

Preparatory Committee of the UN Programme of Action

19 March 2018

Statement by Ireland

Mr President,

While Ireland aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the European Union, I would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

I would like to start by congratulating you on your appointment as President of the Third Review Conference of the Programme of Action. We commend the French Presidency for setting out a clear set of priorities for your Presidency period and we support the high-level goal of negotiating a political declaration at the forthcoming RevCon. You can be assured of Ireland's support during your tenure. The Presidency documents, including the potential list of elements for the implementation plan 2018-2024, provide a useful starting point to stimulate discussion and negotiation at the Third Review Conference in June.

While the UN Programme of Action is a central tool for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and for controlling the negative consequences of small arms and light weapons, it is our view that the aims of the PoA can be further strengthened through continued coordination and enhanced synergies with other legal instruments and processes. The International Tracing

Instrument (ITI) adopted in 2005 is an important example of how the PoA is strengthened through continued synergies with other instruments.

One area for attention in this regard is the need for an enhanced relationship between the UNPoA and Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). While the UNPoA works to encourage states to implement processes, procedures and systems for assessing arms transfers, the ATT includes specific standards on the way assessment procedures should operate effectively.

The ATT represents a major step in international efforts to prevent the proliferation and misuse of conventional arms, including SALW - and it is our view that the ATT and UNPoA are mutually reinforcing. We believe there is considerable room for the building of synergies in their implementation. Ireland would support further work in this area to with the aim of strengthening the UNPoA.

Mr President,

Ireland aligns itself with the position of the European Union in calling for the inclusion of the prevention, combatting and eradication of the illicit trade in ammunition to the scope of the UNPoA. Ireland has been vocal on this issue for some time and we are keen to see progress on this at the forthcoming Third RevCon.

The 2011 International Ammunition Technical Guidelines have provided an excellent framework for assisting states in improving the safety and storage of munitions and reducing the risk of diversion and accidents. The International Small Arms Control Standards provide an effective framework for addressing other relevant aspects including manufacture, transfers, brokering and destruction. We commend these and encourage all states to implement these or equivalent national standards and guidelines.

According to figures from Small Arms Survey, armed violence claims at least 740,000 lives per year, of which the vast majority – at least 490,000, or 66% – of these occur in non-conflict settings.

The reality is that many of these deaths could be prevented by tackling the illicit trade in ammunition, as well as the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Weapons themselves are merely the delivery systems - it is ammunition and weapons that kill and injure. In our view, the treatment of ammunition as somehow unrelated to weapons weakens global efforts to enhance peace and security.

The linkage between weapons and ammunition has long been recognised. The 1997 Report of the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms established that ammunition is “an integral part of the ... [SALW] used in conflicts” and stated that “[t]he availability of ammunition is an important

independent element, since weapons can be rendered useless without appropriate ammunition.”

We are of the view that the inclusion of ammunition in the transfer licensing and reporting system stipulated in UN Firearms Protocol and in the Arms Trade Treaty has strengthened these instruments.

While we recognise the challenges involved and understand that our opinion differs from some states on this issue, we believe that including ammunition in scope of the UNPoA is integral to enhancing its goals and objective. We believe there exists a strong foundation and practical experience from which to build momentum to support the inclusion of ammunition in the scope of the UNPoA, and we would welcome efforts by the Presidency to pursue this matter further ahead of the Third Review Conference in June.

Thank you, Mr President.