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, 18 – 29 June 2018

Statement of the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms

Wednesday, 20 June 2018

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

One month ago, the Secretary-General announced his new agenda for disarmament, entitled "Securing our Common Future." A key feature of it is "disarmament that saves lives": aiming to reduce and mitigate the impact of conventional weapons, with special focus on small arms and light weapons.

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. Achieving the Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda is a top priority of CASA. We provide a coordinated input to this Conference through this Statement.

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.

As part of his disarmament agenda and in response to requests from many States, the Secretary-General will launch a dedicated window in the Peacebuilding Fund to ensure sustained, cross-cutting, multi-year, development-oriented programming to support government action on illicit small arms and light weapons.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Most recently, CASA has been spearheading a United Nations-wide paradigm shift towards placing disarmament and arms regulation squarely within the scope of development policies, particularly under the overarching framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Secretary-General’s agenda outlines clearly how combatting the illicit trade in

¹ www.un-arm.org/UNARMTTEST/SmallArms/CASA.aspx
small arms and light weapons supports the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the goals related to peace, justice and strong institutions, to gender equality, and to safer cities. The United Nations supports Member States in their efforts to achieve and monitor 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 seizures, tracing, trafficking and destruction and by supporting States in utilising the data as evidence base for policy and operational decision-making against the illicit trade in small arms. Two custodian agencies\textsuperscript{2} of the indicator covering the target to significantly reduce illicit arms flows are leading the development of mechanisms to strengthen and better organise the UN support for Member States. The newly developed Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire, in the framework of meetings under the Firearms Protocol, will be primary tool for annual data collection and data processing regarding indicator 16.4.2, as well as submission to the UN Statistical Commission. The PoA/ITI national reports will enrich that process with complementary biennial data collection. A joint non-paper on ‘SDG indicator 16.4.2\textsuperscript{3} has been distributed to all delegations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Through CASA, the United Nations has developed a set of voluntary small arms control standards,\textsuperscript{4} that provide authoritative and comprehensive guidance on controlling the full life-cycle 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. The small arms control standards are currently being used and supported in more than half of Member States.

In order to support national authorities in weapons and ammunition management, CASA partners utilize the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, or IATG, the most comprehensive and authoritative set of guidelines for physical security and stockpile management of ammunition. Key CASA partners have been instrumental in operationalizing the IATG in support of national capacity development efforts. Notably, in cases like Cote d’Ivoire\textsuperscript{5} well-managed national storage sites also proved to be secure against attempts to disrupt the peace through illicit acquisition of State weapons and ammunition by non-state actors.

In 2018, as part of ongoing efforts by the United Nations system to increase the effectiveness of peace operations, CASA partners launched a handbook on “Weapons and ammunition management in a changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration context.” This practitioners’ guide supports the work of United Nations DDR staff 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 programming. Next week, a training course based on this practitioners’ guide will be piloted in Lomé, Togo.

\textsuperscript{2} United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).
\textsuperscript{3} www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/revcon3/
\textsuperscript{4} www.smallarmsstandards.org/
\textsuperscript{5} UNMAS: www.mineaction.org/programmes/clv
Increasingly, we address the gendered impacts of small arms. Specific sets of standards were developed to facilitate the integration of gender perspectives in small arms control. Particularly at the regional level, CASA partners contributed to promotion of the meaningful participation and representation of women, in policymaking, planning and implementation of the Programme of Action. In South East Europe, a gender coach programme on small arms control developed skills for gender responsiveness and fostered commitment to gender equality among senior policy makers. In the Lake Chad Basin in Africa, capacity-building supported women from civil society and government to advocate gender perspectives in small arms control. Similar activities were undertaken in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

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; supporting an efficient criminal justice response; fostering international cooperation and information exchange; advocating gender sensitivities; monitoring and reporting on harm; and raising public awareness.

The UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation or ‘UNSCAR’, provides financial assistance in support of implementation of the Programme of Action. It was established in response to States’ call for an improved funding mechanism for better matching of assistance needs with resources. UNSCAR has funded 51 projects in all regions of the world for a total of 7.5 million dollars over the last 5 years. The 2018 Call for Proposals remains open until the end of July. States in need of assistance are encouraged to consult with UNSCAR 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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6 ISACS 06.10, Women, men and gendered nature of small arms and light weapons
8 UNDP SEESAC: www.seesac.org/Gender-and-Small-Arms/
9 www.un.org/disarmament/unscar/
10 A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4