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

General exchange of views

27 August 2012

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Regina Maria Cordeiro Dunlop,
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I have the honor to speak on behalf of MERCOSUR Members and Associated States.

Madam President,

First, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of this Review Conference. MERCOSUR Members and Associated States wish to express our support and highlight our commitment to this meeting’s successful conclusion.

MERCOSUR Members and Associated States recognize the contribution and the qualitative difference provided by the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA) in order to respond in a multidimensional and integral manner to the problems arising from these illicit activities.

We remain concerned with the effects of the manufacture, transfer and circulation of firearms and ammunition, as well as the proliferation of these in the hands of civilians, which, in many regions, have consequences of various kinds and pose a challenge to the sustainable development of our societies.

We also reiterate our concern about the close link between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and organized crime.

We therefore believe that the Review Conference should reaffirm the objectives of the Programme of Action, make a reliable diagnosis on their implementation in order to identify areas that need to be strengthened and ensure that it is a mechanism complementary to other existing instruments as well as to those negotiation processes of additional instruments. Also, for an effective implementation of the Programme of Action it is important to establish precise follow-up mechanisms, with a clear mandate for the meetings, which can provide substantive results reflected in final documents with specific measures or recommendations for the States.

We consider it important to continue promoting international cooperation and assistance and national capacity-building, which, because of their cross-cutting and multidimensional nature, are essential tools for the effective implementation of the measures recommended in the Programme of Action.

Madam President,

While we recognize the contribution made by the UNPoA, MERCOSUR Members and Associated States wish to reiterate the position that we highlighted in other opportunities that the Programme of Action, as it refers to the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons "in all its aspects", must necessarily include ammunition and explosives. Therefore, we consider that one of the remaining challenges for the implementation of the UNPoA is to approach it in a integral manner. MERCOSUR Members and Associated States consider that, in a integral manner, ammunitions are part
of SALW, which also includes explosives. In addition, we have reiterated that the non-legally binding nature of the UNPoA is an obstacle to its effective implementation.

This conference presents a unique opportunity to reaffirm the commitment to the full implementation of the recommendations of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (ITI). We reiterate the importance for MERCOSUR Members and Associated States that the instrument expand its scope to include ammunition and have a legally binding nature.

We believe that there is a need to strengthen the follow-up mechanisms, such as national reporting, and information exchange: this will allow a more coordinated work and the analysis of the information provided by each State on progress made in the internal control of small arms and light weapons and will represent a fundamental tool for decision making in the action against the illicit trade of these weapons and its serious implications.

Also, we draw attention to the need for greater and more effective coordination, complementarity and synergy of efforts at all levels between the actors involved and recognize the importance of continuing to strengthen strategic alliances involving the Programme of Action between States, international organizations and civil society organizations, since the latter have contributed both to the implementation of the recommendations of the instrument at a national level and to the channeling of resources at the regional and global levels.

Madam President,

Among the outstanding issues, we reiterate the importance of incorporating a gender and age perspective in the implementation of the UNPoA, which would help the most vulnerable sectors of society.

Similarly, we believe that the promotion of a culture of dialogue and peace, crime and conflict prevention, as well as social inclusion, are necessary measures to complement and further improve the preventing and combating of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

MERCOSUR Members and Associated States agree with the approach of the Report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/255) which informs the Security Council on a number of issues that merit special attention, including trade and intermediation; marking, registration and tracing; stockpile management; armed violence and the misuse of small arms, as well as on trade in ammunition, problems with storage, and the importance of tracking ammunition found in conflict areas. We also agree with the six final recommendations of this report.
Madam President,

Finally, MERCOSUR Members and Associated States reiterate our commitment to continue working to strengthen the Programme of Action and highlight the work being done, since 2001, by the MERCOSUR Working Group on Firearms and Ammunition, which includes sharing national experiences, harmonization of national laws and coordination of policies in this area. The Working Group is an example of regional cooperation to provide effective and comprehensive responses to the problem of the illicit trade of firearms.

Thank you.