Statement on behalf of the European Union

by

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at the

Preparatory Committee of the Review Conference on the
UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small
Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

on

Agenda Item 7.b:
International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a
Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons

New York
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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -
Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

2. The ITI is one of the most important achievements of the PoA process. Given its essential role in combating the illicit trade in SALW, the current degree of its implementation should be closely examined.

3. As appropriate, increased national, regional and global efforts to establish the necessary legal, administrative and technical infrastructure to allow full compliance with the ITI, in particular with regard to its marking and registration requirements, are strongly supported.

4. States are encouraged to increase their technical assistance in the implementation of the ITI, including the provision of marking machines as well as expertise for the development of appropriate regulatory and legal measures.

5. The European Union is convinced that States should seek the widest possible exchange of information to trace illicit SALW. Therefore, the Review Conference should promote an increased information exchange on tracing results, inter alia in order to prevent diversion.

6. The PoA process could help develop mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the risk of diversion specifically in the context of transfer authorizations of SALW. The EU suggests that this could be done by elaborating ways to exchange information on existing diversion track records based on traced illicit SALW.

7. At the BMS4 and at the Open-Ended Meeting of Governmental Experts, States were already encouraged to consider improving the availability of information on traced illicit SALW among appropriate agencies at the national, regional and international level to contribute to preventing SALW from being diverted. This goal should be reaffirmed by considering concrete measures on how this could be achieved in practice.

8. In our view, Interpol should play a key role in this process. Full advantage should be taken of the possibilities offered in the framework of Interpol’s illicit arms records and tracing management system iARMS, which assists its Member Countries to report, search and trace stolen and lost firearms and which will also hold an analytical and statistical tool about trafficked firearms and results of tracing operations.

9. Continuous and sustainable training of law enforcement officials, inter alia in registering the marks on firearms also remains crucial to the full and effective implementation of the ITI.

10. In addition to these issues, the Review Conference should discuss how to enable peace support operations to contribute effectively to the tracing of illicit SALW. In the past, the only bodies that have effectively traced illicit SALW in conflict and post-conflict situations seem to have been UN Groups of Experts investigating violations of UN arms embargoes. In contrast, peace support operations have not yet been specifically mandated or equipped to start tracing investigations on the illicit SALW they might encounter. The EU therefore believes that, where appropriate, such operations should be enabled to contribute to the tracing of SALW by explicitly mandating and equipping them for this task. Moreover, a pool of civilian and military experts and possible changes to mission structures should be considered to enable them to contribute effectively to the tracing of illicit SALW.

Thank you, Madam Chair.