

**Statement in the name of Belgium, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Luxembourg for
the Preparatory Committee for the 4th 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**

New York, 12-16 February 2024

Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Belgium, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The BENELUX countries align themselves with the intervention of the European Union and would like to make the following statement in their national capacities.

The ITI was designed to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. Although its implementation can always be improved, it has proven remarkably effective and valuable for this purpose.

The BENELUX countries would like to make sure this instrument remains fit-for-purpose in the light of new developments in SALW manufacturing, technology and design, especially modular and polymer frame firearms as well as 3D-printing. This is why we believe that we should collectively consider, through the establishment of an Open Ended Technical Expert Group, the impact of those technologies on the ITI and the need to update or supplement the ITI.

Belgium made a proposal for a mandate of this group at the BMS8 in order to stimulate reflection on what this mandate could look like. The BENELUX would favor a mandate focused on the three issues mentioned in the Belgian working paper with a strong link to the application of specific articles of the PoA and the ITI (namely art 7, 8 and 10 of the ITI regarding the marking obligations and Part II, 2 of the PoA on illicit manufacture). In our view, this group should be tasked with the development of recommendations regarding a possible update of the ITI, whether it is through an annex, guidelines or any other document.

Regarding participation, the primary responsibility in the OETEG will be on the level of states. But given their expertise of the latest developments regarding technological developments, we value the input that research groups, the industry and NGOs can provide. The rules of participation of the group should therefore ensure that the group can receive briefings from various sources in order to draft informed recommendations.

Other "new technologies" have been mentioned in several papers or interventions in relation to this group, such as the use of keychain technologies, biometrics, AI technologies or computer vision. While these technologies can have a positive impact on the control of the life cycle of SALW, they are not yet widespread and operationally tested and would therefore better be addressed in a standing separate meeting that would meet in the margins of the Biannual Meetings of States. The BENELUX countries would support the inclusion in the Outcome Document of an acknowledgment of the opportunities that new technologies like AI and computer vision can offer to tackle diversion of SALW through improved tracing operations and the evidence these technologies can provide for criminal investigations on these diversions.

I would like to reaffirm again, Madam Chair, that you have the full support of the BENELUX delegations towards an ambitious outcome for the RevCon 4.

I thank you.