



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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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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Mr. President,

First of all, I would like to join the previous colleagues in congratulating you on your election as President of this Conference, and in commending you on the excellent preparatory work you have done over the past several months as president-designate. I am confident that under your able leadership and wise guidance, this Conference will make a substantial contribution to international efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and I assure you of my delegation's full support to this end.

Mr. President,

While the international disarmament community has experienced a fair amount of frustration last year, the progress we have made on small arms and light weapons serves as an encouraging contrast. The adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action (PoA) in 2001 was a landmark achievement in international efforts to deal with this complex issue. Propelled by the Programme of Action and ensuing follow-up discussions on its implementation, the international community was able to adopt last year the International Instrument on the Marking and Tracing of Small Arms and Light Weapons and to bring into force the UN Firearms Protocol. The considerable achievements over the last five years deserve to be seen as a good start, but we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. The crosscutting nature of the small arms

issue will only strengthen our conviction that these problems can only be solved through holistic and concerted efforts.

Despite such progress, much remains still to be done in dealing with the small arms problems and continued efforts are needed to strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action. We should keep in mind that hundreds of thousands lives are still lost each year to the 600 million small arms and light weapons across the globe. Approximately half of those deaths are the result of armed conflicts. The excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons and their unrestrained transfer continue to cause tremendous human suffering by triggering armed conflicts, buttressing criminal activities, hampering economic development and threatening international peace and security.

Against this backdrop, this first Review Conference is an important milestone where we should renew our commitment to the complete implementation of the Programme of Action. It is an opportunity to take a careful look at what we have achieved in recent years and to consider what further actions to take in the future.

Mr. President,

My delegation is pleased by the increasing number of Member States that have voluntarily submitted national reports on their implementation of the Programme of Action. Considering that 50 or so states have not yet submitted reports, the assistance of the UN Secretariat will be crucial for those States that lack the capacity to produce a national report.

The Republic of Korea thus fully acknowledges the importance of international cooperation and assistance in fulfilling the objectives of the Programme of Action. In particular, we recognize the necessity of providing assistance to developing states to build up their national capacities to implement the Programme of Action. Many States need assistance in establishing legislative structures and systems for marking, tracing and stockpile management

Mr. President,

A key area that needs to take priority is the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons. Such brokering continues to be a hotbed of uncontrolled proliferation. Only 55 percent of the countries that submitted national reports have legislation or regulations on brokering activities, and it is not unreasonable to project that the percentage would be still lower among those States that have not yet submitted reports. My delegation expects that the group of governmental experts on illicit brokering to be established after the Review Conference, will make constructive and practical suggestions on how to best

address this issue. Moreover, as in the case of marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, my delegation hopes that the international community, based on the recommendations of the group of governmental experts, will bring forth concrete measures in the fight against the illicit brokering.

Another issue of particular importance is transfer controls. Taking into account that most illicitly circulated small arms and light weapons are diverted from legitimate trade, the development of common international standards or guidelines on the controls governing transfers of small arms and light weapons is the cornerstone in our attempt to eliminate grey markets and prevent their illicit trafficking. As part of its full support for strengthening national controls on the transfer of small arms and light weapons, the Republic of Korea strictly executes the transfer control of small arms and light weapons by taking into account such factors as the potential impact on maintenance of international peace and security, human rights conditions and the UN Security Council arms embargoes.

Combating the illicit trade requires the collective will not only of States or international organizations, but also of civil society, and furthermore, individual citizens. In fact, civil society and NGOs have thus far made tremendous contributions in the fight against illicit small arms and light weapons. In addition, my delegation believes that enhanced public awareness of the issue of small arms and light weapons is indispensable to the success of the Programme of Action. Enhanced public understanding of what is at stake can help to consolidate the political will and to muster the cooperation necessary for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action.

On the issue of a follow-up process, my delegation believes that the follow-up mechanism for the implementation of the Programme of Action should be strengthened. In this light, we support the continued process of convening a Biennial Meeting of States as well as a second Review Conference no later than 2012.

Mr. President,

With the urgent sense that we should not abandon an opportunity, and a responsibility, to make a remarkable progress in our ability to save millions of innocent lives in the years to come, we hope that this Review Conference will be able to adopt a substantive final document, for which we believe the President's draft will serve as a good basis. I would like to close by reaffirming once again my delegation's unswerving commitment to the Programme of Action and to its principles and noble objectives.

Thank you.