



NORWAY

General Assembly

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

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STATEMENT

by

Mr. Raymond Johansen
State Secretary

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Mr President, distinguished delegates,

Five years ago, I spoke at the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. I expressed Norway's concern for the human suffering caused by the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms, and called for concerted international action, international standards and a comprehensive response.

I have the same message today, for the same reasons.

There has been progress since 2001. We have placed the fight against illicit small arms firmly on the humanitarian agenda. The security implications of the small arms traffic have been recognised, and the UN Security Council now has a continuous focus on the issue. Better links have been established between small arms control and development. Steps have been taken to make it possible to trace weapons. Outstanding research has been carried out, providing us with important lessons and enhancing our understanding.

Norway is happy that countries, both those affected by violence due to illicit small arms and others, are working together more consistently to address these problems. We also see that regional and sub-regional organisations are taking an increasing interest in the issue. The UN's role is clearer and more firmly established. NGOs and parliamentarians all over the world are working ceaselessly to stop illicit small arms traffic. A true partnership to implement the Programme of Action is emerging between governments and civil society.

But despite these welcome developments, much work remains. The only yardstick for our success is the reduction of human suffering caused by the illicit trade in small arms. There is little to indicate that the flow of illicit arms has diminished significantly. Development in non-conflict zones is also being hampered by problems caused by illicit weapons.

We need to take decisive further steps to stop the flow of illicit weapons. Governments and civil society must continue to work together to strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action.

A range of issues needs to be addressed at this Conference, and our commitment to taking action must be set out clearly in a strong outcome document.

Mr. President,

I would like to point out three key issues:

Firstly - It is high time that States gain real control over arms transfers.

Norway supports the UK's Transfer Control Initiative. This Conference should reach agreement on common principles, commitments and actions that will improve our control of arms transfers. We should work together to ensure that arms are never transferred to the wrong end users, and that arms embargoes are enforced and respected. To be effective, transfer controls must also include ammunition.

Controls on arms brokers are also sorely needed. Together with the Netherlands, Norway has spearheaded an initiative for more effective international cooperation to stop illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons. I am happy that a UN Group of Governmental Experts is finally going to look into this question. I hope we can soon start negotiating an international instrument to regulate arms brokering. Improving the control of transfers of small arms will be an important step in our efforts to draw up an Arms Trade Treaty that will regulate all transfers of conventional weapons.

Secondly - We must address the demand for small arms.

Our approach to the complex problem of illicit small arms must be an integrated and comprehensive one. Last year's UN World Summit underlined the relationship between security and development.

I am convinced that we will never be able to stop the flow of illicit weapons as long as we only focus on the supply. Today, we know more about the complex relationships between the demand for small arms and poverty, insecurity, injustice and the abuse of natural resources. We know that

development approaches can reduce the availability and misuse of weapons, and improve human security.

We also know more about the different ways violence caused by illicit arms affects women and men, and we see that measures must be adapted to gender to be effective.

Norway strongly advocates better integration of efforts to fight armed violence into programmes for development, peacebuilding and reform of the security sector. This Conference should agree on common objectives and actions that can guide our cooperation in this respect.

Thirdly - We must stop the misuse of weapons.

All who carry weapons should do so in accordance with standards and norms. We should work together to ensure that military, police and security personnel, state or non-state actors, all respect international humanitarian law, human rights law and humanitarian principles.

We should agree on standards that prevent misuse by private persons – the group that accounts for more than half of the world's small arms. These weapons must not be allowed to slip into the illegal market, into the hands of warlords and criminals.

We should address the issue of civilian possession of small arms while ensuring access to legitimate use.

Mr President,

We can reduce the suffering caused by illicit small arms. By committing to work together on the issues I have mentioned – and on a range of other topics already included in the UN Programme of Action – we can turn off the supply and diminish the demand for illicit small arms. This Conference gives us an opportunity to make a real difference.

Thank you.