

EGYPT



مصر

The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
New York

بعثة مصر الدائمة
لدى الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

Statement

by

the Arab Republic of Egypt

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

H.E. Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz
Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Check against delivery

28th of June 2006

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election to preside over the Conference and express our appreciation for your efforts along with members of the bureau towards the success of the conference in achieving the goals set for it.

The delegation of Egypt associates itself with the statement presented by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Arab States, and the Common African Position introduced by the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe

Mr. President,

The UN programme of action provides a clear framework for the international community's action in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. While recognizing the primary responsibility of states and governments, the programme of actions stipulates a set of measures to be adopted nationally, enhanced by regional and sub-regional support, in accordance with the specific circumstances in each region, as well as the assistance extended by the international community to enable states in the implementation of their commitments.

While progress has been achieved by the conclusion of an international instrument to enable states to mark and trace illicit small arms and light weapons, and in regard to illicit brokering, further efforts are needed to achieve full implementation of the programme of action. In this regard, the delegation of Egypt would like to stress several elements of importance to enhance national, regional, and international efforts towards full implementation of the POA:

1-The importance of strengthening the legal framework and political efforts for the settlement of disputes and to enhance the principles of justice and equality in addressing such disputes, and their settlement based on the respect for International Law and the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for the sovereignty of states and their territorial integrity and the right to self-defense, as well as the right to self-determination, in particular of peoples under foreign occupation.

2-The need for further efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in Africa which represents by far the region most affected by such illicit trade and the emergence of conflicts. Prime among such efforts is the full implementation and respect for arms embargoes and measures to address its violations. Similarly, the need to enhance the capabilities and financing of UN Peacekeeping Operations in undertaking DDR programmes in accordance with the implementation of Peace Agreements, which remains the basis for mandating any Peacekeeping Operation. Furthermore, the importance of achieving coordination among the Peace-building Commission, the General Assembly and ECOSOC to address the adverse economic and social conditions that leads to re-emergence of conflicts.

3-To enhance the implementation of commitments by the developed countries and international financial institutions to provide assistance to developing countries in

achieving their development goals, thus eliminating the causes of conflicts and reducing the demand for the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as reflected in the POA with regard to the effects of poverty and under development on the illicit trade.

While international and bilateral assistance has been provided to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, its current levels falls short of addressing the needs of developing states and states emerging from conflict. It has to be noted that the responsibility of the developed countries, including major arms producers, goes beyond the provision of voluntary assistance, for its is a commitment to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries to enable them to fully implement the POA and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in accordance with the common and differentiated responsibility of states.

4-The necessity for a sound assessment to overcome the impediments faced by states in their efforts to eradicate the illicit trade, in particular developing states and those emerging from conflict, such as inadequate national capabilities to exercise control on their national borders and stockpiles of small arms and light weapons, as well as implementation of national legislations regulating such weapons.

5-We need to accord priority to combating the illicit exploitation of natural resources, which provides one of the most important means of financing the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons as reflected in the Secretary-General's reports in this regard, and which leads to the exacerbation of conflicts and erosion of the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Political will by the international community is needed to combat and eradicate the illicit exploitation of natural resources, and we look forward, through the deliberations of the conference, to reach a common determination to break this linkage that poses far-reaching implications for stability in Africa and leads to further illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the continent.

In contributing to this goal, Egypt hosted during the period 17-19 June 2006 a meeting of international and regional experts, in cooperation with the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Africa, to address the illicit exploitation of natural resources in Africa. The meeting discussed several concrete proposals and ideas to strengthen the United Nations capabilities in dealing with the linkage between the illicit exploitation in natural resources and the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in Africa.

6-Major small arms and light weapons producers bear a primary responsibility in strengthening their national legislations regulating the production, trade, and brokerage of small arms and light weapons to prevent such weapons from leaking into illicit trade to conflict zones. Similarly, all states have the responsibility to enhance their national legislations leading to a strengthened regulation and control by the states' authorities on the transaction and possession of arms in their territories, thus reducing the possibilities of leakage into illicit trade, and strengthening their national regulatory frameworks covering international trade of such weapons with a view to ensuring effective national control.

7-It has to be stressed that the selective application of the guiding principles of the program of action would only undermine efforts towards further progress in its implementation and would further deepen divisions that arise due to selective application, double standards or politicization of the programme of action away from its goals and objectives. The programme of action represents a comprehensive framework to combat the illicit trade in the entirety of small arms and light weapons, hence states' commitments in accordance with the POA, relate to all types of small arms and light weapons.

8-We are faced with an urgent need to overcome the setbacks in international efforts to deal with the priority of nuclear disarmament during the NPT Review Conference and the 2005 UN Summit that failed to reach agreement on a disarmament section and confront efforts by some to accord a priority to non-proliferation in disregard to disarmament, as well as the need to achieve the progress sought by all states and peoples to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the full implementation of all consensual commitments reached in 2001.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the delegation of Egypt would like to emphasize the importance of our common efforts during this conference to reach recommendations leading to further progress in implementation of the UNPOA which would require a comprehensive and balanced approach that respects its principles as a basis for further progress.

Thank you.