Challenges in the Implementation of the PoA and ITI

1. The Programme of Action (PoA) contains concrete suggestions for improved national legislation and controls, and international assistance and cooperation.

2. Although much has been achieved in the implementation of the PoA and ITI, the Kingdom of the Netherlands shares the observation of the Secretary-General and many Member States, that much remains to be done. Some of the remaining challenges, as mentioned in the draft outcome document, include the need for enhanced international cooperation and assistance, improvement of physical security and stockpile management. The present draft outcome document identifies a number of measures at the national, regional and global level that will contribute to more effective implementation of the PoA.

Monitoring and enhancing implementation

3. The Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to draw attention to one specific element that can contribute to better achieving our common goals: follow-up mechanisms. Up to now the PoA review cycle has consisted of Biennial Meetings of States, and Review Conferences once every six years. Twice a one-week ‘Meeting of Governmental Experts’ was held as well.
4. In order to achieve greater effectiveness and coherence of implementation at every level, we need to increase Member States’ ownership and engagement on a day-to-day basis, rather than meeting once every two years on this issue in a BMS or RevCon format.

5. Challenges that require more day-to-day attention include diversion, transparency and information sharing, border controls, addressing the impact of new technologies, and fostering more structural cooperation and assistance on this multilateral level.

6. For example, cooperation and assistance would greatly benefit if a number of interested Member States, together with the UN Secretariat, volunteer to work on the implementation of the commitments made in the PoA on a more regular basis. Although the PoA requires national reporting, something many Member States have complied with, there is no concrete follow-up mechanism in the PoA. We need to see more concrete action, e.g. by matching available assistance to the needs identified through these reports.

Proposal for day-to-day global implementation of the PoA

7. The Third Review Conference should decide to further institutionalise day-to-day global implementation of the PoA. A bureau, consisting of a diverse group of 10 Member States on a voluntary basis, could undertake to meet on a more regular basis, chaired by the President-designate of the next Conference. During these meetings they could review national reports with the aim of identifying further implementation need. They could review best practices so that these become available to Member States or even assist Member States who come forward with the aim of carrying out a peer review. All implementation activities such as set out above would be carried out in a voluntary manner. The bureau would then report the progress made to the next BMS.

8. In this manner we provide Member States who are looking to further implement the PoA with a platform for identifying the right assistance and tools, without forcing heavy meeting schedules upon those countries that have indicated that they are not in a position to support such measures.

Conclusion

9. The PoA’s universality makes it the most important instrument we have to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. By strengthening our intersessional process, we increase ownership and ensure that commitments under the PoA are achieved.