Introductory Remarks

Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Third 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 (SALW) in All Its Aspects (PoA RevCon3)

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Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on the assumption of your duties.

Egypt fully associates itself with the statements of the Arab Group, the African Group, and the Non-Aligned Movement and wishes to make the following introductory remarks in its national capacity before we engage in the detailed thematic debate.

Egypt attaches immense importance to the combating and eradication of illicit trade in SALW, and believes that the UN Programme of Action represents the most important and most relevant platform for international cooperation to combat this phenomenon and to tackle its severe security and socioeconomic implications.

Egypt continues to strengthen its legislative and executive capacities in this area at the national level, as reflected in the relevant national implementation reports. Egypt also continues to actively engage with all the relevant regional and international activities.
In this context, it is necessary to underscore the unprecedented increase in the state-sponsored illicit flows of SALW to terrorists and illegal groups in the regions of the Middle East and Africa in recent years, in a clear violation of several basic principles of the UN Charter.

As we gather here today, the Egyptian security forces are risking their lives on a daily basis in a fierce battle against armed terrorists in Sinai, and suppressing continued attempts to smuggle weapons through Egypt’s western borders. Most of the illicit weapons seized in these confrontations are evidently supplied to the terrorists by States.

Mr. President,

Egypt is very keen on furthering and strengthening the implementation of this very valuable Programme of Action. And we call on all Member States to preserve its consensual nature and its agreed scope. This requires that we all strive to focus our efforts on combating illicit trade and supply of SALW rather than attempt to unduly restrict the legitimate right of States to acquire SALW, in contradiction with article 51 of the Charter, or insist on imposing language borrowed from other controversial non-universal instruments.

In the same vein, proposals on the inclusion of ammunitions within the scope of the PoA could be counterproductive, especially that ammunitions inherently have different technical characteristics and, therefore, require different tools and approaches. Moreover, we need to strive for a more efficient implementation of the PoA before we start considering widening its scope.
Mr. President,

We note that there is an increasing tendency towards including references in the PoA context to multifaceted issues that are mainly addressed in the context of other UN bodies, such as certain activities conducted by Peacekeeping Operations or the implementation of Arms Embargos imposed by the UNSC. While the effective implementation of the PoA is definitely a positive contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, it is important to observe the distinction in the relevant mandates of different UN bodies, and the necessity of addressing measures related to each issue at the appropriate venue.

Finally, we would also like to point out the need for careful consideration by the relevant experts of the technical and economic implications of the proposals related to the application of some advanced technologies in the area of marking and tracing.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to assure you of the Egyptian Delegation’s full support in order to ensure the success of this Conference.

Thank you.