



**Statement by
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to the United Nations**

At

**The Preparatory Committee for the 2006 United Nations
Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation
of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate
the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons
in All Aspects**

New York, 11 January 2006

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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Mozambican delegation, allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you on your unanimous election to preside over this Preparatory Committee for the 2006 United Nations Conference to Review the Progress Made in the Implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Our congratulations are also extended to the other Members of the Bureau.

Let me also seize this opportunity to express our appreciation for the work you have done in preparing this Session in order to facilitate our deliberations, as well as for the valuable contribution of the Department of Disarmament Affairs, and the Under-Secretary General Mr. Abe, whose service to the Organization will always be appreciated. We wish him well in his future responsibilities.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the distinguished representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group, which summarized the African Common Position on the 2006 Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

The Second Biennial Meeting of States concluded last July, that significant progress has been achieved in the implementation of the Program of Action since its adoption in 2001. It also noted, however, that due to existing constraints, such as lack of financial, technical and human resources in many developing countries, important provisions of the Program of Action are still to be implemented.

As it has been recognized, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons constitutes a serious threat to peace, security, stability and development of many countries, particularly in Africa, a Continent which is witnessing significant achievements in its quest for peace and stability. Such illicit trade has been not only one of primary causes of loss of lives for many innocent civilians, including women and children, but also a scourge that has contributed to endanger public safety in general and destruction of property in many parts of the world.

The Program of Action offers an excellent framework for concerted global efforts aimed at building international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Mozambique is fully committed to the implementation of the Program of Action as we regard it as a step forward to the continuing consolidation of peace and stability in the country. In the report submitted to the United Nations last July, we have highlighted our achievements in that regard.

Indeed, up to now we have undertaken more than ten *Rachel* operations aimed at identifying, recovering and destroying hidden caches of fire arms, which resulted in destruction of about 30 thousand different types of fire arms, and more than a million ammunitions and related materials. In this regard, the role played by the civil society, particularly through a program by the Christian Council of Mozambique, under which weapons are transformed into ploughshares, has contributed significantly for the development of the culture of peace and non-violence, by encouraging people to participate actively in initiatives for collection and destruction of such illegal weapons.

Furthermore, in compliance with the Program of Action, Mozambique created in 2005 a National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which is responsible for the coordination and integration of national efforts required to prevent, combat and eradicate the problem of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In this connection, we are in the process of reviewing the legislation related to small arms.

Mr. Chairman,

Apart from the national efforts, we recognize that the success of the implementation of the Program of Action depends, to a large extent, on our ability to strengthen cooperation at regional and global levels.

In this context, in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) we signed in August 2001 the Protocol on Fire Arms, Ammunition and Related Materials. The Protocol entered into force in July 2004 and is showing encouraging results.

At the continental level, a number of initiatives have been implemented in Africa, culminating with the holding of the Second Continental Conference of African Government Experts on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in December 2005, in Windhoek, Namibia which produced the African Common Position to the Review Conference.

Within this context, we reaffirm the continued relevance of the UNPoA, whose integrity should be maintained. We also share the view that the outcome of the Conference should be a report on the progress made in the implementation of this important program. This is in keeping with the mandate given to the Review Conference.

It is equally important to highlight that in the new peace and security architecture, the African Union Commission has established a Unit to deal with the issue of small arms which has galvanized action by the Commission.

The involvement of all stakeholders, including parliamentarians and the civil society at large, is fundamental to the success of the implementation of PoA. Accordingly, we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and welcome the participation of an international delegation of parliamentarians from 11 countries worldwide in this Preparatory Committee. Parliamentarians have an important role to play particularly in introducing or supporting legislation at the national level aimed at meeting the requirements of the Program of Action and/or regional instruments to regulate trade in small arms and light weapons. We therefore look forward for their positive contribution not only to this meeting, but also to the review process as a whole.

In addition, greater international assistance and cooperation are crucial for effective implementation of the PoA. Capacity building, technical and financial assistance, including training, should be regarded as key factors to the full implementation of the PoA.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude by assuring you of my delegation's cooperation and full support in our common endeavors to ensure the successful outcome of this Preparatory Meeting as a step ahead towards the full implementation of the United Nations Program of Action.

I thank you.

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