2012 Declaration

A renewed commitment to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

1. We, the States participating in the Second Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, convened in New York from 27 August to 7 September 2012 to review the progress of implementation and explore ways to strengthen implementation, reaffirm our support and commitment to implement all the provisions of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, with a view to ending the human suffering caused by the illicit trade in and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons.

2. We reaffirm our respect for and commitment to international law and the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as other rights in the Programme of Action.

3. We reaffirm the validity and vital importance of the Programme of Action as a global framework to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, and remain convinced that its full and effective implementation is essential for furthering peace and security, protecting lives, and promoting social, economic and human development.

4. We emphasize that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects continues to sustain conflicts, exacerbate armed violence, undermine respect for international humanitarian law, aid terrorism, and facilitate increasing levels of transnational organized crime, human and drug trafficking. By threatening security, safety and stability, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons impedes the provision of humanitarian assistance to victims of armed conflict, contributes to the displacement of civilians, and undermines sustainable development and poverty eradication efforts.

5. We remain mindful of the primary responsibility of Governments for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and solving the problems associated with such trade, and of the importance of regional and international cooperation in reinforcing national implementation.

6. We welcome the considerable progress that has been made in implementing the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument since their adoption, including on the establishment, strengthening and enforcement of national laws, regulations and administrative procedures to prevent the illicit trafficking and illegal manufacture of small arms and light weapons, the development of national action plans, the establishment of national points of contact, the submission of voluntary national
reports, and the strengthening of regional cooperation; as well as progress made in implementing a wide range of specific measures such as on stockpile security, the collection and destruction of illicit small arms and light weapons, the marking of small arms and light weapons, and technical training.

6bis We welcome the significant role of regional and subregional organisations, initiatives and instruments in raising awareness, building capacity, and promoting cooperation to support States implement the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

7. We stress, however, that challenges and obstacles still remain to the full implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. We resolve to tackle these challenges.

8. We underline the need to follow up on the discussions held and recommendations made at previous meetings on the Programme of Action, including the Third Biennial Meeting of States (2008), Fourth Biennial Meeting of States (2010), and Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts (2011), and on related topics taken up by the General Assembly in the past decade such as the negative humanitarian and development impact of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons\(^1\) and prevention of armed violence\(^2\).

9. We support the further strengthening and development of norms and measures at the national, regional and global levels to reinforce and coordinate efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

10. We highlight that limited resources and differing capacity of States still pose significant challenges and obstacles to realising the goals of the Programme of Action. We underscore the continued necessity for international cooperation and assistance, and in particular the need for increased levels of technical and financial assistance, to build national and regional capacities, to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. The development and strengthening of partnerships, as well as sharing of information, experience and training among competent officials such as customs, police, military, intelligence, and arms control officials at the national, regional and global level are essential for meeting commitments under the Programme of Action.

11. We remain gravely concerned about the negative impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on women, children and the elderly and highlight the need for evidence based research to take special account for these groups. We underscore the need to further integrate the role of women into efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

\(^1\) A/Res/60/68
\(^2\) A/Res/63/23, A/64/228
12. We welcome the important contribution of civil society organizations and industry in assisting States to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and encourage further partnerships to this end.

12 bis We endeavour to take full advantage of the benefits of cooperation with international organizations such as the World Customs Organization, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the United Nations regional disarmament centres.

13. We resolve to address the close link between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and armed violence, terrorism, transnational organized crime, trafficking in humans, drugs and natural resources, and to strengthen national, regional and international efforts aimed at combating this trade simultaneously from both a supply and demand perspective.

14. We renew our pledge to rid the world of the scourge brought upon it by the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many parts of the world. We commit to mobilising the necessary political will and resources to implement the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. We aim to achieve clear and tangible results over the next six years that will improve the security, safety and livelihoods of our people by undertaking the measures in the accompanying implementation plans.

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