

Keypoints made by Sierra Leone on the Thematic Debate on International Cooperation and Assistance

Mr. Chairman, thank you for giving me the floor and let me at the outset outline what our delegation would want to see in furtherance of International Cooperation and Assistance within the UNPoA framework.

Firstly, Sierra Leone is a country from conflict, which requires International concerted effort to consolidate the peace that has been achieved. The country still remains vulnerable to organized criminal activity including but not limited to small arms and drug trafficking. In July 2008 703kg of cocaine was landed in our country. The perpetrators were prosecuted and the drugs destroyed. This is indicative of the fact that we ought to be supported by the International Community to deal with these illegal activities, which are inexorably linked with illegal possession of small arms.

Secondly, for a post conflict country that was awash with small arms. it is prudent for our bilateral and multilateral partners to provide technical assistance and national expertise for marking and tracing licit weapons of state security actors. In managing such stockpiles there is need for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of existing armories in the country.

The ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme (ECOSAP) approach of working through country clusters for the implementation of the ECOWAS Convention and UNPoA could be considered as blueprint of best practice to enhance international cooperation and collaboration between states as we strive to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Though bilateral partnerships between states are commendable in implementation of the UNPoA, the intervention of the Regional Economic Committees (REC's) to augment implementation appears to be more targeted, easy to monitor and evaluate and subsequently report.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, cross border cooperation may appear to be the most realistic and workable solution in dealing with SALW proliferation across borders. However, it does not provide all the solutions if it is not merged with International assistance in border management. We look forward to establishing partnerships and synergies in our collective resolve to tackle the menace of Small arms and light weapons proliferation.

I thank you.