WORKING PAPER BY AUSTRIA

With reference to the letter by the Chair-Designate to Participating States from March 5, 2014, and the “zero draft” for the outcome document of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS 5) of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in All Its Aspects (PoA) attached to it, Austria would like to submit the following considerations and suggestions.

1) General remarks

While the PoA has, since its adoption, been making a very important contribution to reducing the dangers and risks emanating from the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW, it appears that worldwide suffering from this plague continues to stand at an unacceptable level. Austria believes that the humanitarian consequences of SALW proliferation deserve more attention, also in the context of the PoA.

Building on the experience and results of previous meetings, most recently the 2012 PoA Second Review Conference, States should, rather than reiterate previously reached consensus, strive to use the BMS 5 as much as possible to exchange views on latest developments, to agree on key areas of future work, and to identify concrete possible steps for further improvement.

BMS 5 should therefore focus on possibilities to enhance implementation of the PoA at the national, regional, and global level. Discussions on this issue at the BMS 5 could, inter alia, explore further:

- synergies with other international instruments with direct relevance to the cause of the PoA;
- the present, and possible future, role of other fora of international cooperation for the implementation of the PoA;
- the recent performance and future opportunities of regional organisations in the implementation of the PoA;
- the involvement of civil society, as well as the arms industry;
- the different concerns and needs of women, men, children, youth, the elderly, and persons with disabilities affected by violence committed with SALW, including possibilities for victim assistance, as appropriate.

2) Stockpile management and physical security measures: see section 4.

3) International Tracing Instrument (ITI)

As regards the ITI, Austria suggests that particular attention should be paid to new possibilities in design and manufacturing of SALW, taking into consideration the forthcoming report by the Secretary General, as requested in the outcome document of the Second Review Conference. These present both the risk of even easier accessibility of SALW, and the opportunity to enhance their marking and tracing. Austria proposes to consider the following recommendation for possible inclusion in the final document of BMS 5:

"Acknowledging the opportunities for the enhancement of marking and tracing of SALW associated with new developments in design and manufacturing, and welcoming the recent report of the Secretary General,

States envisaged to task the 2015 meeting of governmental experts to further elaborate discussion on this issue."
4) International Cooperation and Assistance: Capacity building, including training

Paragraph III.8 of the Programme of Action stipulates that regional and international programmes for specialist training on small arms stockpile management and security should be developed. Upon request, States and appropriate international or regional organisations in a position to do so should support these programmes. Bearing in mind the provisional agenda of BMS 5 with its focus on stockpile management, including physical security measures of small arms and light weapons (6.a) as well as on capacity building, including training (8.a), Austria would like to bring to the attention of partners its recent practical experience in this area.

The Austrian Ministry of Defence is currently engaged in four multilateral long-term assistance projects: on the Western Balkans (in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the framework of the EUFOR ALTHEA mission and in Croatia in cooperation with the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre RACVIAC), in Eastern Europe (in Moldova in the framework of the OSCE Mission) and Eastern Africa (in Kenya in cooperation with the International Peace Support Training Centre IPSTC). Together with partners from the Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group MSAG the main focus is on supporting capacity building and promoting knowledge transfer with regard to the management of national stockpiles based on the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS), as well as the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG), as well as advising and supporting the reduction of surpluses of SALW and corresponding ammunition. Furthermore, Austria is actively involved in the development of new international training activities.

Taking into account the practical experience gained in pursuance of these activities, Austria proposes to consider the following recommendations directly relevant to the implementation of the aforementioned provision, for possible inclusion in the final document of BMS 5:

- Recognizing that effective stockpile management and responsible surplus disposal of SALW, including corresponding ammunition, are essential to the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action,

- States welcomed the provision of relevant cooperation and assistance, by States in a position to do so, both individually and jointly in a multinational framework, e.g. coordinated within the Multinational Small Arms and Ammunition Group MSAG, to States requesting such support.

- With a view to further facilitating the provision of such cooperation and assistance, and to render them even more effective,

- States encouraged the full observation and implementation of the International Small Arms Control Standards, as well as the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, in the activities involved.

- Acknowledging the important contribution international assistance and cooperation in stockpile management is making, where it is a component of United Nations peacekeeping operations, to these operations,

- States encouraged the exploration of ways to improve the legal basis, including the status of experts and their immunities, for the provision of expertise, particularly also in application to activities conducted outside of United Nations peace keeping operations.