General Assembly
8th Biennial Meeting of States

United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

Agenda item 8:
Consideration of international cooperation and assistance, including capacity-building and means of enhancing modalities and procedures for international cooperation and assistance

New York, 29 June 2022

Statement by Switzerland

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation for the precious contributions by international, regional and non-governmental organisations on Wednesday. Switzerland believes that they play an important role in small arms and light weapons control, complementing and supporting States.

Mr. Chair,

National governments bear the primary responsibility for the management of small arms and light weapons. In parallel, international cooperation and assistance is an essential instrument to support States in this endeavour. Switzerland appreciates that the Secretary-General’s report for BMS8 contains many relevant recommendations in this regard. They deserve close consideration by Member States at BMS8 and in our preparations for the Fourth Review Conference.

My delegation would like to emphasise three points of particular importance for our deliberations.

First, achieving sustainable results in international cooperation and assistance is pivotal. It is therefore highly relevant that sustainability is amply referenced across the draft outcome document. In our experience, sustainability requires the adoption of measures that go beyond technical assistance. It is the institutional capacities that enable States to fully absorb, integrate and utilise sustainably the technical assistance they receive. Switzerland welcomes that the draft outcome document recognises for the first time all the elements needed to achieve sustainability, notably national normative frameworks, structures, processes and capabilities.

Second, further attention should be given to how needs, resources and expertise could be matched under the PoA. In practice, requests for assistance that States submit in their national reports under the PoA do currently not prompt follow-up within the Secretariat. This is an impediment to responding to
needs effectively. We believe that structured procedures under the PoA to follow-up on assistance requests would also increase coordination and efficiency among all States, heightening the prospects for long-term engagement of both receiving and contributing States.

Against this background, Switzerland appreciates that the draft outcome document entails a commitment in view of the Fourth Review Conference in this regard. In our view, this should become an opportunity to explore how structured procedures for processing assistance requests could look like within the Secretariat.

Finally, Switzerland advocates for the increased use of baseline assessments as the basis for assistance under the PoA and ITI. Baseline assessments help gather the technical information needed to substantiate an assistance request, determine the starting point for assistance and define criteria to assess progress. They have become a key modality to move towards a comprehensive approach and sustainable results in international cooperation and assistance.

In this context, Switzerland also underlines the value for requesting and contributing States to conduct baseline assessments jointly. Such joint endeavour helps create trust, provide credibility to subsequent assistance requests and contribute to longer-term engagement by all parties involved.

I thank you.