STATEMENT BY

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DURING THE

THE FIFTH BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES TO
CONSIDER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT,
COMBAT AND ERADICATE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL
ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

“CONSIDERATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING INSTRUMENT TO
ENABLE STATES TO IDENTIFY AND TRACE IN A
TIMELY AND RELIABLE MANNER ILLICIT SMALL
ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS”

17 JUNE 2014, UNITED NATIONS

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Mr. Chairman,

1. Let me first congratulate you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this important Fifth Biennial Meeting of States whose objective is to Consider the National, Regional and Global implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in small arms and light weapons. I am confident that you will steer this BMS to a successful outcome, and I pledge the full support and cooperation of my delegation in this endeavour.

2. We consider this Meeting very critical in our quest to achieve our common goal of eradicating illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

3. Botswana remains deeply concerned over the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Their accumulation and uncontrolled spread in all regions of the World has devastating effects on the lives of the civilian population. Tragically, these Arms continue to be weapons of choice in most situations, including conflict and post conflict situations.

4. Botswana remains committed to the fight against trafficking in SALW and the 2001 PoA, and has taken steps and initiatives in that direction. It is against this backdrop that Botswana has established an Inter-Agency body responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the PoA and Regional Protocols aimed at addressing the proliferation of SALW.

Mr. Chairman,

5. My delegation is also delighted to share with the International Community that we are in the process of reviewing our Arms legislation, regulations and administrative procedures. A draft Bill is also being developed which will, inter alia, provide measures to regulate import, export, transit and transfer of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The draft Bill also seeks to repeal the 1981 Arms and Ammunition Act and align it with International and Regional Instruments aimed at controlling illicit proliferation of SALW.

6. In as far as marking, tracing and record keeping are concerned, my delegation is of the view that these are indispensable in the fight against the illicit trade in SALW. To that effect, Botswana has commenced marking of firearms within her jurisdiction. To date, all Arms in State possession have been marked with the exception of those held by the Military. The exercise to mark Arms in civilian possession will commence once the review of the National Legislation is finalised.

7. In order to be successful, efforts to combat the illicit proliferation of SALW require cooperation at all levels. It is against this backdrop that at the regional level, Botswana through Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (SARPCCCO), continues to conduct cross border and simultaneous operations with neighbouring States in order to prevent and combat illicit trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons.
Mr. Chairman,

8. The destruction of surplus, seized, forfeited and obsolete weapons and ammunition remains critical in reducing stock of weapons available for illicit circulation, thereby reducing the burden placed on Government with regard to management of large stocks.

9. It is in that regard that preparations are underway for Botswana to join the rest of the world to observe International Gun Destruction Day. Observance of this day is intended to raise awareness among the civilian population about the dangers of these weapons. A total of six hundred and ninety four (694) firearms are ear-marked for destruction. However, it is important to note that safe destruction always poses a challenge in terms of appropriate facilities and capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Botswana strongly supports the use of databases and online technologies that contribute to improved effectiveness and efficiency in tracing illicit SALW. With regards the International Tracing Instrument, Botswana has installed Interpol Illicit Arms Records and tracing Management System (iARMS) and the Interpol Ballistic Information Network (IBIN) tools. The tools support law enforcement Agencies to prevent, investigate and address firearms related crimes by facilitating information exchange and investigative cooperation between law enforcement Agencies.

11. In conclusion, Mr. Chair, my delegation wishes to reiterate Botswana’s support for all efforts directed at preventing, combating and eradicating the proliferation of illicit SALW in order to make the world a safer place for both present and future generations.

I thank you for your attention.