

**Statement by HE Ms. Bénédicte FRANKINET
Ambassador, Permanent Representative**

**Open debate of the Security Council on "The human cost of the illicit transfer, the destabilizing
accumulation and misuse of small arms and small caliber"**


[New](#)  York, May 13, 2015


Madam President,
Excellencies,

Thank you for [me](#)  to speak.


My statement is in addition to that of the European Union.


Madam President,

I congratulate you on this initiative that keeps the issue of small arms and small caliber to the agenda of the Security Council's agenda, and reminds us of the human cost of their uncontrolled proliferation. Today's debate is an opportunity to [confirm](#)  and strengthen the Council's commitment in this area and continue along the path of the Australian initiative in September 2013 which led to the adoption by the Council Resolution 2117.

Belgium thanked the Secretary-General's new report on small arms and small arms. The report rightly claims that "every crisis or conflict dealt with by the Security Council has its own characteristics. However, a key common denominator in all these issues is that the availability, possession and use of weapons and ammunition significantly determines the dynamics of the crisis. " Crises and conflicts have many different causes, but the weapons fall into the hands of destabilizing actors, the more these problems are increasing. As we see it too often, civilians - particularly women and children - are the [main](#)  victims of armed violence. The availability of small arms is also one of the factors that promote sexual violence in zones of conflict and post-conflict. Also, if the fight against the illicit trade in SALW can alone solve these problems, it is nevertheless an essential element of a comprehensive approach to address them.

Madam President,

The [Charter](#)  of the United Nations mandates the Security Council to regulate weapons and impose embargoes if necessary. These embargoes can not be effective if violations are detected and processed and if offenders are held accountable. In this respect, the sanctions committees and expert groups have a key role in the implementation of an embargo.

Belgium supports the approach is to mandate of United Nations missions, where appropriate, contribute to the monitoring of arms embargoes, including [by](#)  means of a staff that is specifically assigned to or

monitoring units, in close cooperation with the sanctions committees and respective expert groups. This approach is reflected in resolution 2117 (2013) of the Council and the conclusions of the meetings held in the framework of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms.

Last year Belgium hosted a seminar devoted specifically to the role of maintaining peace operations in the tracing of illicit weapons in conflict zones. We [have](#) included the results of the seminar on the contribution that Belgium has submitted on the review in 2015 of United Nations peace operations. UN missions mandated to monitor arms embargoes on are a significant lever of the Security Council to enforce its sanctions. In this regard, the Secretary General's report on small arms recalls the positive experiences of UNOCI in Côte d'Ivoire and the DRC and MONUSCO also mentions the role of the units of the United Nations Police.

The tracing of illicit weapons in conflict areas can provide answers to the following questions:

- Where non-State actors do they get their weapons and ammunition?
- Will he or unauthorized re-export the original supplier is he aware?
- What are the end-users, dealers and transporters who have an increased risk of diversion [to](#) conflict zones?
- What government stocks flow on illicit markets and to what extent?
- What elements of the army are involved in the diversion of arms to insurgent forces?
- The collected weapons in a DDR effort do they reappear on the illicit market?

The characteristics of the illicit trade and misuse of SALW made visible by their tracing in conflict zones can be used to improve the effectiveness of gun control measures. The information on identified diversions is useful for the control of arms exports. It helps exporting states to assess the risk of diversion before granting an export license and to improve risk mitigation measures during and after the transfer. All that is required by Article 11 of the Treaty on Trade in Weapons. The information on identified diversions can increase the effectiveness of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration sector reform security and integrated border management. It can also contribute to a better distribution of secure arms depots efforts. On that point, Belgium fully supports the approach which is to give a mandate, where appropriate, to UN missions help secure arms depots.

All these desirable results can only be achieved if stakeholders cooperate and share relevant information. To this effect, information on trafficking in weapons identified must be compiled and made available to the competent authorities to take action. This sharing should be done at national, regional and international levels. The reports of the expert groups are an essential tool for the exchange of information. Belgium believes that the Office of the UN Disarmament Affairs to play a role in the extraction of these reports, data related to illicit weapons and their compilation in appropriate databases for control purposes armaments.

Besides the UN entities, other stakeholders and resources can contribute to tracking and sharing the results. We believe regional organizations, to trade in the framework of the Treaty on the arms trade and bilateral notifications. Belgium welcomes the development and wider use of iArms INTERPOL database and supports non-governmental initiatives such as iTrace of Conflict Armament Research.

Madam President,

Allow me a final comment. A successful tracing requires an international agreement on how to mark weapons, keep records and to cooperate in tracing. This standard is the International Tracing Instrument approved by the UN General Assembly in 2005.

In 2014, at the 5th Biennial of States under the United Nations Programme of Action Meeting, States noted that technological developments and design of small arms have implications for the effectiveness of the marking, the registration and tracing. States have recognized the challenges but also the potential of these developments.

Next month, government experts will meet at the UN to be effective in terms of the International Tracing Instrument. The success of this meeting, which will power the Programme of Action Review Conference in 2018, will be important to maintain and increase the effectiveness of our joint effort to fight against the illicit trade in light weapons and small arms. Belgium will contribute to this effort based on a joint working document with Germany and other states.

In conclusion, let me say that Belgium fully supports the note submitted by the Lithuanian Chairmanship and would adopt a new resolution based on its key objectives and considerations that Belgium has just mentioned.

Thank you.