

International Co-operation, Assistance and National Capacity-Building

Allow me first of all, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair of this meeting, and to thank you for your great efforts to prepare this third Biennial Meeting of States in a manner that will allow us to discuss the chosen set of topics more thoroughly. I am confident that this new approach will allow for a successful outcome of this BMS.

Furthermore, I wish to thank our facilitator Colombia, for preparing a discussion paper to facilitate today's thematic discussion.

Within the UN much work has been done to tackle the issue of small arms and light weapons, but the problems arising from small arms proliferation are still plentiful. First and foremost, we need to continue striving for full implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. And international co-operation and assistance, the cross-cutting theme for this BMS, is key to the successful implementation of the Programme of Action.

Building on the statement made by France on behalf of the European Union the Netherlands wishes to emphasize the importance of co-operation within this discussion. The development of the PoA-ISS database in which needs and resources are to be matched can only be applauded in this respect. It will allow a more efficient approach to the implementation of the Programme of Action, as it requires affected countries to clearly assess their situation and determine their needs resulting from this assessment. And at the same time it asks donor-countries to make their available resources and priorities known.

The Netherlands is strongly committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action, and as such is pleased to have found a partner in Uganda. Uganda has shown to be similarly committed to addressing the problems relating to the proliferation of small arms, and has made great progress in implementing the Programme of Action. It has chosen to integrate this Programme into its general strategy for development, the Poverty Eradication Action Plan. This approach is highly relevant. It assures that small arms issues are seen and dealt with in the context of wider development issues. In taking this approach, Uganda acts in the spirit of UNGA resolution 60/68 on *Addressing the negative humanitarian and development impact of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation*. Recently, a three-year bilateral agreement between our two countries was signed, in support of the Ugandan National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons to implement the Programme of Action. In doing so our two countries have applied the principles of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness to this new area.

Allow me to take the opportunity to address under this item a different, but equally important form of co-operation, i.e. regional co-operation, and particularly with respect to the issue of brokering.

Besides attention for the general implementation of the UN Programme of Action, special attention is needed for the recommendations made in the GGE report on illicit brokering. It will require our combined willingness and effort to make of this document more than a paper tiger. Brokering in arms often is a regional activity that needs to be addressed in close co-operation between governments in the region amongst themselves and through regional organisations. Much like the Programme of Action has, with great success, received follow-up on a regional level, the follow-up to the recommendations made in the GGE would also be best pursued by such a regional approach.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.