



Statement by Ambassador Brian Flynn, Deputy Permanent
Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

At the Third 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 and Its International Tracing Instrument

19 June 2018

Mr President,

At the outset, permit me to congratulate you on your election and to offer my delegation's support to you as President of the Third Review Conference. Ireland is committed to the full implementation of the Programme of Action and stands ready to provide you with any assistance you might require over the coming days.

I would like to associate my delegation with the Statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and add the following remarks in a national capacity.

Mr President,

Small arms and light weapons continue to be the main weapon used in the majority of conflicts around the world. The UN Programme of Action was drafted in 2001 in recognition of that fact, and notwithstanding the progress made since then, the illicit movement and use of small arms and light weapons remains a grave problem with a severe humanitarian impact. The appalling humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons should be at the forefront of our minds as we undertake our responsibility at this Review Conference to agree on ways to strengthen the implementation and impact of the Programme of Action.

Mr President, your early circulation of a draft outcome establishes a good basis for work at this Conference; our goal must now be to agree an ambitious set of

outcomes which can fulfil our shared commitment. We undertake this task always bearing in mind the terrible consequences of inaction.

As we review developments over the last seventeen years, we can point to certain areas of tangible progress. These include:

- the agreement of the International Tracing Instrument;
- the establishment, strengthening and enforcement of national laws, regulations and administrative procedures to prevent the illicit trade and illegal manufacture of small arms and light weapons, including the marking of small arms and light weapons;
- the development of national action plans, and the establishment of national points of contact;
- the submission of voluntary national reports, and the strengthening of regional cooperation; as well as progress made in implementing stockpile security, the collection and destruction of illicit small arms and light weapons.

However, Mr President, we should also acknowledge the shortcomings in implementation of certain parts of the Programme of Action. The sharing of information and expertise between States and within the UN system represents a key element in the Programme, both to enable States to meet minimum and best

standards and to tackle the illicit trade of arms. Efforts to broaden and deepen this information exchange must be maintained, while the full implementation of other instruments, including the UN Firearms Protocol, the International Instruments on Marking on Tracing and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) are critical to the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Mr President,

The diversion, illicit trade and unauthorised use of small arms and light weapons still constitutes a serious impediment for peace and security, growth, development, and security in the world. Ireland considers that the Programme of Action continues to provide a valid and effective strategy to cope with this problem and these meetings remain the global forum to share and develop further action on national, regional and international levels.

However, we must always remain conscious of the need to strengthen the UN Programme of Action, where possible. Ireland believes the inclusion of ammunition, a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals, and examining ways to enhanced synergies with other relevant legal instruments such as the ATT, would further enhance the UN Programme of Action. It also remains essential to fully integrate the gender perspective into all efforts of preventing and combating the risk of the misuse, diversion and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons so that the gendered aspects of armed violence are adequately addressed.

We must also ensure the full and active participation of all - men as well as women - in decision making processes.

Mr President,

Ireland remains committed to fulfilling its obligations to assist others in implementing the Programme of Action and to countering the problems caused by the illicit movement and use of small arms and light weapons where it can. Since 2014, we have provided €250,000 to support and further the work of United Nations Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulations (UNSCAR) and the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS). In addition, members of our police and defence forces have participated in missions to mitigate the effect of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to assisting with the demobilisation, disarming and rehabilitation of former combatants in Europe and Africa.

Mr President,

As a Member State of the European Union Ireland contributes to and implements the EU Strategy on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We welcome the development of initiatives in other regional fora to tackle the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and offer our support to such mechanisms. While recognising that such initiatives are designed for particular regions,

identifying ways to share the experience of these various mechanisms would also help to share best practice and expertise.

In closing, Mr President, allow me to restate my delegation's congratulations to you and our support for your task of bringing this Review Conference to a successful conclusion.

Thank You.