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Statement by Austria

delivered by

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to the United Nations

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Mr. Chair,

At the outset let me congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of this important meeting and let me assure you of Austria’s full support for your endeavour to lead this conference to a successful outcome. Let me also thank you and your team for the tremendous efforts you have invested in the preparation of this conference as well as of the draft outcome document.

Austria fully aligns herself with the statement of the European Union delivered earlier, as well as with the elements contained in the Working Paper submitted by the EU to this meeting.

The UNPoA is the centrepiece of an architecture of international instruments relating to small arms and light weapons control. This implies that synergies with the other instruments are important and should be acknowledged, even if not all UNPoA participating countries are States Parties to each and every one of those other documents. Chiefly but by no means exclusively I am referring here to the Arms Trade Treaty, the entry into force of which in late 2014 clearly has been the most significant event in our policy domain since the last biennial meeting.

The implementation of the UNPoA will surely profit from a more systematic consideration of a number of important issues, such as gender, the role of regional organisations, physical security and stockpile management and ammunition including the crucial aspect of a comprehensive life-cycle management, as well as international cooperation and assistance. One of these issues, namely new SALW production technologies and how they impact SALW control, were the subject of a working paper submitted by Austria together with Belgium and Germany to last year’s UNPoA expert meeting, meant to stimulate further discussion.

Mr. Chair,

Austria is fully committed to continue faithful implementation of the UNPoA at the national level. Legislation and administrative practice is in place to ensure a high level of effective control over small arms and light weapons originating in our country, entering it, circulating within it, or transiting through it.
The Austrian capital is proud to host a number of important organisations engaged in small arms and light weapons control, such as the UNODC, the OSCE, and the Wassenaar Arrangement. Last but not least, I would like to inform about ongoing assistance activities: the Austrian Armed Forces continue their active engagement in several long-term assistance projects on the Western Balkans (BIH), in Eastern Europe (MOLDOVA) and in Africa (KENYA and SENEGAL). Together with partners from the Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group MSAG the main focus is on supporting capacity building and promoting knowledge transfer with regard to the standardized ISACS- and IATG-based management of national stockpiles, as well as advising and supporting the reduction of surpluses of SALW and corresponding ammunition. Furthermore, Austria is actively involved in the development of new international training activities.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.