



**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
SOUS RÉSERVE DE MODIFICATIONS**

**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR GILBERT LAURIN
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**TO THE OPENING OF THE UN 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**

AT THE SIXTIETH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 26 JUNE 2006

**DÉCLARATION DE
L'AMBASSADEUR GILBERT LAURIN
REPRÉSENTANT PERMANENT ADJOINT DU CANADA
AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES**

**À LA CONFÉRENCE DES NATIONS UNIES CHARGÉE D'EXAMINER LES
PROGRÈS ACCOMPLIS DANS L'EXÉCUTION DU PROGRAMME D'ACTION EN
VUE DE PRÉVENIR, COMBATTRE ET ÉLIMINER LE COMMERCE ILLICITE DES
ARMES LÉGÈRES SOUS TOUS SES ASPECTS**

À LA SOIXANTIÈME SESSION DE L'ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE DES NATIONS UNIES

NEW YORK, LE 26 JUIN 2006

Let me begin, Mr. President, by extending, on behalf of the Canadian delegation, our warm congratulations on your election as President of this Review Conference.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are brought together on this landmark occasion by tragedy and by hope. Tragedy, because in excess of three hundred and fifty thousand people each year fall victim to the misuse of small arms and light weapons; an average of 1,000 every day.

Hope, because we are well placed, both during and following this Conference, to advance significantly 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.

I take this opportunity to highlight specific measures that Canada regards as priorities, measures which we pledge to pursue energetically in cooperation with other nations and civil society.

Mr. President, we must continue to strengthen the global regulatory framework governing small arms transfers in order to combat the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons, while at the same time, respecting the legitimate interests of lawful firearms producers, exporters, retailers and owners.

In this regard, Canada welcomes the imminent establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on brokering, and hopes that the work of the Group can get underway as soon as possible.

Canada supports the development of global principles that will guide the transfer of small arms and light weapons throughout their active life.

Canada is also supportive, in principle, of a comprehensive, legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) that would cover all conventional arms, which prevents the illicit flow of arms to conflict zones.

We commend the excellent work to date of civil society and the government of the United Kingdom on the ATT initiative, and pledge to work closely with all involved to advance the early development and adoption of this important instrument.

Mr. President, we must reduce the misuse of small arms and light weapons by civilians, as civilians possess more than 60% of the world's 600 million or more small arms. Most are used responsibly for hunting or target shooting. Others are used for illicit purposes.

Tremendous gains can be made by States through simple measures such as the implementation of a licensing regime that establishes clear criteria for the lawful ownership and use of firearms. These criteria should include establishing a reasonable minimum age so as to keep guns out of the hands of children, ensuring that prospective owners and users are screened for a history of violence or criminal activity and ensuring as well, that each individual possesses a basic knowledge of firearms safety.

Each State must also ensure the appropriate use of small arms and light weapons by state officials and security agents. In this regard, Canada urges the establishment and enforcement of standards for the issue and use of firearms by police and state security officials and agents that reflect the *United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement officials*.

We must ensure that essential stocks of small arms and light weapons remain secure and that surplus stocks are safely disposed of. To this end, Canada would welcome the further sharing of information on >best practices= in this and related areas and the provision of technical and financial assistance where required.

In addition to matters related to the 'supply' of small arms and light weapons, it is important to identify factors that lead to the demand for such weapons for illicit purposes. It is equally important to support initiatives that will effectively address the demand for small arms within the broader national and international political, social, economic, and cultural contexts.

Since young men continue to be the main perpetrators and victims of gun violence, our analysis should include gender considerations.

It is also critically important that we meet the physical and psychological needs of the survivors of armed violence, and ensure that they are reintegrated into their societies as full, productive members.

Where appropriate, small arms and light weapons programming should be mainstreamed into the national development plans and strategies of developing countries and the international development community, including the World Bank, Regional Development Banks, relevant UN agencies, Official Development Assistance agencies and development NGOs.

But none of this will occur, Mr. President, if we do not accord small arms and light weapons issues the time and attention they warrant.

Participants may recall that during the Preparatory Committee Meeting in January, Canada submitted a Working Paper proposing adoption at this Review Conference of an Intersessional Program of Work that would bring us together informally on a semi-annual basis to generate ideas for consideration of States during subsequent formal meetings. As such they would be complementary to formal meetings of States.

Among other things, this would afford greater opportunity for focussed, results oriented work on various thematic priorities and to develop and implement a strategy to raise the resources required to fully implement the Programme of Action.

Canada has submitted for the consideration of this Conference, a new working paper that further elaborates this proposal.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, the Programme of Action adopted in 2001 is a valuable framework agreement. Let us use it and our collective experience over the past five years to guide our deliberations in order that the work we undertake during this Conference and in years to come fulfils the promise of the Programme of Action.

Thank you.