

BMS-4
14 – 18 June 2010
New York

Item “International Cooperation and Assistance”
Statement by Austria

Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time that I’ve taken the floor in this meeting, let me congratulate you on your election, as well as the members of the Bureau and the facilitators, and let me express my delegation’s gratitude for the excellent preparation of this meeting. Let me also assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Austrian delegation.

Austria fully associates herself with the statement delivered by the European Union on this issue, and I would also wish to thank the facilitator, Ms Sarah de Zoeten, for her hard work in preparing such a comprehensive and thoughtful concept paper to stimulate our discussions on international cooperation and assistance this week.

It is obvious that the challenges posed by Small Arms and Light Weapons require a firm, internationally co-ordinated response, and require co-operation between states, international organizations and civil society. The UN Programme of Action on Small Arms (UNPoA) is a good instrument to work towards the successful achievement of this goal. So let us use this week’s meeting to share best practices and develop new ideas to further

strengthen the UNPoA and to join efforts for a new way forward towards making real progress on the ground.

From the Austrian perspective international cooperation, assistance and capacity-building are essential key factors for the success of the UNPoA. Cooperation and assistance programmes exist in many fields of international relations, providing examples of how we can best manage this work. Put simply, we need to equip ourselves with a flexible framework and processes, first to identify needs, and second, to identify appropriate and available expertise to address those needs.

Austria welcomes a number of useful suggestions made in the facilitator's concept paper, including perhaps a more formalised role for UNODA in presenting needs requests to regular informal meetings of interested States, international organisations and civil society, or even in directly identifying potential donors. We also look forward to the model being developed by UNODA for use by States in outlining their assistance needs in the context of the POA ISS.

Austria also supports the suggestion that the BMS could highlight the need to build linkages across existing projects which achieve multiple objectives.

As a Member State of the European Union, Austria is directly and closely involved in the EU's many activities in the field of small arms and light weapons, some of these activities were enumerated a short time ago. Austria also supports several SALW projects and programmes on a bilateral basis.

At BMS 3, it was concluded that Africa is particularly affected by illicit SALW. Against that background, Austria chose Africa as a focus of Austrian co-operation.

Since the BMS3, Austria has provided more than 400,000 Euro in addition to our traditional development assistance, for projects in Africa in the field of SALW. Austria has also provided support to various regional workshops and seminars, and has again teamed up with UNDP to fund participation of representatives of African states at this BMS4 meeting.

Austria funded three UNODA projects in Africa: one project focused on technical support to the ECOWAS Small Arms Unit, another aimed at the elaboration of a legal instrument for the control of SALW in the Central African region. We also made a financial contribution to a project on regulating Small Arms Brokering in Africa.

Austria wholeheartedly congratulates the Central African states on having drawn up a "Central African Convention on the control of SALW, their ammunitions, and parts and components that can be used for their manufacture, repair or assembly". This project by UNREC, funded by Austria, came to a successful conclusion in spring 2010 with consensual adoption of the draft text.

Austria continues to build up special expertise in the fields of physical security and stockpile management. In addition, Austria supports two multinational SALW Training courses held at the NATO School in

Oberammergau by sending instructors and participants from the Austrian Ministry of Defence and Sports, including a practical exercise conducted at an Austrian ammunition depot.

Austria is also actively involved in multinational training courses on physical security and stockpile management in Africa, Central Asia and on the Balkans. Together with project partners, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports was actively involved in such projects in 2008 in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. In 2009, SALW projects were successfully carried out in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Tajikistan. The project in Ethiopia on stockpile security continues in 2010, further projects in Africa and on the Balkans are in the planning phase at present.

In recent years, Austria has also supported the destruction of SALW through various NATO Trust Fund projects, such as in Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Albania.

Mr. Chairman,

The complexity of the issue of SALW has to be addressed jointly by states, regional and international organisations as well as civil society. In this spirit Austria for her part continues to be committed to the full implementation of the UNPoA and to contribute to effective international cooperation in this field.

Thank you.