Ireland’s response to the UNSG’s request for views in relation to Resolution 74/60 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

27 February 2020

1. In accordance with operative paragraph 26 of Resolution 74/60, Ireland submits its views to the United Nations Secretary-General on best practices, lessons learned and new recommendations on preventing and combating the diversion and illicit international transfer of small arms and light weapons (SALW) to unauthorised recipients.

2. Ireland welcomes that Resolution 74/60 emphasised the importance of the continued and full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA) and the continued and full implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (ITI). The illicit weapons trade forms a persistent barrier to the realisation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as a means to achieve a safer and more secure world. Ireland regards the UN PoA as a vital instrument in the global community’s efforts to counter the threat posed by the illicit trade in SALW.

3. Ireland believes that the aims of the UN PoA can be further strengthened through continued coordination and enhanced synergies with other legal instruments and processes, as successfully evidenced by the synergies with the ITI. Opportunities exist in this area for an enhanced relationship between the UN PoA and Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). While the UN PoA works to encourage states to implement processes, procedures and systems for assessing arms transfers, the ATT includes specific standards on the way assessment procedures should operate effectively. Ireland is supportive of efforts by States to examine ATT standards when implementing the UN PoA through their national regulations, recognising that it is ultimately the purview of national authorities and governments to implement the PoA as they decide. Another area in which there is particular scope for coordination between the two mechanisms is that of reporting, which is crucial for transparency and the effective functioning of the UN PoA and ATT.

4. Ireland considers that effective controls on the illicit spread of ammunition will greatly reduce the use of illegal weapons and thus, reduce the level of casualties arising from such use. We support the inclusion of the prevention, combatting and eradication of the illicit trade in ammunition to the scope of the UN PoA. To this end, Ireland is pleased that the unanimously adopted outcome document of the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the UN PoA welcomes the process established by UN General Assembly Resolution 72/55 on examining problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus. Ireland would further welcome consideration of the outcomes of this process at future meetings of the UNPoA, where relevant.

5. Ireland considers that the gender dimensions of the illicit trade in SALW and of ammunition management are insufficiently addressed in policy and practice. To meaningfully address the gendered impacts of SALW and their ammunition, Ireland sees the opportunity for increased cooperation among States with regard to information sharing and data collection. Ireland further considers that the review of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines in 2020 provides an opportune moment to consider issues of gender-responsive ammunition management in this framework for assisting States in improving the safety and storage of munitions, and reducing the risk of diversion and accidents. We
are pleased to be supporting a project of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in this regard.

6. Finally, Ireland welcomes the establishment of the Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT) fund to ensure coordinated and sustained small arms control measures in affected countries. We also recall the complementary contribution that smaller-scale, flexible mechanisms can provide, such as the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR).