Statement
by
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Deputy Head
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at the
Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Second Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

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(check against delivery)
Madam Chair,

Germany fully associates itself with the statement of the European Union.

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) are the main instrument of lethal armed violence worldwide. The importance of the risks from SALW and ammunition are growing, not receding, as events in post conflict Libya, armed violence in parts of Latin America, or the explosion of a depot in Brazzaville have recently shown. The UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA) has provided for an internationally recognized reference document in the fight against illicit small arms. The Review Conference provides us with an opportunity to take stock of the implementation process of the last ten years and to draw conclusions for the future. Given the serious and far-reaching nature of the issue, we believe the international community has a duty to reach substantial conclusions at this conference, paving the way for enhanced international cooperation. We stand ready to discuss in a constructive spirit.

1. Preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at the national level

Germany sees states as the principal actors for the effective implementation of the PoA. Safeguarding weapons, providing for adequate laws and regulations, stockpiling appropriately arms and ammunitions, ensuring that neither weapons nor ammunitions are diverted into the illegal sector, ensuring appropriate border controls preventing illicit trans border shipments, educating and training involved staff and decision makers of the law enforcement sector, the judiciary and the political sphere as well as the population at large regarding the risks of illicit SALW all fall into the responsibility of states. Germany would therefore support a final document that stresses these responsibilities.

In view of the growing number of accidents in ammunition depots and in particular having in mind the catastrophe in Brazzaville from 5 March 2012, particular weight should be attributed to Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM). In this context, ammunition plays the decisive role and poses immediate risks for accidental explosions and contamination. We should therefore mention ammunition as a crucial element to be taken care of.

MANPADS have proven to be a risk of particular concern as these weapons, fallen into the wrong hands, constitute a threat to civil aviation worldwide. Recent events in Libya have shown that this risk can become virulent in a post conflict situation. Germany would like to stress the responsibility of states to avoid destabilizing accumulations of MANPADS, to exchange information on these weapons, e.g. by declaring imports and exports in the framework of the UN Register of Conventional Weapons, and to safeguard stocks held with particular diligence. PSSM plays a particularly important role with MANPADS.
Women are generally as much affected by armed conflicts as men. UN Security Resolution 1325 (2000) urges states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in the security sector. Women play a particularly important role in any process of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. We believe the Review Conference should take the opportunity to make a reference to UNSR 1325, urging states to enhance the integration of women in decision-making processes in the security sector.

2. Preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at the regional level

Germany supports the particular weight attached to the role of regional organizations in the implementation of the PoA. Regional organizations have the understanding and the support of their member states and are often best suited to coordinate efforts in the fight against illicit SALW. Moreover, SALW proliferation and illicit trade often is most virulent at the regional level. Germany encourages regional organizations to support their member states systematically in implementing the PoA, thus promoting cooperation and information exchange crucial for border control, tracing of arms and the fight against arms smuggling and organized crime. As ballistic evidence plays an increasing role in persecution and tracing, ammunition should be included in regional cooperation mechanisms.

3. Preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at the global level

Germany underlines the role of the UN body and institutions for fight against illicit SALW. We value the coordinating role of UNODA. We appreciate the clearing mechanism established by the publication "Matching Needs and Resources" and encourage states to contribute as donors and recipients by defining and updating the project list.

Germany coordinates the Group of Interested States and encourages other States to participate actively. We also appreciate the role of UNIDIR in developing further scientific knowledge in the field of small arms control and have funded various research projects to that subject in the last few years.

Germany encourages states to report to the UN arms register including in the category SALW. Germany would support the idea of a mandatory reporting mechanism in SALW as an additional category of the UN weapons register as we believe SALW are the main factor of instability in many parts of the world, often exceeding heavy weaponry as a stability challenge. We believe that the Review Conference of the Programme of Action gives the opportunity to develop further this idea.
4. Implementation, international cooperation and assistance

Security is a major factor for economic and social stability and therefore for a prosperous development. In this context, SALW control plays a critical role. In particular, it is a necessary element in the stabilization of post conflict situations and, at the same time, an important element of crisis prevention, as today's SALW and ammunition will fuel the conflicts of tomorrow.

Germany has increased its relevant international assistance in the last years. We have focused on post conflict states, mainly in Africa. It goes without saying that international cooperation cannot be a one-way street. To ensure effectiveness of measures undertaken to promote the implementation of the PoA, the commitment from donor countries has to be met by corresponding commitments from recipient countries. We are ready to listen to the needs of states in the implementing process of the UNPoA.

5. Follow-up

To ensure effectively progress in the implementation of the PoA, a follow-up mechanism is of crucial importance. Japan has made very valuable proposals for the next six-year cycle. We support this approach, in particular with regards to a focus on clearly defined technical issues, PSSM being one of the priorities. The Review Conference should definitely indicate the way forward.

The follow-up mechanism should also define instruments to measure further implementation success including benchmarks. In this context, the Review Conference should make reference to the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATGs) and the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) two standard works defining proper policies, standard procedures and appropriate handling guidelines regarding SALW and ammunition.

6. International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons

Marking, proper registration and tracing will continue to play a crucial role in the control of the proliferation of illicit SALW and ammunition. The Review Conference should take into account developments in arms register databases and new cooperation possibilities due to technical developments offered, inter alia, by INTERPOL. In particular, data exchange on ballistic evidence can make a contribution to resolving criminal use of firearms; in a reference to the ITI ammunition should therefore be mentioned.

Thank you for your attention.