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

STATEMENT BY PORTUGAL

Delivered by Francisco Duarte Lopes,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations

New York, 19 of June 2018

Thank you, Mr. President,

On behalf of Portugal, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as President of this Conference and to assure you of my delegation’s full cooperation.

Mr. President,

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to make complementary comments in its national capacity.

Mr. President,

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are the more significant and widespread instruments of violence and death worldwide. Its
illicit traffic causes tremendous human suffering and fuels organized crime, terrorism and regional instability, especially in some of the more vulnerable countries and regions.

My country is contributing to several EU initiatives and programmes, including the iTrace initiative and fully supports the UN instruments designed to prevent, combat and eradicate the diversion and the illicit trade of SALW and their ammunitions.

Mr. President,

Portugal considers the Draft 2 of the Outcome Document a good basis for our work and would like to highlight some priorities and key issues.

First, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the interconnection of peace and sustainable development and points out, in SDG 16 and target 16.4 (by 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows), the important contribution of small arms control in reducing violence. This convergence of goals with the 2030 Agenda should be reflected in the Programme of Action.

Second, diverted ammunition is an increasing cause of concern, also because it has been used in the manufacture of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED’s). We are convinced that the inclusion of ammunition in the scope of the PoA will significantly increase its implementation.

Third, Portugal strongly advocates the need to incorporate gender perspectives in the PoA, as part of the broader effort to promote women participation in disarmament affairs. Thus, we favour the inclusion of gender aspects in all SALW-control projects.

Fourth, we should foster synergies with other international instruments, in particular the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), linking
efforts to regulate arms trade with the prevention of diversion and illicit trade in SALW.

Fifth, the implementation of the PoA would benefit from increasing international cooperation and assistance, including technical and financial assistance. In this respect, the role of international and regional organizations should be enhanced, assisting States in building capacities and training, as well as in collecting and exchanging information and experiences.

Six, the PoA should also take stock of developments in science and technology. New technologies and materials in the manufacturing, marking and tracing of weapons can open new possibilities but they also represent a challenge. In this respect, we should consider the proposal contained in the Secretary-General’s report of adding a technical annex to the ITI, reflecting the implications of new technologies, on marking, record-keeping and tracing SALW.

Seven, the PoA should support the comprehensive approach to address armed violence contained in the new Agenda for Disarmament, recently launched by the Secretary-General. We welcome the initiative to establish a new Multi-partner Trust Fund within the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) dedicated to SALW control.

Finally, we support the proposals for a more effective monitoring of the day-to-day implementation of the PoA at global level.

To conclude, Mr. President,

This Conference is a good opportunity to make progress in eradicating the illicit traffic of SALW and have a real impact in some of the most vulnerable societies, saving lives. Our expectation is that this Conference will contribute to improve the PoA and enhance its implementation, with concrete proposals and solutions.
I thank you.