

STATEMENT BY KENYA DURING THE UNITED NATIONS PREPATORY MEETING OF THE REVIEW CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS, 11TH JANUARY, 2006, NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

I congratulate you on your election to preside over this important meeting. My delegation has every confidence in your ability to meet this challenge. We look forward to working closely with you with a view to a successful conclusion of the meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya attaches great importance to measures aimed at reducing the demand of small arms at the national, regional and international levels. Over the last five years, the Government has taken a number of steps to ensure comprehensive and sustained efforts towards preventing, combating and eradicating trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. These include a National Policy and Plan of Action, establishment of provincial and district task forces, destruction of arms, strengthening of the national coordination structures and ensuring the sustained participation of civil society. Further measures have been taken to integrate conflict prevention, conflict early warning and development of community based structures to enhance community participation.

Mr. Chairman,

The efforts to reduce small arms and light weapons cannot succeed without stable and peaceful states. It is for this reason that Kenya has been actively engaged in seeking peaceful resolution of conflicts in the Great lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. The establishment of a Transitional National Government for Somalia in December, 2003, and the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement for Sudan in January, 2005, are but an outcome of these efforts. Kenya and Uganda are pursuing an integrated approach focusing on disarming pastoral communities living along the common border. We are open to extending similar arrangements to other neighbouring states.

In this regard, we appeal to the international community to reinvigorate its engagement with the Government of Somalia and help the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development to remain seized with the problems of that country. It is incumbent upon the international community to assist the Government of Somalia to establish and develop institutions necessary to enhance security. The recent acts of piracy in the shipping lanes along the coast of Somalia emphasize the magnitude of the problem. International engagement in Somalia is paramount if we are to address the issues of arms trafficking.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation greatly values the ongoing efforts by the United Nations Secretary General and Member States of the Great Lakes Region to create conditions for peace and stability in the region under the aegis of the International Conference of the Great Lakes. We believe that this process will enhance the recommendations contained in the United Nations Programme for Action and will contribute substantially to reducing the demand for illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

It is our conviction that the Review Conference must come up with clear international guidelines on arms transfer. At the regional level, it is encouraging to note that twelve countries have developed and adopted transfer guidelines under the umbrella of a legally binding instrument, the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. We consider this to be a significant step towards strengthening the measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects.

Nevertheless, it is our contention that there is an urgent need to embark on a process that will eventually lead to a legally binding global instrument on arms transfers.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya welcomes your proposal to enhance the participation of civil society. Over the last five years we have witnessed very close cooperation between the Government and civil society in addressing the problem of small arms and light weapons. Kenya supports the interactive participation of Civil Society in this process and welcomes the decision by a number of Member States to include members of the civil society in their official delegations. There is no doubt that the effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action requires the collective efforts of all.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the inclusion of Parliamentarians from eleven countries to participate in the deliberations of this meeting. Parliamentarians have an important part to role in interfacing Governments with the civil society. Their legislative role at the national level would certainly give impetus to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, we wish to emphasize that the Review Conference should develop a programme of assistance to developing countries especially in Africa to enable them to integrate small arms programmes in other development issues of priority such as poverty eradication, economic and social development and security sector reform. It is my delegation hope that the Conference will lead to a better implementation of the Programme of Action. The measure of success of the Programme can only be gauged by its impact on human security. This is the challenge for the Review Conference.

Thank you for your attention