Statement
by
Dr. Detlev Wolter
Head of Division Conventional Arms Control and CSBM, Federal Foreign Office
at the  
Second Review Conference  
on the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action  
to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade  
in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects  
Check against delivery
Statement by Germany

Mrs. Chair,
we fully associate ourselves with the statement made by the EU.

As previous speakers before I would like to commend your and your facilitators’ excellent work as well as the way you have steered the process towards this Review Conference. Indeed, important progress has been accomplished in the preparation process.

The structure of the outcome documents you have proposed follows a compelling logic. Germany very much supports to have a final declaration, a document regarding the implementation plan of the Programme of Action and another one for the International Tracing Instrument, and finally a document pointing the way forward with regards to the schedule of meetings in the follow-up mechanism.

As the Programme of Action comes of age, we have gathered with the mandate to discuss ways to improve the implementation of the Programme of Action. This implies the necessity to identify our priorities and weaknesses in the light of experience made so far in the implementation process. It is also our task to take the Programme of Action further and to identify the needs and possibilities for future developments in view of new challenges, new political developments and opportunities and last not least technical progress related to small arms and light weapons.

The imperative for a strong signal coming from this Review Conference is even more compelling in the light of the unfinished attempt to conclude a global Arms Trade Treaty. One of the fundamental rationales for the ATT in the field of transfers is the fight against misuse and diversion of small arms and light weapons, the very essence of the Programme of Action. Although we will continue our efforts to agree on an ATT – and Germany will do what it takes to finally reach a strong and robust treaty – we are now in a situation where we must use the instruments at hands as forcefully and consequently as possible.

Therefore, we have the duty to adopt an implementation plan reflecting these tasks. Recent events have proven more than ever the urgency to combat illicit small arms and light weapons. Earlier this year, we have witnessed in the Sahel how uncontrolled arms proliferation can spread instability, violence and crime. In Syria a similar danger looms. Particularly dangerous weapons like MANPADS pose a risk for civil aviation worldwide and should therefore be treated with special attention.

In the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument new technologies offer new opportunities. States can take advantage of improved forensic possibilities and enhanced instruments to trace weapons and ammunitions like the INTERPOL Firearms Tracing System or the INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network. We should use this conference to encourage states to do so.

For good reasons, regional organisations take an important place in the PoA. Regional organisations usually have the necessary historic and cultural knowledge and networks to react adequately to threats of arms proliferation. Moreover, the
spread of illicit small arms often happens in a regional context. Germany is ready to support regional organisations willing to take an active role in the control of illicit small arms.

We would also like to emphasize the role of the United Nations in global coordination efforts in the framework of the Programme of Action. Germany is happy to chair the Group of Interested States on Practical Disarmament Measures together with UNODA and will be hosting two side events this week. We encourage states to take advantage of the coordinating mechanism of "Matching Needs and Resources".

Mrs. Chair,
please allow me to mention two more issues dear to my delegation. There is broad scope to enhance the role of women in the security sector; including in the field of small arms control. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) affirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building. It urges States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions. Women should have their share in mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts. In particular, women deserve an increased role in the field of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. While implementing the PoA, states should take into consideration the link between the PoA and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). We should reflect this adequately in the final documents of this conference.

In the last few years, states have turned their attention to the particularly sensitive subject of children in armed conflict. Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) calls upon states to ban all transfers of weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, to states where children are subject to abuse in armed conflicts. We should reflect this development as well while considering PoA implementation.

Mrs. Chair,
We believe it is important to use this conference to set the agenda for the follow-up mechanism of the PoA. Germany clearly supports a decision on the next six-year cycle. We should continue the practice of Biennial Meetings of state. The nature of these meetings may vary according to the context and be of more political or more technical nature. Room for additional meetings allowing for the discussion of urgent current issues should be foreseen. To give an example: I could imagine the necessity to discuss the way forward of the PoA in view of an Arms Trade Treaty that may see the light in the near future.

Mrs. Chair,
it is important we take advantage of the opportunities given to us by the holding of this conference. We shall not stay behind the commitments already made with the adoption of the PoA, neither shall we limit ourselves to merely repeating what is contained in the text. The aim of this conference must be to send a strong signal that the combat of illicit small arms and light weapons is urgent and important for the sake of the stability of states and the security and well being of their people. It has to be directed towards the challenges of the future.

Thank you Mrs. Chair