Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

STATEMENT
by the Chairmanship of the Forum for Security Cooperation on behalf of the OSCE at
Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and
Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
16-20 June 2014, New York

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

While addressing the problem of illicit trade in SALW, the United Nations Programme of Action (PoA), contains an appeal to regional and intergovernmental organisations to contribute to preventing, combating and eradicating this phenomenon in all its aspects. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, continues to play an important role in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Since the adoption of the UN Programme of Action on SALW, the Organization has promoted its implementation taking into account the special needs of the OSCE region that includes 57 participating States in the area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Security Council Resolution 2117 reinforces the importance of capacity-building to address issues arising from the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small and light weapons at a regional level. In this respect from 2000 onwards, the OSCE has developed a comprehensive set of measures covering each stage of life of SALW seeking to complement and reinforce commitments and action undertaken globally.

Mr. Chairman,
Since the Review Conference on the Programme of Action on SALW in 2012, the OSCE has focussed its efforts on the harmonization with other relevant international norms and implementation. Let me elaborate on these two in more detail.

A number of commitments on SALW control have been elaborated at the international and regionals levels and applicable to OSCE participating States. While their main focus, scope and legal status may differ, a clear analysis of those differences could tremendously help at the national level in the implementation of those commitments. Bearing this thought, the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre conducted an analysis contrasting OSCE SALW commitments versus other applicable international/regional commitments. A mapping study produced with a help of consultant also presents areas where OSCE commitments are ahead of those agreed in other instruments, such as export and brokering controls, and where further work is required, such as tracing illicit SALW.

Furthermore, just last week the OSCE welcomed the development of voluntary guidelines for compiling national reports on SALW exports from/imports to other participating States during the previous calendar year. Being focused on the implementation of commitments, these guidelines will enhance the quality of national reports and increase their value.
One of the practical initiatives to facilitate tracing illicit SALW was initiated last year by the OSCE jointly with UNODA, UNODC and INTERPOL. More specifically, an Inaugural Conference on Tracing Illicit SALW in the OSCE area was organized with the participation of 150 representatives from law enforcement agencies of OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation. While allowing sharing best national and international practices, the event also examined challenges with regard to tracing and recommended follow-up at the regional level. One of the regional follow-up events took place already in May of this year for countries of Central Asia.

While providing the political impetus at the headquarters level, it is important to maintain and enhance the awareness of international commitments among practitioners on the ground to further improve national procedures related to SALW controls. In this regard, the OSCE has continued the tradition of targeted and region-tailored capacity building events focussing on law enforcement authorities in order to improve their capabilities for enforcement of brokering controls, cross-border and inter-agency co-operation on export of SALW and dual-use goods by means of properly identifying military and dual-use goods and tracing illicit SALW. Three such events were organized since early 2013 resulting in the training of over 100 national officials from OSCE participating States.

Starting from 2003, the OSCE has received over 47 requests for assistance on SALW and/or conventional ammunition from 17 participating States including SALW collection, small arms and conventional ammunition stockpile management and security as well as destruction of their surpluses, meeting the high standards that the OSCE has set. Significant funding has been voluntarily provided to finance such programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

Before concluding I would like to raise some points on major challenges and priorities that should be addressed by the international community from the OSCE perspective to enhance our joint efforts to curb the proliferation of illicit SALW.

While serious success has been achieved in setting norms, measures and principles for preventing spread of illicit SALW and their diversion to illegal markets and conflict areas, their consistent implementation still presents a challenge. We, therefore, call for the enhanced and focussed action to ensure the full implementation of agreed commitments.

Further, building inter-institutional partnerships has proven to bring positive results by allowing to effectively using available resources, minimizing risk of duplication and increasing the value of initiatives. The OSCE has already established practical partnerships with a number of organizations on SALW issues, including UNODA, UNDP and UNODC. However, as the number of actors active in the area increases, the need for strong co-ordination does too. In this regard, we strongly encourage further enhancing such co-operation at the international level and will seek pragmatic partnerships with relevant regional actors.

Mr. Chairman,

A lot has been done since the adoption of the PoA in the OSCE area in order to establish and advance effective SALW control mechanisms. Despite the success that we have achieved, further efforts are necessary to ensure that no weapons end up in the wrong hands. The OSCE will continue working to promote the world safe of illicit SALW.