Statement of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
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by Mrs. Sachi Claringbould
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Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, allow me to thank you for the extensive work you have undertaken in the past year to take forward our work on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We appreciated the number of consultations you have held to prepare transparently for this Preparatory Committee, leading to the Review Conference in June. I assure you of the full cooperation of the Netherlands’ delegation.

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement delivered by the EU, and we would like to make some remarks in our national capacity.

As the UN Secretary General’s report of December 2017 pointed out, the rate of firearms-related homicides in post-conflict societies is high. It is often higher than that of battlefield deaths. And these weapons are also the dominant tools of criminal violence in non-conflict societies. Fewer illicit flows of small arms will be a catalyst for fewer violent deaths, less armed conflict and a reduction of human suffering. Mr. President, this is the type of disarmament that saves lives, as the UNSG rightfully reminds us.

Mr. President, I wish to make a few points on synergies, diversion, new technologies, development and gender, following your structure of the thematic debate.
[Synergies]
The Netherlands strongly favours pursuing synergies, in various aspects. We are one of the sponsors of a UNIDIR study on synergies in reporting. Reporting is crucial as part of transparency, which is an important confidence building measure and thus contributes to peace and security. We have many reporting obligations in the field of conventional arms, including Small Arms and Light Weapons, such as under the ATT, UN Register of Conventional Arms, UN PoA, but also EU, OSCE, export control regimes and reporting to our national parliament. In order to improve rates of reporting and hence increase transparency, we need to see where synergies as feasible. We look forward to continuing work on this, also in the context of the PoA. UNIDIR is hosting a side-event during lunchtime this Thursday on this important issue, supported by Switzerland, France and the Netherlands.

The UNGA adopted resolution 71/44 on Transparency in Armaments during its 71\textsuperscript{th} session, in which an important decision was made with regard to the UN Register of Conventional Arms. It decided to endorse the recommendations by the 2016 Group of Governmental Exports to include the reporting of international transfers of Small Arms and Light Weapons as an extra category of the Register. This will hopefully lead to the increase of reporting. At the same time, it makes synergies in reporting more important as there are more instruments under which to report.

Mr. President, we believe the Arms Trade Treaty offers further opportunities for synergies between instruments. Under the ATT, States Parties establish an export control system that will contribute to reducing human suffering. It will help reduce the illicit trade, accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition, and parts and components. It will also help combat diversion.

We acknowledge that the ATT and PoA are two separate instruments and that not all states are party to the ATT. Still, we believe the ATT and its provisions on diversion could provide a useful basis for discussion and further steps.
And synergies are broader than instruments in themselves. Some regional organisations, such as the OSCE, align the timing of their SALW meetings with the more general meeting cycle. We fully support this practice and believe it can contribute to more focused attention to SALW issues.

[Diversion/PSSM]

Mr. President,

Diversion remains one of the most pressing challenges in the field of SALW control. Solid arms export control systems can be the first line of defence to prevent diversion. Moreover, effective controls for end user certificates can help nib potential diversion in the bud. The Netherlands stands ready to share experiences about our national system to interested states.

Physical security and stockpile management, or PSSM, of small arms and their ammunition is another key element. When criminal groups or non-state actors can easily get their hands on unprotected caches of small arms, the effects have an impact in a broader region. We have seen this in Libya. We do not want to see it again. Therefore, we believe PSSM ought to be at the top of our list of priorities in the field of small arms and light weapons, and their ammunition.

[New technologies]

Mr. President,

Recent technological developments both pose problems and present solutions. Technological innovations can help in curbing illicit SALW trade, for example via the further development of fingerprint technology. In that way, we can prevent weapons from being fired by anyone but the rightful owner.
**[Development]**
The Netherlands believes our work in the framework of the PoA and ITI should be linked to the Sustainable Development Agenda and its SDGs, in particular Goal 16. Continued efforts in the context of the PoA can help achieve Target 16.4, limiting illicit arms flows.

Moreover, as SALW are responsible for 90% of conflict deaths worldwide, curbing the illicit trade and irresponsible transfers of SALW can contribute to achieving Target 16.1, significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.

**[Gender]**
Last but certainly not least, Mr. President, the Netherlands fully supports the recognition and integration of gender as a factor into all cycles of small arms control. The linkages between small arms control and gender are increasingly demonstrated in research. Disaggregated data is crucial for conducting such research. We would like to urge those collecting data for all types of research to take this into account. The Arms Trade Treaty already pays specific attention to gender-based violence. Also as part of SDG 5 on gender equality, we would support further attention to gender in discussions about the PoA as well.

Thank you Mr. President.