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**Third United Nations 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, 18–29 June 2018

**Working paper submitted by the Netherlands**

**Proposal for the day-to-day implementation of the  
Programme of Action at the global level in preparation of the  
Third Review Conference**

**Challenges in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the  
International Tracing Instrument**

1. The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects contains concrete suggestions for improved national legislation and controls and international assistance and cooperation.
2. Although much has been achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Netherlands shares the observation of the Secretary-General and many Member States that much remains to be done. Some of the remaining challenges, as mentioned in the draft outcome document, include the need for enhanced international cooperation and assistance, improvement of physical security and stockpile management. The draft outcome document identifies a number of measures at the national, regional and global level that will contribute to the more effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

**Monitoring and enhancing implementation**

3. The Netherlands would like to draw attention to one specific element that can contribute to better achieving our common goals: follow-up mechanisms. Up to now, the review cycle of the Programme of Action has consisted of Biennial Meetings of States, and Review Conferences once every six years. Two one-week Open-ended Meetings of Governmental Experts have been held as well.



4. In order to achieve greater effectiveness and coherence of implementation at every level, we need to increase Member States' ownership and engagement on a day-to-day basis, rather than meeting once every two years on this issue in a Biennial Meeting of States or Review Conference format.

5. Challenges that require more day-to-day attention include diversion, transparency and information-sharing, border controls, addressing the impact of new technologies and fostering more structural cooperation and assistance on this multilateral level.

6. For example, cooperation and assistance would greatly benefit if a number of interested Member States, together with the United Nations Secretariat, were to volunteer to work on the implementation of the commitments made in the Programme of Action on a more regular basis. Although the Programme of Action requires national reporting, something many Member States have complied with, it has no concrete follow-up mechanism. We need to see more concrete action, for example, by matching available assistance to the needs identified through these reports.

#### **Proposal for the day-to-day global implementation of the Programme of Action**

7. The Third Review Conference should decide to further institutionalize the day-to-day global implementation of the Programme of Action. A bureau, consisting of a diverse group of 10 Member States on a voluntary basis, could undertake to meet on a more regular basis and be chaired by the President-designate of the next Conference. During those meetings, they could review national reports with the aim of identifying further implementation needs. They could review best practices so that these become available to Member States or even assist Member States that come forward with the aim of carrying out a peer review. All implementation activities such as those set out above would be carried out in a voluntary manner. The bureau would then report on the progress made at the next Biennial Meeting of States.

8. In this manner, we would provide Member States that are looking to further implement the Programme of Action with a platform for identifying the right assistance and tools, without forcing heavy meeting schedules upon those countries that have indicated that they are not in a position to support such measures.

#### **Conclusion**

9. The universality of the Programme of Action makes it the most important instrument we have to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. By strengthening our intersessional process, we will increase ownership and ensure that commitments under the Programme of Action are achieved.