

**Statement by
Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Before the Preparatory Committee for the UN Conference
To Review Progress Made in the Implementation of Programme of Action on SALW
9 to 20 January 2006, New York**

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

Let me start by congratulating you on your assumption to preside over this important meeting of the United Nations. I am sure that your diplomatic skills coupled with the professional assistance from the Secretariat would ensure a successful meeting for this Preparatory Committee. My felicitations go to the other members of the Bureau as well.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community, concerned with the human suffering caused by illicit trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), showed its moral as well as political obligations to alleviate this suffering through the adoption of the "Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects" in the 2001 UN Conference. The Programme of Action has set out important commitments for States to address the serious and wide-ranging challenges posed by illicit trade of SALW. And now after five years, Member States will review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The problems related to the issue of illicit SALW, as reflected in the Programme of Action, have a variety of dimensions and under different circumstances in various regions, each effected country faces some or part of these problems. Bearing in mind the relevance of this issue to the regional and international security, many UN Member States particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America have been confronting these problems. In some regions, excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of illicit SALW have resulted in devastating consequences on human life. Others suffer from the illegal use of SALW in international organized crimes such as terrorism and drug trafficking, which have grave effects on socio-economic development of regions.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is located in a region where drug trafficking, tied with circulation of illicit SALW particularly by infamous terrorist groups or drug and arms trafficking gangs, continues unabated. In such an area, Iran has spared no efforts to implement the UN Programme of Action and to combat the interlinked problems of drug and SALW trafficking together. Unfortunately we have lost more than 3400 of our best Police officers in confronting well-equipped drug lords or notorious terrorist groups, who receive or buy weapons illicitly.

The problem of illicit trade of SALW is global in nature and requires international efforts within the framework of the United Nations. Providing assistance to states at the forefront of fight against illicit

trade of SALW would contribute to the better implement the Programme of Action. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a country fighting against both drug trafficking and illicit trade of SALW, expects that the Review Conference would appropriately address this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

The 2006 Conference has a clear mandate to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. As it was emphasized by many delegations before me, the 2001 Programme of Action, though not ideal, is a comprehensive instrument, not subject to renegotiation or re-opening either in the Preparatory Committee or in the Review Conference. The Conference would be an appropriate opportunity for Member States to exchange their experiences on the Programme of Action implementation. The main goal at this stage should be the advancement toward the full, comprehensive and non-discriminatory implementation of the Programme of Action. This Preparatory Committee which is supposed to work on the procedural arrangements and other issues should focus its efforts on fulfilling its tasks. Stressing on the issues beyond the scope of the Programme of Action would not be helpful and will only complicate the work of the Review Conference.

The review of national reports of more than 100 Member States indicates that significant progress has been made in the implementation of Programme of Action at the national as well as regional levels. However, much remains to be done. National reports also show the areas that need more attention. The major difficulties presently exist in areas such as capacity building and financial as well as technical assistance and cooperation. My delegation would elaborate further on these issues in the thematic debate.

Mr. Chairman,

The conclusion of the international instrument on Marking and Tracing under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Thalmann of Switzerland is a major achievement in the implementation of Programme of Action at the global level. The General Assembly also mandated the Secretary-General to establish a Group of Governmental Experts to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in SALW which is a further step in the implementation of the Programme of Action. We look forward to the beginning of its activities after the Review Conference.

States participating in the 2001 UN Conference recognized that the primary responsibility for solving the problems associated with the illicit trade in SALW falls on all States. They also agreed that States need close international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate this illicit trade. The developed countries made clear undertakings to provide assistance to interested States including technical and financial assistance. The upcoming Review Conference would be a proper forum to assess the level of assistance provided to the interested States.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like once again express my delegation's support to the full implementation of Programme of Action. We are confident that our meeting will be fruitful by the constructive participation of all Member States. Thank you for your attention.