Statement by H.E. Mr. Enrique Manalo

Chair of 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

Monday, 27 June 2022, 10am, CR2, New York

Excellencies,

Mr. Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me thank all delegations for electing me as the Chair of this 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. You can rest assured that I will do my best in exploring all avenues that can lead towards the success of this Meeting.

Less than a year ago today, Member States gathered for BMS7, which due to COVID-19 had to be deferred from 2020 to 2021. Following prevailing health restrictions and protocols, BMS7 was conducted in a hybrid format. But this year, it is my honor and pleasure to welcome everyone back to the UN and participate in a fully in-person format.

Despite having met only a year ago, I thank delegations for their very active participation in our informal consultations and for engaging constructively during discussions. I also thank the Secretariat for helping me and my team in facilitating these informal consultations.
Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General and his team for their effort in preparing the report on “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,” contained in document A/77/77. The report contains relevant recommendations focused on means of enhancing modalities and procedures of international cooperation assistance, the main subject of our current meeting as agreed in BMS7. These recommendations could help us move closer towards our goal of preventing, combating, and eradicating illicit manufacture and trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

I highly encourage delegates to read and explore these recommendations and think of how we can incorporate them in our current work.

Distinguished delegates,

The progress made since the adoption of the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons in 2001 is significant but much work has to be done. Our meeting this week, with the current draft outcome document, is a step forward to ensure the effective implementation of the PoA, and make sure that it remains relevant and effective in the years ahead.

While the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA) is not legally-binding, this agreed political commitments help establish the normative framework for small arms control. This framework, effectively supplemented by other instruments and processes, enhance and expands it
provisions. I hope States continue to support and propel political will in the implementation of the UN PoA and the ITI.

With the challenging geopolitical environment, I count on all delegations to work together and extend utmost flexibility in order to achieve a consensus outcome document at the end of our meeting. I would also like to acknowledge the presence and efforts of representatives from international, regional organizations and civil society towards our goal. Let us all work together to achieve greater things and address the challenges posed by illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.