

**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**

26 June – 7 July 2006, New York

**Statement of Sri Lanka
during the exchange of views on progress and problems in the implementation of the
POA with a specific emphasis on international cooperation and assistance and best
practices of small arms and light weapons projects**

Mr. Chairman,

In October 2004, the President of Sri Lanka formally established the “National Commission to Deal with the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in Sri Lanka” (NCAPISA) under the Chairmanship of the Secretary to the Ministry of Public Security, Law and Order. The National Commission was reconstituted in 2006 under the Chairmanship of the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, Public Security, Law and Order.

The National Commission has now embarked on conducting a national survey on the illicit small arms problem in Sri Lanka. As the initial step towards conducting a national survey, we have conducted a pilot “small arms and safety survey” in Hambanthota District in the southern part of the country. It is expected that the findings, methodology and lessons learned of this survey will be useful in planning and conducting a nation-wide survey.

The National Commission has already conducted a weapons collection and destruction programme and several public awareness programmes. A legislative review is also being undertaken by the Commission with a view to bringing the national legislation in line with accepted international standards.

Sri Lanka has submitted three reports on national implementation of the POA at the 2003 and 2005 Biennial Meetings as well as at this review conference with more details about action taken so far in a number of areas under the POA.

Sri Lanka strongly believes that international cooperation and assistance for national capacity building and to assist in matching needs with resources play an integral part in the full implementation of the POA. Therefore, we strongly support the Section III of the President’s non-paper, which has recognized the need for further international cooperation to enhance ongoing efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, at national as well as regional and sub-regional levels.

In this regard, we believe that the outcome of this conference should further strengthen international cooperation, particularly in the areas of resource mobilization, training and capacity building of law enforcement agencies, lessons learned, and sharing of best practices. Compilation of a database on the needs of affected States and to undertake a study on the financial and technical needs of developing countries in implementing the POA will greatly facilitate these efforts.

Since the adoption of the POA in 2001, a number of regional initiatives have been launched in order to further strengthen regional cooperation in combating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We strongly believe that there is no substitute for strengthened regional cooperation to effectively combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Therefore, we call for further international assistance in support for these regional initiatives, while also strengthening national capacities.

We also call for international assistance for enhanced cooperation among law enforcement authorities at regional and sub-regional levels, particularly in the Asian region. Such cooperation and assistance should include, *inter alia*, the import, export, transit, transshipment control and interdiction of shipments carrying illicit small arms and light weapons. Further capacity building of regional and international mechanisms, including Interpol and the World Customs Organization, would also greatly facilitate these efforts.

Sri Lanka also calls for greater international cooperation and assistance in establishing and capacity building of national commissions and national points of contact and where appropriate, in conducting national surveys to identify the extent of the challenge posed by illicit small arms and light weapons.

Sri Lanka is a country, which has already benefited from international assistance in these areas, particularly in connection with the establishment and capacity building of the National Commission, and the conduct of a national survey.

We welcome further assistance in these areas, which will enable us to ensure full and effective implementation of the POA at national level, in partnership with all relevant government agencies, law enforcement authorities and the civil society.

Thank you.