The Arab Group stresses the importance of the Programme of Action as a pivotal international tool to address the challenges resulting from the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, particularly in the light of the increasing tensions, crises and armed conflicts taking place in various regions of the world, especially in the Arab region. This has exacerbated the challenges associated with the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons with the assistance of some States and non-State actors.

The Member States of the League of Arab States attach increasing importance to combating the illicit trade in and supply of small arms and light weapons. The League of Arab States convenes periodic meetings of Arab national focal points for the United Nations Programme of Action. These meetings aim to enhancing regional cooperation and national implementation programs, particularly given the catastrophic impacts of the unprecedented rise in the illicit supply of small arms and light weapons in the Arab region, and what appears to be the resort by some governments to supplying weapons to terrorist groups to prolong armed conflicts, and pursue malign political objectives in contravention of the simplest principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. This phenomenon has severely affected the security, humanitarian, and economic sectors.

From this standpoint, the Arab Group looks forward to the development and adoption of a consensual and balanced outcome document for the Fourth Review
Conference of the Programme of Action, building on and drawing from the consensus outcomes of previous meetings of States and review conferences of the Programme of Action, in a manner that meets the concerns of all States and reflects the nature and challenges of the various regions.

The Arab Group looks forward to including the following elements in the final document of the Fourth Review Conference:

First: Implementation of the UN Programme of Action on SALW, including preventing and combating illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized persons and entities:

1. Emphasizing the right of states to manufacture, possess and transfer small arms and light weapons, in line with their legitimate right to self-defense, whether individually or collectively, in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the UN Charter, and in line with the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter.

2. Emphasizing the need for all states, - in particular main manufacturers - to fulfill their responsibilities and meet their relevant international obligations regarding small arms and light weapons trafficking, including prohibiting the transfer of SALW to terrorist groups and illegitimate entities, and preventing their trafficking, transfer or diversion to any groups, entities or individuals in the destination states, without the authorization of the importing (destination) state’s government. Similarly emphasizing the importance of conducting a comprehensive discussion on the issue of diversion of SALW.

3. Full adherence to the mandate of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and avoiding repeated attempts to expand its scope, or to include vague or non-consensual concepts and topics, so as to support the effectiveness of the Programme of Action in addressing small arms and light weapons issues.

4. Stressing the necessity to focus on strengthening the implementation of the Programme of Action and bridging the gaps that prevent it from achieving its required effectiveness. It further calls for a clear distinction between the new framework on conventional ammunition, which is still under development, and the
UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, established and functions independently for over 20 years. This is particularly crucial given the varying scopes and technical dimensions of both initiatives.

5. Enhancing the role of regional organizations in coordinating efforts and facilitating assistance to states in a way that contributes to the effective implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons at the regional level. In this context, the League of Arab States holds regular meetings for Arab national points of contact concerned with the UN Programme of Action to enhance regional cooperation and national implementation programs in this regard.

**Second: Implementation of the International Tracing Instrument to identify and trace small arms and light weapons:**

1. Emphasizing the importance of properly marking weapons, in addition to developing an effective international tool to monitor and track the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which could play an effective role in combating cases of deliberate diversion or transfer of small arms and light weapons to individuals or terrorist groups or illegal entities.

2. The centrality of the non-discriminatory provision of the necessary technical expertise, and technologies to developing states, with the aim to enhancing national efforts to mark and trace small arms and light weapons and to control borders.

3. With regard to new technologies in manufacturing and tracing small arms and light weapons, in particular modular and polymer weapons as well as 3D printing, stressing the importance of conducting extensive and comprehensive consultations on this issue, taking into account the following factors:

   - Giving priority to the strengthening the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, avoiding to put additional burden on them.

   - The technological gaps between developed and developing states, as these new technologies might not be available to developing states, and the high cost of some of those technologies.

   - The centrality of the of unconditional provision of international cooperation and assistance, upon the request of the recipient states, including sharing expertise, technical assistance and building the capacities of developing countries.
- The diverse legal and legislative national systems governing SALW, which - in many cases - prohibits the illicit trade in SALW regardless of how they are manufactured.

- The necessity to avoid imposing or introducing any restrictions that could impede the transfer of these technologies including 3D printing, as its also used for peaceful and civil purposes.

**Third: International cooperation and assistance:**

1. Promoting international cooperation and assistance including the transfer of technical expertise and training to developing countries, and providing them with advanced equipment to develop their national capabilities in the field of marking and tracing SALW and monitoring their international borders, and without imposing discriminatory restrictions including the illegal unilateral coercive measures, or interfering in the internal affairs of states.

2. Supporting states' capacities with relevant advanced technologies, according to the needs of each state, and without interfering in its development priorities or detracting from official development assistance (ODA) resources allocated to that state.

3. Prohibiting the provision of training to individuals/entities/groups of other states without the consent of the recipient states’ governments in the domain of SALW.

4. Supporting the Fellowship on Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted by the General Assembly resolution A/77/71, and emphasizing the need for states to commit to providing and supporting the necessary financial appropriations - through voluntary contributions and/or UN budget discussions - to ensure that the program is held regularly in a way that enhances the capabilities of developing countries as desired, and urging the Secretariat to finalize all organizational and logistical arrangements for the program's agenda and content within the nearest possible timeframe in preparation for holding its first session during the current year 2024.