

Mr. Chairman,

Solomon Islands wishes to join others that spoke before me in congratulating you on your assumption as chair and assure you of my delegations support and cooperation in this preparatory process.

I would like to begin by associating my delegation's statement with the statement delivered yesterday by the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, Ambassador Robert Aisi Papua New Guinea's Permanent Representative on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Members.

Mr. Chairman,

The problem of small arms is a global problem for the world, for a Small Islands Developing States the threat of small arms in the wrong hands have a more destabilizing and destructive impact on national governance and socio-economic development of the country's. In the case of Solomon Islands ethnic conflict that took place couple of years ago has come at a huge economic and social costs, setting the country back decades in terms of its developmental achievements.

In this connection, Solomon Islands would like to see the momentum and facilitation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons strengthened. The weakness of the international system has seen Solomon Islands turning to its region to prevent and eradicate a gun culture that was emerging during its ethnic conflict. The intervention by my region commonly referred to as Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) to Solomon Islands in mid 2003 prevented restored the rule of law and collected some 3,700 guns within a period of three months in a small society of less than half a million people. Today the country is still in the process of healing the social and economic wounds inflicted years ago.

Mr. Chairman,

Solomon Islands interests in the review as it allows us the opportunity to take stock of where we are and to fill in gaps that needs closing. In this regards Solomon Islands would like to see a more defined form of coordination within the UN system in implementing the programme. The international framework has grown so huge and wide that at times it is at times it is difficult to see who is doing what within the UN system in terms of assisting member states in implementing the Programme, both in terms of resources and capacity building.

Secondly there needs to be more focused in creating a secure economy that reaches out to its people. This is the most effective preventive measure as it brings about an environment of stability and discourages those that turn to arms to get their demand their share. In this regards my delegation wish to suggests such programme should be linked with other development programmes including those such as the Brussels Programme of Action for LDCs, Bahamas Programme of Actions so that a more

comprehensive approach could be better achieved via a collective programming effort to compliment regional and national efforts in adopting common approach to weapons control.

Mr. Chairman,

My third point is related to the above, the Programme must also address the emergence of home made guns in a big way. These weapons are untraceable. A starting point is to deny the manufactures from having access to ammunition for the guns. The cleaning up of world War II ammunition left over during WWII has provided ammunitions. Programmes to have the population involve in such a task is something that could be pursued. Theses ammunitions have been responsible for damaging the fragile environment that exists and certain population dynamites to catch fish.

Mr. Chairman,

I close by assuring you once again of Solomon Islands committment in contributing constructively to the debate and wish you every success in the task ahead.