Preparatory Committee for the UN 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

Topic 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

United Nations, New York
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Intervention by Portugal

Madame Chair,

Allow me first to congratulate you on your election as President of the Fourth Review Conference of the Programme of Action, and to thank you for your transparent and inclusive consultations leading to this week’s Preparatory Committee. We look forward to working with you towards a successful outcome at the Review Conference in June.

Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today by the European Union, and wishes to highlight the following in its national capacity.

The diversion, illicit trade and misuse of small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and security, and to hinder the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is why Portugal has consistently supported the full implementation of the PoA since its adoption in 2001.

Regarding national priorities for the cycle leading to the Fourth Review Conference, let me flag two topics that will be of importance for Portugal:

First, the role and evolution of new technologies, including 3D printing technology, and its use in the illegal manufacturing of firearms. New technological developments add up to the traditional challenges in combating the illicit trade of SALW, and create new challenges for arms control, which exacerbate the need to strengthen cooperation at national, regional and global levels.

Secondly, we believe it is important to encourage the designation of national firearms focal points at the national level, to ensure effective international cooperation, including through the sharing of information on firearms. We stand ready to share more information on the Portuguese experience regarding National Firearms Focal Points in due course.

In addition to these two areas, increasing international cooperation and assistance, and achieving the full, equal, and effective participation of women in disarmament should be cross-cutting to our work.

Madame Chair,

When considering preventing and combatting through-life diversion and illicit trafficking, the Conference should consider the fundamental importance of traceability.

By guaranteeing traceability throughout the life cycle of the firearm and its essential components (from manufacture to destruction), we can step up the prevention and fight against
arms trafficking. In this regard, we would like to stress the need to harmonize existing legal frameworks, at the global, regional and national levels. Such harmonization efforts should include minimum marking requirements for essential components, which are currently not covered by the UN Firearms Protocol, although their circulation without control/registration is a sizeable challenge.

Efforts regarding traceability should also extend to ammunition, which is intrinsically linked to SALW. The successful adoption of the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, last year, is welcome and should be recognized in the framework of the PoA. This is particularly important as much remains to be done regarding the traceability of ammunition.

In closing, on these aspects and overall, let me assure of Portugal’s continued constructive engagement for the discussions ahead.

I thank you.