Statement by El Salvador
Preparatory Committee 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 in All Its Aspects
New York, 12–16 February 2024

Thematic debate on progress made in the implementation of:

A. Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

a. Preventing, combating, and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects at the national, regional, and global levels.

Madam Chair,

Allow me to begin by extending warm congratulations on your election to the Presidency of this important Review Conference. For El Salvador, the leadership, active and significant participation of women in the processes related to conventional arms control is of great significance and, additionally, we consider highly relevant the leadership of the Central American countries in multilateral efforts on the fight and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

We also acknowledge the preparatory work and exchanges on national priorities and expectations in anticipation of this Preparatory Committee meeting and are especially pleased to be part of the Bureau of the Review Conference on the progress made in the implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Madam Chair,

For my country, the Program of Action adopted in 2001 is an important milestone in addressing the challenges posed by the diversion and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. However, more than 20 years after its adoption, we believe that this Review Conference should be the opportunity to produce an action-oriented document, with concrete proposals that transcend political commitments.

For this reason, El Salvador actively participated in the Eighth Biennial Meeting of the States Parties to the POA, held in 2022 and welcomes its results adopted by consensus. We consider that this document
is relevant in our deliberations and highlights the need to work with an incremental approach to raise our level of ambition, with respect to the results of this meeting of the Preparatory Committee and the Review Conference.

Regarding progress at the national level, it is relevant to point out that my country has regulations, laws, and administrative procedures to exercise effective national control over the complete life cycle of small arms and light weapons, as well as controls for their export, import, transit, and retransfer. Salvadoran national institutions exercise strict controls that reduce their diversion and illicit trafficking and translate into a reduction of armed violence, directly contributing to the fulfillment of our sustainable development commitments. In addition, these controls cover the complete cycle of small arms and light weapons to prevent them from reaching unauthorized recipients or promoting international illicit trafficking, including controls for their effective disposal and elimination.

In this section it is relevant to mention the complementarities and synergies with other regional instruments, such as the processes derived from the Democratic Security Directorate of the Central American Integration System (SICA), particularly those on illicit trafficking routes of small arms and light weapons in the region, which contribute to the implementation of the Program of Action and its International Tracing Instrument, and other relevant strategies that allow addressing the phenomenon of illicit trafficking outside national borders, to complement global efforts.

At the international level and in response to the mandates derived from the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly in the field of conventional weapons, El Salvador has reported timely progress in the implementation and monitoring of initiatives to prevent the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, and to improve safekeeping controls to prevent theft and misplacement. In addition, actions on marking have been reported, which contribute to tracing actions that prevent proliferation to unauthorized recipients. With regard to complementarity with other international instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty, export and transfer controls are conducted and reported, information that is duly shared with the Secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty. The above, in addition to the presentation of national reports on the implementation of the Program of Action, which are duly completed and submitted for the processing of the corresponding information.

In this section we would like to highlight the importance of cooperation with civil society organizations, international agencies, and other relevant actors who, through concrete actions of promotion, training, education, and research, contribute to the execution and implementation of the Program of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. In particular, we highlight those aimed at highlighting the differentiated impacts of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, their ammunition, parts and components on women, men, boys, girls, and youth.
In connection with the above and with specific reference to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective, we note the importance of the Conference advancing in forecasts on the active involvement of women in the decision-making processes of the POA and its ITI, the integration of gender and youth perspectives in the deliberations, the synergies with other processes such as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and other relevant General Assembly resolutions, as well as the importance of collecting disaggregated data for the generation of targeted and effective public policies.

Madam Chair,

In this process, El Salvador also advocates for the recognition of complementarities with other relevant instruments, such as the recently adopted Global Framework for the Lifetime Management of Conventional Ammunition. My country actively participated in the process that led to the adoption of the global framework because it recognizes the importance of analyzing the management and handling of ammunition in a comprehensive manner and incorporating these visions into conventional arms control.

Finally, in recognition of the results of the Biennial Meetings and the evolving scenario of conventional weapons and their interrelation with emerging technologies, we consider it relevant to advance in the commitments derived from new design and printing techniques, particularly for modular and polymer weapons, including 3D printing, but progressively, it is important to consider other emerging technologies, such as the integration of robotics and artificial intelligence applications.

El Salvador advocates an approach that points out potential risks, from a technology-neutral perspective that also recognizes the potential opportunities and avenues that will allow us to move forward together in manufacturing, marking and traceability forecasts.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.