Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in All Its Aspects (PoA RevCon4)

12-16 February 2024, New York

Item 1: Preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in Small Arms and light weapons in all its aspects at the national, regional and global levels

Madame President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on the assumption of your duties and to assure you of my delegation’s full cooperation.

Egypt fully associates itself with the statements of the Arab Group and the African Group, and wishes to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

Egypt attaches immense importance to the combating and eradication of illicit trade in SALW, and believes that the UN PoA represents the most important and most relevant platform for international cooperation to combat this phenomenon and to tackle its severe security and socioeconomic implications. In this context, it is necessary to underscore the unprecedented increase in the illicit flows of SALW to terrorist and illegal groups in the regions of the Middle East and Africa in recent years in clear violation of several principles of the UN Charter.

Egypt continuous to undertake remarkable efforts at the national level to enhance the legislative and executive capacities in this area as reflected in the
national implementation reports submitted in accordance with the PoA as well as the active engagement with relevant regional and international activities.

In this regard, Egypt continues to be at the forefront of the international efforts to combat terrorism and terrorist groups at all levels, as we fought a fierce battle against armed terrorists in Sinai over the past decade, and Egypt continues to take strict measures to ensure control over all its borders.

Madame President,

We hope that the Review Conference can make progress on reaching an agreement on possible ways to prohibit any provision of weapons to any group or entity without an official authorization by the government of the recipient State and we wish that the inclusion of the proposed declaration in the outcome document of the Conference, would represent an international commitment to prohibit any provision of weapons to any group or entity without an official authorization by the government of the recipient State, to address one of the most important gaps in this domain.

Madame President,

Egypt stresses the importance that the Conference must address the concerns and priorities of all member states, underscoring that its mandated to “review the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action” and not to alter its scope or amend its provisions, to avoid undermining the consensual nature of this sole universal instrument in this domain.
It is also important to underscore that all measures regarding securing and tracing national stockpiles, as well as their disposal, are mainly conducted at the national level under the responsibility of each sovereign State, and that the role of international cooperation in this regard is mainly to develop possible voluntary guidelines and sharing information based on best practices, as well as the provision of assistance upon request.

Egypt underscores the prerogative right of each State to manage, acquire, and transfer small arms and light weapons, for its self-defense and security needs, as well as the principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including the legitimate right to self-defense and non-interference in internal affairs.

We Stress that the political commitments as well as the measure and recommendation to be included in the outcome report of the Conference must respect the mandate and scope of the PoA and ITI, and to avoid addressing secondary issues, or the inclusion of controversial or political issues that might be covered by other non-universal instruments, thereby maintaining the consensual and political nature of the PoA.

In the same vein, proposals on the inclusion of ammunitions within the scope of the PoA, or to synergize with the newly established Global Frame work on Conventional Ammunitions would be counterproductive, taking into account the following: A- ammunitions are totally different in nature than weapons, B- the diverse national legal systems that differentiates between SALW and ammunition, C- the clear distinction of the scope of the two instruments (PoA and the Global
Framework on Ammunition), D- such attempts would increase divisions among member states and could undermine the effective implementation of the two processes.

Madame President,

We note that there is an increasing tendency towards including references in the PoA context to multifaceted issues that are mainly tackled in the context of other UN bodies such as certain activities conducted by Peacekeeping Operations or the implementation of Arms Embargos imposed by certain UNSC resolutions. While the contribution of the effective implementation of the PoA is definitely a positive contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, it is important to observe the distinction in the relevant mandates and the necessity to address any measures related to such complicated issues at the right venues.

In conclusion, we assure you again, Madame President, that Egypt’s delegation will make every effort to reach constructive and consensual results during this important conference.

We Thank you.