

Tuesday, 13 October 2020

## **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

### **Agenda item 2 (d): Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition**

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for providing me the opportunity to introduce this agenda item.

Excellencies, distinguished representatives, ladies and gentlemen,

Illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition continue to pose serious challenges to peace and security of countries and nations, and to hamper the full achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Illicitly manufactured, acquired or trafficked firearms are central and cross-cutting elements that enable, facilitate or aggravate many other forms of crime, from gang criminality and urban crime, to organized crime and terrorism, and can serve also as means of payment or as vehicle to finance other illicit activities including terrorism. Disrupting the illicit arms flows and bringing the perpetrators to justice is therefore an essential condition to respond to the multiple security threats faced by Member States today.

The Conference has repeatedly expressed its concern for the harm and the threat posed by criminal groups as a result of their access and availability of these

arms, and has also acknowledged that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Firearms Protocol are the principal global legal instruments to combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and urged Member States to accede to and implement these instruments.

Despite the recognition of these important connections, the **adherence status to the Firearms Protocol** continues to remain far below the ratification and accession rate to the Convention and to the other supplementing Protocols. Today, 119 parties adhere to the Firearms Protocol. I would like to welcome the Plurinational State of Bolivia, France, Palau and Sudan as the latest parties adhering to the Protocol since the last session of the Conference of the Parties.

During the inter-sessional period, the open-ended Working Group on Firearms has only held one meeting, on 16 and 17 July 2020, in a hybrid format. In this meeting the Working Group has addressed and explored a number of complex and important topics. Among the topics discussed were the responsiveness of the Firearms Protocol and national legislation to new and emerging threats relating to the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition as well as investigative and prosecutorial approaches in countering illicit firearms trafficking and related forms of crime within and across jurisdictions.

The results of the tireless efforts made by the Working Group are reflected in the discussion points that have been submitted for consideration to the Conference.

Distinguished representatives, ladies and gentlemen;

UNODC has continued to support Member States in their efforts to prevent and counter the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, through the Global Firearms Programme. The Programme aims at providing integrated responses that address both the preventive and control side of the equation, as well as their close links to other crimes, such as organized crime, gang criminality and terrorism, through five interconnected pillars (a) legislative reviews and reform efforts; (b) implementing effective preventive and regulatory measures for firearms control; (c) enhancing criminal justice responses to counter illicit trafficking and related crimes; (d) participating in regular information exchange and cooperation among the global community of firearms and criminal justice practitioners, and (e) enhancing knowledge and understanding on the dimension of firearms trafficking and its wider criminal context. The Programme is geared towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the achievement and monitoring of SDG 16.4, which, amongst others, commits Member States to significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows until 2030, and towards ensuring greater gender mainstreaming throughout its entire work.

Over the past two years, the Programme organized more than 70 events, seminars and training sessions, benefiting more than 70 countries and reaching more than 1300 national stakeholder. During this biennium, the Programme has expanded its size and provided assistance to wider regions in Africa, Eastern Europe (Ukraine) and the Western Balkans, Central Asia and Latin America. The growth of the Programme has been accompanied by a significant increase of its field presence, with 50 per cent of its team located in beneficiary countries.

Highlights of the work of UNODC include the launch of the Global Study on Firearms Trafficking in 2020 based on data from 81 countries for 2016 and 2017, which gives a unique insight into the patterns of trafficking globally, regionally and nationally, and provides a vital resource for law enforcement, policymakers and public bodies seeking to reduce the damage caused by the illicit circulation of firearms; the launch of the joint inter-agency project to address the connection between terrorism, organized crime and the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Central Asia, jointly implemented with United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and United Nations Office on Disarmament Affairs. UNODC has also continued to strengthen cooperation with international and regional organizations, in particular in Africa, where we continued to support the advancement of the African-wide Silencing the Guns initiative, including through the joint INTERPOL-UNODC operation “KAFO” against illicit firearms trafficking in West Africa, targeting the people and networks behind firearms trafficking. Thanks to the generous contributions provided through the joint UNDP/UNODC Multi-Partner Trust Fund to support the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition in the Western Balkans, UNODC has started the implementation of a comprehensive regional project to strengthen the criminal justice response to firearms trafficking and a joint UNDP/UNODC project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which addresses trafficking via postal services. In Latin America UNODC held several regional and cross-regional meetings of practitioners to foster regional and international cooperation to prevent and combat the illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. Moreover, UNODC has supported the

development and adoption of joint national roadmaps in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Central African Republic, Honduras and Paraguay, the implementation of which will be supported in the upcoming reporting period.

The documents [CTOC/COP/2020/4](#) and [CTOC/COP/WG.6/2020/4](#) provide a more detailed account on the activities of UNODC on firearms and on the discussion points prepared by the Chair of the Working Group on Firearms at its seventh meeting.

Please allow me to end my remarks by saying that we very much look forward to our continued cooperation with partner States, organisations and institutions, as well as to working with partners which do not yet benefit from UNODC's support in addressing firearms challenges.

Thank you for your attention.

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