



NORWAY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT

BY

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AT

THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
TO REVIEW PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT, AND
ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN
SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

NEW YORK, 9 JANUARY 2006

Mr Chairman,

Norway aligned itself with the EU statement that was made by Austria this morning, but would like to make a few additional comments.

To win the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, our efforts must go beyond the concrete measures that seemed relevant five years ago. These problems demand a comprehensive response. The UN Programme of Action is a first step. We must build on the broad objectives it contains, as well as the principles and commitments for our common action.

The First Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action will be a real opportunity to strengthen our cooperation to implement the Programme of Action. We must seize this chance to agree on robust measures to meet our common commitment. We need more and sharper tools to implement the UN Programme of Action. The Review Conference should provide us with that.

This meeting of the Preparatory Committee must agree on the issues that shall be examined at the Review Conference, and what kind of outcome the discussions should lead to.

Mr Chairman,

Let me set out our priorities. The next step in implementing the Programme of Action is to enhance international co-operation on brokering. Since 2001, we have seen great progress on the regional level. We believe there is already a large degree of international consensus on the need for global brokering controls, and on the means to be employed. The Governmental Group of Experts that will be established next fall should look into the feasibility of a legally binding instrument on brokering and make precise recommendations on a negotiating mandate. The outcome document of the Review Conference could provide this precision to the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts.

The issue of brokering needs to be accompanied by progress on developing end-user certificates for the trade in small arms and light weapons.

We all face challenges related to implementing the new instrument for tracing and marking of small arms. The Review Conference should agree on concrete cooperative measures to make sure the new standards are respected globally.

Norway supports the UK's Transfer Control Initiative. The Review Conference should agree on developing common international standards for the transfer of small arms.

Efforts to control the flow of arms and secure their stockpiles must comprise ammunition if they are to be effective.

Arms control measures alone will not stop the flow of illicit weapons. It will be a great challenge for us at the Review Conference to properly address the factors behind demand, and the complex interlinkages between development, human rights and security. We should look for ways to increase security for the individual. A key motivation for acquiring small arms and light weapons is a sense of insecurity. Governments, law enforcement agencies and civil society have all crucial roles to play to enhance security at the level of the individual.

Misuse of small arms and light weapons by state agents and non-state actors should be addressed. Civilian ownership remains a vital issue. Most illegal weapons originate from legally acquired weapons, which are later diverted.

The gender dimension must be taken into account, and in particular the way women are affected by the misuse of small arms. Equally, we must examine how to better protect children and young people from the consequences of illicit trade in small arms. Strategies to provide assistance to victims of gun violence and their families should be elaborated.

The Programme of Action will remain words on paper until practical measures are taken to implement the obligations and recommendations therein. We must therefore strengthen the mechanisms for implementing the Programme of Action. The Review Conference could elaborate arrangements that enhance capacity for management and oversight. We could work together to ensure representation at meetings under the Programme of Action so that we can have a more consistent dialogue. Communication on concrete needs and priorities to shoulder implementation could be improved. That would provide a strengthened basis for cooperation and sharing of resources.

Mr Chairman,

To address all these issues, consensus decisions remain the best and most legitimate basis. It is our clear objective to reach global agreement on the framework for our efforts. We can, however, not set aside the heavy humanitarian considerations that constitute the root of our concern. If consensus cannot be reached on the way ahead in crucial areas, we will have to think carefully about how the best interest of the victims of violence can be served.

International and non-governmental organisations play a crucial role in implementing the Programme of Action. They are present in the places where people suffer because of the flow of illicit arms. They know what works in the field, and can bring valuable perspectives to the table. I am happy that so many of them have come to our meeting. Norway places great emphasis on securing their participation in our deliberations.

Let me end by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, and wish you the best of luck in carrying out your heavy responsibilities. I equally congratulate members of the bureau. Norway looks forward to working together with you too.

Thank you Mr Chairman