Excellency,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair-designate of the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS8) to consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, to be held in New York from 27 June to 1 July 2022.

I would like to thank all delegations for the trust bestowed upon me by endorsing my nomination as chair-designate for BMS8. I would like to assure you that I will work closely and transparently with all Member States to ensure a successful BMS8.

Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) is a scourge that continues to undermine efforts towards the achievement of durable peace, security, and socio-economic development in many countries and regions. The Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument constitute the sole universal frameworks for addressing this scourge. BMS8, like the other preceding meetings, will provide an opportunity for all States to examine implementation challenges and opportunities.

To begin our preparations, I would like to invite you to our first round of open, informal consultations on BMS8 on 15 February 2022 at 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. These consultations will take place virtually and a technical note and a link to the meeting are circulated alongside this letter. The objective of the meeting is to begin an exchange of views on a possible agenda, outcome, and other substantive and organisational aspects of BMS8. I would be very grateful if you could contribute your government’s views and suggestions during our informal consultations on those issues. In line with standing practice, this informal meeting will be conducted without interpretation.

Working methods

I propose using the same working methods as were successfully employed in the past meetings of the Programme of Action. This included an early agreement on the provisional agenda followed by the circulation of a “zero-draft” of a possible outcome document, with ample possibility for open, transparent consultations in the lead-up to the meeting itself.

Thus, it is my intention to hold several open, informal consultations prior to BMS8, beginning with monthly consultations in February, March and April and more frequently thereafter, if needed.

I will work with the Secretariat to determine if and when consultations can be conducted in-person in New York and would like to ask all delegations to excise flexibility as needed, on the modalities of the preparatory process.

For BMS8 itself in June, I intend to organize all the meetings in a fully in-person format.
Also, given that the five-day session of the BMS does not provide sufficient time for substantive deliberations, it is suggested that there will be no general debate nor a high-level segment at BMS8, but that the meeting moves directly into the thematic debate. In conformity with past practice, I encourage States to consider their national reports as their contribution of views on the general implementation of the PoA. I understand that the Secretariat will shortly be issuing a Note Verbale requesting States to submit their national reports in a timely manner in advance of BMS8.

I would also strongly encourage States, in due course, to provide working papers for consideration at BMS8, as I believe these would be valuable to our discussions and enrich the outcome of the meeting.

**BMS8 mandates**

In the few months, we will have the opportunity to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (PoA), as envisaged for the Biennial Meeting of States.

In line with past practice – and within the mandate of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (ITI), adopted by consensus in 2005 – it is foreseen that BMS8 will consider the implementation of the ITI as well as implementation of the PoA.

In line with General Assembly resolution 76/232, States have also agreed for BMS8 to have a special focus on the “means of enhancing modalities and procedures for international cooperation and assistance.”

I consider the above mandates as the basis for the discussion of BMS8 agenda items. With the cooperation of all delegations, it is my intention to reach informal agreement on the BMS8 agenda as soon as possible. Thus, it is my intention to circulate a draft provisional agenda for your consideration following our first round of consultations which will be based on the above mandates and your inputs.

**Secretary-General’s report**

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 76/232, a report by the UN Secretary-General will be issued ahead of BMS8 which can contribute to enriching our deliberations.

I understand the Secretariat has circulated a request in line with the resolution, seeking the views of Member States for enhancing international cooperation and assistance modalities and procedures in the framework of the PoA and the ITI, taking into account good practice and lessons learned. The deadline for submissions is **31 March 2022** and I encourage delegations to submit their views on this important matter.

**Bureau meetings**

As per usual practice under PoA processes, a Bureau will be convened for BMS8 consisting of members from all regional groups. I understand the Secretariat has already sent a request to all regional groups to each nominate amongst themselves three members for the Bureau, except for the Asia and Pacific Group – the group from which the Chair-Designate has been nominated – to which the request has been made for two Bureau members only. I hope all Groups can complete these nominations as soon as possible.
I look forward to our informal consultations on 15 February 2022 and to an exchange of views on achieving our joint objectives. Regional and bilateral consultations may also be held as we proceed with our work. Let me also stress that I and my team will be available for consultations on any issue that may be of concern to you or your region regarding BMS8.

Please note that all relevant information pertaining to BMS8 will be posted on the Meeting Place website of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs: https://meetings.unoda.org/meeting/poa-bms8-2022.

Please accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

ENRIQUE A. MANALO
Permanent Representative

All Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York