The establishment, where appropriate, of subregional or regional mechanisms with a view to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons across borders, including trans-border customs cooperation and networks for information-sharing among law enforcement, border and customs control agencies

1. States recognized the urgent need to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons across borders due to the harmful effects of those activities on the security of each State, subregion, region and the world as a whole, endangering not only the well-being of peoples but also their social and economic development and their right to live in peace.

2. States reiterated that Governments bear the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects across borders, in accordance with the principle of the sovereignty of States and their relevant international obligations.

3. Furthermore, due to the transnational nature and dimension of this illicit activity, States recognized the value of addressing the illicit trafficking of SALW across borders and their cooperation on this matter through an approach of common and shared responsibility among them with full respect of each State’s sovereignty.

4. States also acknowledged that the “porosity of borders”, wherever they exist, is an aggravating element of arms illicit trafficking at all levels, that leads to the prolongation of conflicts, exacerbates violence, undermines the internal security of States, increases the activities of transnational organized crime, corruption, drug trafficking, and in some cases even terrorism, at the same time that it undermines the development and allows criminals and traffickers weapons to have a free access to the armament through poor border controls.

5. States pointed out that the geographical nature and the inaccessibility of some border areas, including maritime borders, poses challenges and difficulties in controlling cross-border activities, including the trafficking of arms and weapons.

6. States emphasized the need to enhance cooperation and coordination among customs, border controls and police authorities, in order to make it easier for competent authorities to identify and seize small arms and light weapons illegally traded by air, sea and land.

7. States underlined the need to address the lack of means, transfer of technology as well as of human resources and institutional capacity to deal with this problem. Accordingly, States are encouraged to facilitate the transfer of technology for detection and tracing of
the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, in particular when it is related to drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism.

8. States expressed the importance of several bilateral, subregional and regional instruments, mechanisms and initiatives that refer to this topic, as well as the UN Programme of Action and the Guidelines for International Arms Transfers, as a useful means to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit traffic on SALW across borders.

The way forward

1. States are encouraged to enact laws, where appropriate or required, and to effectively reinforce laws and regulations in order to strengthen border controls at national, subregional, regional and global levels, where appropriate;

2. States should enhance cooperation among those institutions responsible for the effective control of borders, at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, with a view to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects;

3. States recommend convening subregional, regional and interregional meetings of their relevant enforcement authorities in order to exchange information, including best practices and lessons learned, in relation to the trafficking of SALW;

4. States are encouraged to integrate coordinated and adequate procedures and processes for the prevention of the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in their national border management strategy. This may include, where appropriate, the establishment or strengthening of border control mechanisms, the development of laws, regulations, policies, and practices, as well as the creation or improvement of infrastructure, upgrading equipment, implementing confidence-building measures, developing of training programs for personnel, and joint inter-agency border patrol exercises, among others;

5. States are encouraged to take full advantage of the benefits that cooperation with international organizations can offer, such as the World Customs Organization, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and UN Regional Disarmament Centers, among others;

6. States are encouraged to share among them technical information in order to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW across borders, and are encouraged to designate a technical contact to facilitate timely cooperation and to carryout joint actions, whenever necessary;

7. States underline the importance to continue implementing paragraph 27 of the UN PoA in accordance with the approach of common and shared responsibility among them with full respect of each State’s sovereignty.
8. States emphasized that preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons across borders merits further analysis, including determining ways forward to address this challenge, within the UN PoA process.