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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 document submitted by Paraguay on behalf of the
member and associate States of the Southern Common Market**

**Elements of the position of the member and associate States of the
Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) on the 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.**

1. The countries that make up the Working Group on Firearms and Ammunition of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and its associated States, working together, recognize the enormous value of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects and of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons as means of addressing the scourge of illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking in a comprehensive and multidimensional manner, as well as the progress that has been achieved using these tools.
2. We would first of all like to express our concern about the consequences of the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, as well as of ammunition, parts and components. Those consequences are varied in nature, touching on security, economic and social issues. The excessive accumulation of weapons causes destabilization and restricts the prospect of sustainable development in our countries.
3. We also note that the trafficking of small arms and light weapons has implications for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the goals related to peace, justice and the rule of law, poverty reduction, economic growth, health, gender equality, and safe cities and communities.



4. In that regard, we agree with the statements made by the Security Council in its resolution [2220 \(2015\)](#) with respect to the human toll of illicit transfers. That issue is one of paramount importance for our societies, and entails the need to enhance and coordinate efforts to address it.
5. When reflecting on the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national level, we must first emphasize that the periodic submission of national reports is an essential and useful tool that informs us about the degree of progress achieved in the implementation of the provisions of the Programme of Action. The reports not only allow for the exchange of information, they also serve as a basis for cooperation and coordination among States for improved implementation and the recognition of needs.
6. We believe that the value of these reports should be enhanced for those purposes, and that we should explore the possibility of establishing a mechanism that allows for the intersection of the available resources and cooperation and assistance requirements.
7. Regional and subregional organizations play an important role in the implementation of the Programme of Action in terms of cooperation and coordination of assistance, as well as in terms of the exchange of good practices and experience at the national level.
8. The Working Group on Firearms and Ammunition of MERCOSUR and its associated States can serve as an example of how the provisions of the Programme of Action can be addressed at the subregional level. It has been a pillar in sharing national experience, working on cooperation and policy coordination and, by extension, in responding effectively to illicit trafficking.
9. The work of the Regional Centres of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs should also be highlighted and made use of when channelling needs in terms of capacity-building, training of experts and exchange of experience and information.
10. Regarding the role of women, we want to reaffirm the main principles of General Assembly resolution [71/56](#), on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, and of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), as well as the commitment to their implementation. Increased mainstreaming of a gender approach that promotes equality between men and women in the implementation of the Programme of Action is still a pending matter.
11. We believe that the Third Review Conference provides the opportunity to adequately address the issue of ammunition, which is inextricably linked to the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. That link is recognized by all major international and regional instruments. In many situations, particularly in conflict zones where there are already a large number of weapons in circulation, control of the flow of ammunition is just as important and urgent, as the fight against arms trafficking per se, or even more so. The Third Conference should clearly state that the provisions of the Programme of Action — particularly those pertaining to the manufacture, possession, storage and trade of small arms and light weapons — also apply to the respective ammunition. Another measure that invites reflection is the discussion of ammunition regulation within the framework of meetings of governmental experts that may be convened in follow-up to the Review Conference.
12. Furthermore, we are of the view that the Programme of Action review process should contribute to reflection on the prohibition of unauthorized transfers for non-State actors, particularly in situations of conflict. Given that small arms and light weapons have a very long lifespan, such unauthorized transfers have unforeseeable and long-term negative consequences, causing instability and feeding the illicit market.

13. Developments in the area of manufacturing, technology and design in the effective marking, registration and tracking of small arms and light weapons have led to the need to make significant changes in legislation on and monitoring of such materials in all our countries, with particular reference to marking and tracing.

14. The 2014 report of the Secretary-General on recent developments in technology and design and their implications for on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument ([A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/1](#)) was clear in its conclusions. The challenges had steadily increased owing to these advances and the availability of technology to confront the new trends has become a central concern. We must make it possible for all countries to enjoy the benefits from these new technologies and have equal access to them, and thus to be able to be effective when a response to these complex challenges is needed.

15. The implications and impact of those technological developments in the implementation of the Programme of Action, and in particular the International Tracing Instrument, have also increased. There is a technology gap that in many cases makes proper and effective implementation of their provisions more difficult. Tools such as technical assistance and cooperation thus can offer solutions, taking into account the specific needs of States and with the participation of the national authorities. That alone can guarantee efficiency and coordination when transferring technology or sharing experiences in order to improve marking, registration and tracing.

16. In addition, in our view the International Tracing Instrument remains valid and current, and States must guarantee its full implementation. Along those lines, monitoring of the Programme of Action should not only consider ways to update it in the light of recent technological developments, but also ways to strengthen it, such as its transformation into a legally binding instrument and the inclusion of provisions covering ammunition.

17. However, the discussion on updating the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, in the light of the emergence of new technologies, should be based on the understanding that it would be unacceptable to establish restrictions on the legitimate transfer of such technology and associated materials.

18. As was discussed at the second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on 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, the impact of the new technological developments in small arms and light weapons affects States in different ways, and we believe that the analysis and approach to this tendency and the challenges that it represents must be pursued as part of this Third Review Conference.

19. We believe that it is necessary to continue making progress and advancing technical cooperation and assistance between States. No country can face these issues alone, given their extreme complexity. Sharing experiences and helping to build capacity horizontally is one of the essential tools for implementation of the Programme of Action.

20. Questions relating to cooperation and assistance are a central item on the agenda for this meeting. The countries of MERCOSUR and associated States have been working on this issue for many years, and we believe that there is still far to go.

21. The exchange of information on illicit manufacture and trafficking in firearms and ammunition has proven to be a useful tool in making progress on these matters. It is also useful to have a registry of buyers and sellers of weapons and ammunition in each country. On the level of MERCOSUR and associated States, we have been working on similar initiatives during recent years. The adoption on 20 July 2017 of a

memorandum of understanding for the exchange of information on illicit manufacture and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials strengthens the Programme of Action and also the International Tracing Instrument.

22. Improving monitoring and inspection of transfers, harmonizing requirements when authorizing and monitoring transfers and exchange of information are essential measures towards the objective of preventing diversion and strengthening cooperation and monitoring at the borders. In MERCOSUR and associated States, we think that efforts should be directed to that area and intensified.

23. Lastly, we must study the methods whereby such cooperation can be made feasible, in particular to facilitate technology transfer and training, in order to build national capacity in the areas of monitoring agencies, the secure management and operation of arsenals of weapons and ammunition, and their transport.

24. We believe that another relevant topic that we should consider is the complementarity among various international instruments on illicit trafficking in firearms and ammunition.

25. The Programme of Action, together with the International Tracing Instrument, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Arms Trade Treaty, for those States which are parties, and the other regional and subregional instruments and mechanisms, comprise a legal monitoring framework with many complementarities and points in common that should be examined in depth, with the objective of contributing to improved national implementation.

26. The designation of the respective points of contact and exchange of information are essential in order to intensify this complementarity.

27. In conclusion, looking toward the future of the implementation of the Programme of Action, we see a need to intensify the discussions around the impact of new technologies and the importance of effective and coordinated cooperation and technical assistance, based on the needs of the States requesting it, to enable compliance with the provisions of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.
