

## **WPS Media Stakeout**

### Open Debate on Small arms: Addressing the threats posed by diversion, illicit trafficking, and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition to peace and security

We, the Security Council signatories of the Shared Commitments on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) – Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Japan, Malta, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the incoming Members of the Security Council, Guyana, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone and Slovenia– reaffirm that WPS is a priority in all aspects of our work in the Security Council.

We express our grave concern regarding the detrimental and disproportionate impact of ineffective management, diversion, illicit trafficking, proliferation, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and ammunition on women and girls, including the exacerbation of discrimination, gender inequality and sexual and gender-based violence.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on small arms and light weapons (S/2023/823) as well as the Secretary-General report on conflict-related sexual violence (A/2023/413), which highlights the fact that illicit small arms and light weapons have been used to facilitate conflict-related sexual violence, as well as recent research which shows that, in countries with available data, between 70% to 90% of conflict-related sexual violence incidents involve weapons.

To address the disproportionate impact on women and girls, we underscore the need for evidence-based, gender-responsive policymaking and programming on small arms and light weapons control, including by the collection, where feasible, and analysis of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability.

We acknowledge the testimonies from Civil Society on how illicit arms flows threaten the security of women, particularly, peacebuilders, journalists, and human rights defenders, and increase sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and non-conflict situations, and acknowledge the call from Civil society to regulate arms transfers that threatens the security of women and girls.

We encourage the full and effective implementation of gender-related provisions of international arms control frameworks, including the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons to be reviewed in June next year and the recently adopted Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, and relevant international and regional instruments, and for States to report on their implementation.

We reiterate the Security Council's call for women's full, equal, meaningful, safe and effective participation in all levels of decision-making and in the design and implementation of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts. However, we note with concern that less than one-third of voices heard in arms control and disarmament fora are those of women. This gender imbalance is symptomatic of women's unequal access to leadership in national, regional and international institutions.

We, the signatories of the WPS Shared Commitments, believe that more can be done for integrating WPS into Security Council decisions related to small arms and light weapons. At the same time, gender-responsive arms control and disarmament tools, are essential to

transform gendered power dynamics in peace and security, as called for by the New Agenda for Peace.

We strongly believe that the national implementation of the Council's WPS agenda can be made more tangible and effective when bringing in concrete actions on arms control. We are committed to work together to prevent weapons-fueled sexual and gender-based violence, to ensure a more inclusive understanding of security, and to reduce the negative impacts of illicit small arms and light weapons and ammunition on the lives and security of all women and girls.

Thanks.