STATEMENT

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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)
New York, 27 June – 1 July 2022

AGENDA ITEM 6

Madame Chair, excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

At the outset Madame Chair, we would like to express our sincere congratulations to you and your Team for your excellent leadership.

Madame Chair, with respect to agenda item No. 6, in 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, my delegation would like to highlight some concrete activities and national efforts that should contribute to an effective implementation at the national level:

Firstly, we wish to inform that the Philippines have an established National Point of Contact (NPoC) which is directly under the Office of the President – the Special Envoy on Transnational Crime. With the leadership of our NPoC, the Philippines have complied with its reporting obligation under the UN PoA.

Secondly, our country is in the process of updating our National Action Plan on SALW, which features a gender-based provision that adheres to the commitment of the Philippines in putting these provisions in many aspects of the issues that the country has worked on. Consultations with various national authorities highlighted the lifecycle of weapons and ammunition, from manufacturing to disposal, which was adopted into the latest draft of the NAP on SALW. Additionally, in line with the commitment of the
Philippines to the ATT, verification process of weapons that were potentially involved in violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and/or Human Rights (HR) were also included in the NAP to ensure compliance with our treaty obligations. Rest assured, the country continuously takes measures to ensure that its SALW exports do not contribute to the IHL and HR violations.

Thirdly, our national agency tasked with the country’s firearms regulation, the Philippine National Police Firearms and Explosives Office has been consistently conducting the following activities even during the pandemic:

1. Advocating responsible gun ownership by providing gun safety and responsible gun ownership seminars to individual applicants for ownership and possession of firearm.

2. Putting in place the Accounting and Disposition of Firearms with Expired Registration, and the administrative procedure in the final disposition and destruction of SALW which are categorized as Captured, Confiscated, Surrendered, and Forfeited Firearms. In this regard Madame Chair, we appreciate the inclusion of the points that the Philippines has proposed as reflected in the Outcome Document specifically on the need for regular disposal of SALW.

Fourthly, with the passage of Republic Act No. 10697 or the Strategic Trade Management Act, we have recently established our Strategic Trade Management Office, which is the lead government agency responsible for the establishment of management systems for the trade in strategic goods, including SALWs.

Lastly, to upgrade the knowledge and skills in licensing and update our personnel on various development, challenges, issues as well as best practices pertaining to SALW management, the Philippines has been consistently participating in different meetings and capacity building activities sponsored by different countries and organizations such as the United States, the European Union, the United Nations Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament for Asia and the Pacific, and Non-Violence International Southeast Asia to name a few. It is on this opportunity, Madame Chair, that we would like also to express our gratitude to all States and organizations that have been consistently providing technical assistance to the Philippines in terms of licensing, enforcement, and investigation.

We would like to highlight the participation of women in all aspects of decision-making and implementation processes relating to the PoA and the ITI, where government line-agencies have assigned women in key positions responsible in processesing of application for import and export permits.

As to our national policies, Madame Chair, arms smuggling remains to be a criminal offense in the Philippines in violation of the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act of 2013 or RA No. 10591. Further, manufacturers and dealers of SALW, are required to keep records of their production and/or sales and submit a monthly report.
Failure on their part to submit such reports for three consecutive months is a ground for the revocation of their License pursuant to Section 39 of the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act of 2013.

We would like to reiterate, Madame Chair, that addressing diversion of small arms and light weapons that may eventually end up in the wrong hands remains to be a priority for the Philippines. Therefore, having a risk-assessment criteria for Export and Import is very important.

Further, supporting the robust implementation of the UN PoA is further complemented with other obligations and principles that the Philippines adheres to in various multilateral regimes on SALW, such as being a state-party to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, and more recently the Arms Trade Treaty, which the Philippines ratified early this year.

Lastly, Madame Chair, the Philippine leadership on this issue at the global level highly inspires our implementing authorities to fully implement the UN PoA and to continue to share our good practices with our neighboring states and partners around the world.

Thank you, Madame Chair.