



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT

BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

Joint Statement on behalf of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and
Inclusive Societies at the Fourth Review Conference of the
Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons

CR 1 UNHQ
19th JUNE 2024

(Please check against delivery)

Madam President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

1. This statement was delivered by **Sierra Leone** on behalf of the following Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies' member states: **Brazil, Bangladesh, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Namibia, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Senegal, Slovakia, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Uruguay as well as the European Union.**

2. Pathfinders is a member state-led, cross-regional and multistakeholder coalition committed to building more peaceful, just and inclusive societies through the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goal targets for peace,

justice, equality and inclusion (SDG16+). SDG16 commits us to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere (16.1), and significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows (16.4).

3. There is no pathway for peace or development that does not incorporate small arms control, and only through a development approach will we be able to make significant progress in reducing the use and circulation of small arms, light weapons, and ammunition. Similarly, small arms violence has a differentiated impact by gender, with women and girls often at particular risk. Without robust gender provisions, mainstreaming, and inclusion, it will be impossible to have effective small arms control or to fulfill both the 2030 Agenda and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda.
4. For these reasons, we strongly support the inclusion of elements in the Draft Outcome Document of the 4th Review Conference on the Programme of Actions for Small Arms and Light Weapons that highlight the importance of taking a development approach to limit illicit proliferation and misuse of small arms, address their

differentiated impacts, mainstream gender in these policies and actions, and ensure the inclusion of women in the development and implementation of arms control processes.

5. Small arms proliferation and misuse has a substantial negative impact on development with profound impacts in people's daily lives. Not only are small arms involved in 40 percent of homicides worldwide, but they are also a crucial tool of control for gangs and organized criminal groups, and the illicit proliferation of these weapons adds overall feelings of unsafety, hindering people's ability to work, access healthcare or basic service, and acting as a further inhibitor for development. Furthermore, the illicit transfer of small arms from conflict to non-conflict areas exacerbates violence globally, influencing regions far beyond their points of origin.
6. The significant economic impact of the violence generated by small arms could otherwise support development aims. In 2022, small arms cost the world 21.9 billion dollars, which is more than the total official development assistance (ODA) committed to education (14.4 billion dollars) and health (21.1 billion dollars) in the same year.

7. For these reasons, it is imperative to take a development - and gender mainstreamed - approach to the POA and ITI implementation, as called for in the Draft Outcome document. This is necessary to ensure that changes are long-lasting and address both upstream risks and downstream effects. Such an approach prioritizes holistic and multi-sectoral action, bringing together national and local stakeholders to address the root causes and drivers of demand for small arms proliferation and misuse.
8. An inclusive and gender mainstreamed approach yields better results across for all stakeholders. Women have proven their strength at different levels of negotiation for both peace and development processes, but still remain largely excluded from national and international level negotiations, only representing 16 percent of participants in peace processes. Successful initiatives of the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control – or GENSAC, a Pathfinders Initiative – show the power of what women peacebuilders, arms control experts, security officials, and grassroots civil society can achieve when gender equality, development, and small arms control are simultaneously addressed. We invite you all to learn more about this important

initiative and join us at a side-event on June 20 which will feature GENSAC's work to improve arms control legislation with Parliamentarians.

9. The damaging and far-reaching impacts of the illicit proliferation, diversion, and misuse of small arms and light weapons in society demand urgent action from member states, national governments, and local actors. For small arms control to be effective, however, it needs to be part of a comprehensive, holistic, and multi-sectoral response that addresses development needs and root causes and must also leverage the power of the affected communities to create long-lasting changes. As such, it is crucial to incorporate development and gender considerations into the POA and ITI implementation. Through addressing the illicit proliferation and misuse of small arms, we can together establish the basis for a more peaceful society and further the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I thank you.