Preparatory Committee 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 in All Its Aspects

New York, 19 – 23 March 2018

Statement of the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms

Wednesday, 21 March 2018

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Twenty-three UN entities work together through the Coordinating Action on Small Arms, or ‘CASA’ mechanism¹ to ensure that United Nations policies and practices on assisting States to control small arms, light weapons, ammunition and the arms trade are consistent and of high quality.

UN system-wide responses to the increasing harm associated with the misuse, illicit transfer and circulation of arms and ammunition requires consistency across the board, from arms regulation, human rights, counter-terrorism, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and humanitarian aid, to aviation safety, economic development, refugees, organized crime, gender and children’s rights.

Through CASA, the United Nations has developed a set of voluntary International Small Arms Control Standards² or “ISACS” that provide authoritative and comprehensive guidance on controlling the full lifecycle of small arms and light weapons. These standards are derived from multilateral instruments that States have negotiated and are used by CASA partners to ensure that the United Nations as a whole consistently delivers high-quality support. ISACS are currently being used and supported in more than 110 countries.

In order to support national authorities in weapons and ammunition management, CASA partners utilize the (General Assembly-mandated) International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, or IA TG, the most comprehensive and authoritative set of guidelines for physical security and stockpile management.

In 2018, as part of ongoing efforts by the United Nations system to increase the effectiveness of peace operations, CASA partners launched a new handbook entitled “Weapons and ammunition management in a changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration context”. This handbook is the first output of a collaborative project intended to support the work of United Nations DDR practitioners who find themselves operating in increasingly challenging environments—often characterized by acute violence and a prevalence of small arms, ammunition and explosives. The handbook provides guidance for both classic DDR operations as well as innovative community violence reduction (CVR) programming, that draws upon good practice and the highest international standards, including the CASA-driven ISACS. The next phase of the

¹ www.un-arm.org/UNARMTEST/SmallArms/CASA.aspx
² www.smallarmsstandards.org/
project will focus on the development of a corresponding training course to be piloted this calendar year.

Mr. Chair,

Most recently, CASA has been spearheading a United Nations-wide paradigm shift towards placing disarmament issues squarely within the scope of development policies, particularly under the global overarching framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations supports Member States in their efforts to achieve the targets set by the 2030 Agenda, including by developing capacity within national law enforcement systems and national statistical offices to sustainably collect data on weapons tracing and destruction. Target 16.4 of the Agenda pertains to 'by 2030, significantly reduce illicit arms flows.' Two custodian agencies\(^3\) of indicator 16.4.2 under this target, consulted with other CASA partners and are cooperating in institutionalizing mechanisms to strengthen and better organise the UN support for Member States. Further assistance will be provided to properly process data for submission to the Statistical Commission. CASA serves as a forum to share information regarding implementation of the target and progress in data collection for this indicator.

Excellencies,

The need for enhanced international cooperation and assistance was reiterated in the last biennial meeting under the UN Programme of Action.

The United Nations has been providing a broad range of support to Member States related to small arms control; for example, improving national legislation; converting craft production; undertaking weapons destruction; providing technical advice and assistance to enhance stockpile management; supporting weapons tracing; advocating gender sensitivities; monitoring and reporting on harm; and raising public awareness. The UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation\(^4\) or ‘UNSCAR’ provides financial assistance in support of implementation of the Programme of Action. It was established as the result of the 2012 Review Conference in response to States’ call for an improved funding mechanism for better matching of assistance needs with resources.\(^5\) UNSCAR has funded 51 projects in all regions of the world for a total of USD 7.5 million over the last 5 years.

The 2018 Call for Proposals will open from June to July 2018. States in need of assistance are encouraged to consult with UNODA to identify eligible implementing partners, and have them submit proposals. UNSCAR will consider proposals which address national needs indicated in Programme of Action national reports; which incorporate gender considerations; and which contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The UN system stands ready to provide coordinated advice and support to Member States, with a view to ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument. Such support will be formulated in line with the development priorities at the global, regional and national levels.

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3 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).
4 www.un.org/disarmament/unscar/
5 A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4