

Preparatory Committee of the UN Programme of Action

20 March 2018

Statement by Ireland

Mr President,

Ireland regards the UNPoA as one of the vital instruments in the global community's efforts towards a safer and more secure world, as envisaged in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

The Sustainable Development Goals cover a wide range of areas, and address the many causes of poverty, injustice and damage to our planet. Taking effective action to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as their ammunition, is a key factor in terms of enabling us to make concrete progress towards meeting our commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals agenda. The recent call by the United Nations Secretary General to draw a more explicit link between disarmament generally and the 2030 SDGs is a welcome intervention in this regard.

Large quantities of illicit arms and ammunition in circulation contribute to insecurity, cause harm to civilians and severely constrain humanitarian assistance activities. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, have a wide

range of humanitarian and socio-economic consequences and pose a serious threat to long-term sustainable development, while also fuelling crime and terrorism.

SDG 16 which seeks to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels....is to be achieved in part by significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere and significantly reducing illicit arms flows by 2030”. The reality is that the core goal of development cannot be realised without peace and stability and curbing the illicit trade SALW and ammunition is crucial to securing that peace and stability.

It is widely acknowledged that development, peace and security are mutually reinforcing mechanisms. The illicit weapons trade forms a persistent barrier to a more secure, stable world in which economic and social development can prosper.

The realisation of SDG 5 on gender equality is also crucial to furthering these ambitions. The illicit flow of arms overwhelmingly contributes to gender based violence, in particular violence against women and children.

We commend the Presidency on their recognition of the synergies between the Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, both in the elements papers and we are pleased to note the inclusion of questions on gender

in the National Report template. We hope for a meaningful discussions on gender throughout this year's review process.

The gendered aspect of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons must be acknowledged in order to meaningfully address its impact. In order to address the problem, we must also understand it more fully. To that end, we hope to work with other states to enhance information sharing and data collection on issues relating to gender and the illicit SALW trade.

When our Heads of State and Government adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, they made a clear link between Development and Gender Equality, with a strong recognition of the need to ensure women's empowerment and agency in the decision making and negotiating bodies which take the decisions which affect us all equally, men and women. Ireland considers it vital for women to be represented in discussions around violence and the weapons trade, both at home and in international fora. It is important to demonstrate that a gender perspective can lead to more inclusive and successful policy outcomes.

We welcome all efforts to recognise the devastating effects of the illicit arms trade on the lives of women and children, as well as on the development of economies and communities around the world.

Thank you, Mr President.