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8 March 2022

Excellency,

The open, informal consultations on the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States 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 (BMS8) held on 15 February 2022 were highly constructive and enriching. The meeting provided valuable insights regarding Member States' perspectives on a possible agenda, outcome, and other substantive and organisational aspects of BMS8, which is scheduled to take place from 27 June to 1 July 2022 in New York.

I wish to share with you the salient points which I believe have emerged from those informal consultations focusing on the methods of work, the possible agenda items, as well as a timeline for further informal consultations leading up to BMS8.

Working methods

I have noted from our consultations a broadly held preference for adopting the same working methods that were successfully employed in past Programme of Action (PoA) meetings. This includes the established practice of going directly into substantive discussions without a general debate or high-level segment; the early circulation of a 'zero-draft' outcome document after informal agreement on the agenda items, and with ample possibility for open, transparent consultations in the lead-up to the meeting itself; and encouraging States to consider their national reports as their contribution of views on the general implementation of the PoA.

In line with past practice, I also plan to submit to BMS8 a draft decision to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, the rules of procedure of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects held in 2001, as contained in document A/CONF.192/16. We will take action on this on the first day of BMS8.

BMS8 agenda items

At our consultations, I took good note of the views expressed by States on the agenda for BMS8, based on which I have now formulated an initial list of suggested agenda items for our meeting.

To allow us to move into substantive discussions in good time, I am proposing straightforward agenda which I hope will garner consensus. The proposal is derived from the standing mandate for all PoA Biennial Meetings of States as well as the specific mandate for BMS8 agreed upon in General Assembly resolution 76/232.

1. Consideration of 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, at the national, regional and global levels

2. Consideration of the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons

3. Consideration of international cooperation and assistance, including capacity-building, and means of enhancing modalities and procedures for international cooperation and assistance

4. Other issues and topics for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument

Considering different national and regional priorities, I trust this framework is broad enough to allow all delegations to raise and discuss their substantive priorities within the proposed agenda items. This includes the issue of the fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons under agenda item three (3) as well as recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design under agenda item (2), in line with the outcome document of Seventh Biennial Meeting of States (BMS7) (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1).

I look forward to an early agreement on the agenda items for BMS8, which will allow us to move efficiently into the substantive discussions and the beginning of work on the draft outcome document. In that regard I trust that we will all be able to combine our continued commitment to strengthening the fight against the illicit trade in small arms, with the flexibility necessary for making progress in multilateral settings.

Timeline for informal consultations

To allow delegations to plan in good time and to participate effectively in the BMS8 preparatory process, I am pleased to provide herewith a tentative timeline for upcoming informal consultations.

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|------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Wednesday, 16 March | 10:00 a.m. | |
| 2) Monday, 25 April | 10:00 a.m. | |
| 3) Thursday, 5 May | 10:00 a.m. | |
| 4) Tuesday, 31 May | 10:00 a.m. | |
| 5) Tuesday, 14 June | 10:00 a.m. | |
| 6) Friday, 24 June | 10:00 a.m. | (informal organizational meeting) |

Next consultations

Accordingly, our next informal consultations to which you are all invited will be held on Wednesday, 16 March at 10:00 a.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 exchange views on the proposed agenda items.

In line with standing practice, this informal meeting will be conducted without interpretation.

Other issues

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 76/232, a report by the UN Secretary-General will be issued ahead of BMS8. I would like to remind delegations of the upcoming deadline of 31 March for contributions to the report on the important matter of enhancing international cooperation and assistance modalities and procedures in the framework of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, taking into account good practice and lessons learned. A Note Verbale (reference ODA/2022-00043/SALW) was sent to Member States by UNODA to this effect.

I also wish to reiterate the invitation to 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 – from which only two Bureau members are required. To date we have received nominations for South Korea and Thailand. I hope the other regional groups will follow suit in a timely manner.

And finally, please be reminded that all relevant information pertaining to BMS8 are available on the Meeting Place website of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs: <https://meetings.unoda.org/meeting/poa-bms8-2022>. I look forward to a productive and constructive exchange of views at next week's informal consultations.

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**