



June 2006

**German national statement to the First 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**

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement of the Austrian EU-Presidency's statement. I would like to emphasize a few aspects.

Transfers

The Programme of Action's goal, which is to eradicate the *illicit* trade in small arms and light weapons, can only be achieved through transparent and effective control of *all* trade in small arms and light weapons. It is therefore of utmost importance that States agree on international principles that would be fundamental to any transfer of small arms and light weapons. In Germany's view, such principles are needed not only with regard to small arms and light weapons but to any conventional weapon.

This conference should pave the way to concrete international guidelines which would enable States to regulate transfers of small arms and light weapons at a national or regional level in accordance with international law. To give an example, Germany as arms producer conducts its export control policy very strictly: the respect for human rights in the recipient country, regional stability and end-use safeguards play – among other criteria - a decisive role in the licensing process. The export of military small arms and light weapons is not licensed for private end-users. Many countries have a similar export policy. It should thus be possible to find common ground at UN level and work out global rules that would only reflect already existing obligations under international law, and especially international commitment to respect human rights.

Transparent and harmonized rules for the transfer of small arms and light weapons would contribute to preventing these weapons from falling into the hands of criminal gangs and terrorists. Germany firmly believes that there should be no transfer of military small arms and

light weapons without official approval by the exporting and the importing State. For example, the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons from 2000 provides that before permitting a shipment of small arms to another State the exporting State would “ensure that it has received from the importing State the appropriate import licence or some other form of official authorization”.

Ammunition

We all know that illegal trafficking in ammunition can be of equally devastating consequences as illegal trafficking in weapons. Illicit weapons and ammunition often are obtained from the same sources, sold by the same methods and the same people. This intrinsic link between small arms and light weapons and ammunition that allows these arms to operate, should be reflected adequately. This conference should lead to a global discussion on ammunition that might draw upon regional expertise.

Follow-up

Germany is strongly in favour of a follow-up process that would allow States to keep on focussing on implementation and continue discussions on issues that are still not ripe for decisions. We experience in the framework of the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, that even the mere continuation of discussion may bring about positive effects: Protocol V on explosive remnants of war was adopted in 2003 and we see progress in the field of cluster ammunition. We have all recognized that the international community has a duty to deal with the issue of small arms and light weapons in order to reduce human suffering caused by these arms. The ongoing UN process on small arms and light weapons should thus not be interrupted.