



Statement of the
Republic of Iraq
to the 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
Delivered by
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Mr. President,

At the outset please allow me to congratulate you on your election as the President of the 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. I am confident that with your wise presidency and your distinguished skills we will reach a successful outcome at this conference accepted by all participants and enabling us to eradicate the traces of this illicit trade.

I would also like to align my delegation to the statement delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Arab League member-states.

The Programme of Action which has been adopted by the member-states after arduous negotiations reflects consensus of different opinions and varied interests and it is thus necessary that the conference concentrates on the progress made in the implementation of this programme and highlight the weak points and the obstacles that prevented the full implementation of its provisions and to address them. The Programme is the starting point and our objective should be to consider its implementation and the achievement of its goals.

The national and regional strategies to combat poverty would ensure an active implementation of the United Nations programme of action to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Reference should be made to this trade in the plans of action aimed at improving the societies' infrastructure. The link between this trade in small arms and the illicit use of natural resources in conflict areas should also be addressed. The role of non-governmental organizations is important in spreading

awareness programmes and the culture of peace in the society as well as informing people through their parliaments of the dangers of the illicit trade and its negative impact on societies.

It is the responsibility of the international society to address this matter by providing financial and technical assistance to the most effected areas by this illegal trade and where most of those weapons end up. It is also important to assist people in those areas to succeed in their political process through capacity building in areas that would include: drafting appropriate laws and norms, gathering information, managing and securing stockpiles of small arms and light weapons, providing methods to destroy its surplus that may not be stored, assisting in providing active assessments for those weapons, providing technical assistance regarding the storage of those weapons and the administration of its stockpiles in a secure manner, provide intensified courses in the field of fire arms in terms of methods of tracking them and identifying their sources. All these require the necessary funding for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration in civil society in order to ensure the whole peace process would succeed especially in post-conflict areas.

The small arms and light weapons constitute the main source of the continued existence of terrorism due the ease of transfer, usage, and portability of those weapons. Governments are the main actors in the prevention of this illicit trade. They should intensify their efforts to find solutions to its eradication through the continued cooperation and coordination between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Taking into consideration that the Security Council work complements that of the General Assembly. Governments should also intensify their bilateral and regional efforts through the exchange of information and experience and strict control of borders to prevent terrorists from obtaining these weapons. In the meantime, my government

emphasizes the inherent right to individual or collective self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and the right of self-determination of all peoples.

Mr. President,

While, we are aware of the impact of small arms and light weapons on societies and that the illicit trade of these weapons prolongs and intensifies armed conflicts, we nevertheless, stress that priority should be given to strengthening the Weapons of Mass Destruction and nuclear disarmament efforts and its non-proliferation as well as the conventional weapons in order to confront the new threats and challenges caused by terrorists' attempts to possess them.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons constitutes a daily problem for the Iraqi people. The looting and plundering of the weapons and ammunitions warehouses of the disbanded former Iraqi army following the collapse of the dictatorial regime in Iraq on 9 April 2003. This was preceded by the wide distribution of thousands of these weapons throughout the country by the former regime without any awareness to the dangers of these weapons and the impact such a policy would have on the security and the stability of the country. These factors resulted in the availability of these weapons to the terrorists and insurgents enabling easy access to these weapons and their use in destabilizing the security and stability and threatened the civil peace, the loss of life of thousands of innocent people and frighten women, children and the elderly.

The Programme of action has indicated that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons constitutes one of the principal elements which support terrorism. Thus my government has focused on this phenomenon and attempted to eliminate it by a series of national measures within the framework of the Programme of action. The government has destroyed large amounts of confiscated weapons and it also seeks to confine the

possession of these weapons in the hands of the national security forces according to the constitutional and legal regulations.

The government of Iraq stresses the need for strict monitoring on the production of these weapons and on its trade in a manner that would facilitate its tracking and would prevent its transfer to the armed terrorist groups, through the ideal use of the end-user certificate. In this regard, we commend the exceptional efforts exerted by the United Nations working group during its three substantive sessions that led to the adoption of the General Assembly of an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. It is to be mentioned that this international instrument includes a clear definition of the concept of small arms and light weapons. Accordingly, my delegation emphasizes that no weapon should be considered more important than another.

Finally, my delegation supports the constructive efforts of the United Nations and the concerned international organizations as well as the regional and international initiatives aiming at consolidating the implementation of the programme of action and providing assistance in the implementation of this programme. We also stress the importance of cooperation among Iraq's neighbors to eradicate this phenomenon.

Thank you Mr. President.