

**Statement by the United States on  
Strengthening of the Follow-up Mechanism and  
Preparations for the 2011 Experts Group Meeting and the 2012 Review Conference**

Delivered by Steven R. Costner

U.S. Department of State

June 16, 2010

At the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the *UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects*

Mr. Chairman,

I thank you, the Mexican delegation, and the Colombian delegation for working on the critical issue of follow up to the PoA as described in working paper (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/WP.3).

The United States would like to make the following points on the topic:

- We believe that Member States should proceed in a manner that distinguishes between the mandates of the Biennial Meetings of States and the Review Conference. The Biennial Meetings of States rightly looks at implementation while the Review Conference could examine the broader status of the PoA.
- We support a six-year cycle involving Biennial Meetings of States.
- We should be careful about regularizing open-ended meetings of government experts (MGE), as we do not want to add meetings just for the sake of holding meetings. Talk shops that do not result in concrete progress in implementation do not help alleviate the problem of the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.
- We would encourage other Member States and the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs to consider delaying the January 2011 MGE to January 2012 and turning the event into a Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Review Conference later in that year. We understand that rescheduling events poses challenges. However, we do not have a firm agenda for the MGE, and time is running out.
- We support early designation of Chairpersons and themes well in advance of the meetings. If the MGE cannot be rescheduled, then we need to name the Chair-designate as soon as possible.
- We also urge Chairs of PoA meetings to stay on as focal points on PoA-related meetings until the next meeting. For example, ideally, Ambassador Macedo will stay on as Chair until the 2011 MGE. This structure will help focus follow-up activities and encourage continuity between PoA meetings.

- We welcome a ten-year progress review of PoA implementation not so much because of the ten-year anniversary of the PoA in 2011 but because the study may serve as a useful tool in preparation for the 2012 Review Conference.
- We support biennial reporting on PoA implementation (as opposed to annual reporting). This would reduce the reporting burden on all Member States and likely increase both submission rates as well as the quality of reporting.
- We also support standardization of biennial reporting on PoA implementation, as this would help with analysis. However, the reporting mechanism should be flexible enough to allow more in-depth reporting by Member States, where appropriate.
- We would support the establishment of a voluntary sponsorship program to allow more Member States to participate in PoA follow-up meetings. Full participation will help lead to full implementation.
- While we do not necessarily oppose expanding the Implementation Support System or the tasking of a resource person to track implementation and follow-up, Member States first need to examine carefully the effectiveness of such measures given scarce resources. We do not want to create additional layers of bureaucracy if they do not contribute in a practical manner to PoA implementation.
- The annual “omnibus” resolution in the UN General Assembly, so ably shepherded by our colleagues from Japan, Colombia, and South Africa, will need to consider recommendations made in the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States if they are to be realized.
- Finally, we will need to look seriously at budgetary implications and ensure we can take up the recommendations within existing resources.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.