



REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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STATEMENT

by

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**at 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**

High-Level Segment

New York, 26 June-7 July 2006

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you for your election to the presidency of the *Review Conference*. Your demonstrated dedication to the cause of prevention, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has been well appreciated by the Moldovan delegation. We are confident that under your leadership our work will achieve meaningful progress.

Distinguished Delegates,

Five years after the adoption by consensus of the United Nations Programme of Action (UNPoA) the availability of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world continues to be a major source of insecurity and poverty. The threat and use of these weapons continue to cause human suffering.

As this is the first Review Conference there are high expectations not only about its outcome, but also about its substantive nature. The preparatory process has produced rather mixed results. My delegation regrets that agreement was not reached on substantive recommendations. Nevertheless, we consider that the intensity of the debates during the meetings of the Preparatory Committee reconfirmed that the UN Member States remain committed to tackle the challenges posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Likewise, the wide range of views expressed on a number of issues and possible approaches for promoting the SALW issue on the international agenda illustrated the complexity of the challenges posed by this multidimensional problem.

In Moldova's view, the Non Paper presented to us on 27 June by the Conference's President reflects the diverse interests of the UN Member States and it is an excellent basis for developing a balanced Outcome Document. Although each country undoubtedly believes the document could be improved in different ways it is imperative that delegations show flexibility and compromise. Let's not forget that the world expects this Conference to adopt an Outcome Document that will enhance the 2001 UN Programme and ensure its full implementation.

While we look forward to a politically binding document of concrete norms and measures at the national, regional and global levels, my delegation would like to focus on some of the issues, which should be, in our opinion, adequately addressed by the Review Conference.

The Moldovan delegation has associated itself with Austrian EU-Presidency's statement which emphasised, *inter alia*, that the transfer controls, including end-use certification, marking and tracing, brokering regulations, ammunition and the integration of small arms measures into development assistance are those crucial areas where significant obstacles to full implementation of Programme of Action still exist.

While fully supporting the EU position on these issues, we consider that the Programme of Action's noble objectives will be best served if the UN Member States will agree, among others:

- to strengthen into legally binding obligations the provisions of the recently adopted international instrument on tracing, which should also encompass the question of peace keeping operations as well as ammunition;
- to negotiate a legally binding instrument on arms brokering;
- to use minimum common standards, including criteria or guidelines to determine whether a proposed transfer of small arms or light weapons will aggravate conflict, repress human rights or undermine development;

We believe that the guidelines developed at the 20-21 April Nairobi meeting within the Transfer Controls Initiative (TCI) offers a valuable basis for elaborating global guidelines that should reflect the existing responsibilities of states under international law.

Also, the Republic of Moldova supports the development of a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) covering all conventional arms which should prevent the illegal flow of arms to conflict areas.

It is in this context that we would like the Review Conference to consider additional measures to increase the efficacy of the UN Programme, including prohibiting the transfer of weapons to non-State actors, a phenomenon that took place during 1991-1992 military conflict in Moldova that led to the excessive accumulation of SALW and other weapons in the Eastern part of the country, with negative implications for its territorial integrity, sovereignty, security and stability.

Mr. President,

My delegation welcomes the proposals incorporated in the Chapter III of the Non-Paper. If adopted they will strengthen the further implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels.

We recognize that the lack of technical and financial resources in many affected countries represents an obstacle to effective SALW control. In particular, assistance is required to establish national co-ordination agencies and for the creation and implementation of comprehensive national action plans. In this context we call upon relevant international organizations and States in a position to do so to increase their technical and financial support to those countries that have demonstrated a commitment to improving national SALW controls.

The Follow-up process deserves clearly adequate attention. Implementation and monitoring will be crucial to the success of the UN Programme. To this end, Moldova favours a follow-up process that would ensure a framework for discussions focused on implementation as well as on advancement of common approaches in this regard.

Distinguished Delegates,

Being a country that is confronted with an irreducible internal conflict, with Russian troops and ammunitions still stationed illegally on a part of its territory, which is not yet controlled by the central legitimate Government, where the illicit production of and trafficking in arms, including SALW has been registered and where the human rights are being violated by a separatist entity, inspired and supported from abroad, Moldova fully recognizes the value of the UN PoA.

This document is rightly seen as a key element in supporting conflict prevention and resolution, sustainable post-conflict reconstruction and promoting lasting peace and security. Unfortunately, it cannot be implemented in the Eastern part of my country provided the specific situation there.

It should be stressed from this high rostrum, Mr. President, that when it comes to transnistrian region, the provisions of the UN Programme of Action as well as of the existing multilateral instruments in the field of arms control and verification, appear to be not very high on the agenda of the Russian Federation, a country that has been entrusted fourteen years ago with a central mediation role in the transnistrian conflict resolution.

In this connection, I wish to reiterate our long-standing position that the withdrawal in good faith by the Russian Federation of its troops and armaments, including SALW, in accordance with the 1999 Istanbul Summit decisions, will decisively facilitate the settlement of the internal conflict and will enhance the security and stability both in Moldova and at the regional level.

The unresolved internal conflict prevents, Mr. President, the development and implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, including the effective collection, control, storage and destruction of SALW in the transnistrian region of Moldova. Also, no international monitoring missions are allowed to inspect the illegal production facilities of arms, ammunition and other military goods belonging to the separatist entity.

Currently, with the assistance of the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), which was launched in November 2005 and in close cooperation with Ukraine, efforts are being made to secure the Eastern border of the country. We hope that, with the EUBAM's help, the control at this border will be restored and the phenomenon of illicit trafficking in all its aspects will be effectively countered.

Mr. President,

The circumstances I have referred to explain clearly our strong interest to support initiatives at the global and regional levels in the area of disarmament and arms control aimed at curbing arms proliferation, including small arms and light weapons. Moldova has committed itself to a number of important international SALW agreements that are reflected, in various degrees, in the operations of national arms control system.

Compliance with the relevant EU legislation and agreements concerning small arms and light weapons is also very important for the Republic of Moldova provided that it aspires to integrate itself in the European Union.

We intend to work towards full compliance with the EU Revised Code of Conduct for Arms Exports. Alignment to the EU Code would further bind Moldova to abide by all guidelines, decisions and positions related to arms transfers adopted by the EU.

From this perspective, we supported, at the regional level, the initiative to revise the Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan "*Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons*" (SP RIP SALW) in order to further assist the states of the South Eastern European region (SEE), including Moldova in their efforts to integrate in the European Union, through harmonization with the EU security policies in the field of SALW and developing capacity for adoption and implementation of the EU legislation and policies on small arms and light weapons.

The Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan has been instrumental in promoting the agenda of reducing the flow and availability of small arms and light weapons in the SEE region. It has provided concrete mechanisms for assisting SEE countries' implementation of commitments in the SALW area, including those deriving from the UN Programme of Action.

These mechanisms have been successfully implemented through the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), whose important work we recognize and praise.

Still in this context, I want to stress that Moldova recognizes the importance of civil society's involvement in developing national SALW controls, whom we consider to be an invaluable partner in these endeavors. This position was reflected in our co-operation with civil society groups during research for the National SALW Survey in 2005 and with inclusion of a civil society representative in the Moldovan delegation to this Conference.

Distinguished Delegates,

Successful implementation of the Programme of Action will require resources, commitment and vision by all UN Member States and interested NGOs in the coming years. As we explore ways and means to implement the UN Programme of Action, as we increase cooperation and understanding of the common challenges, we have an opportunity to learn and share a common vision on how to respond to this global challenge.

Let me conclude, Mr. President, by wishing the Review Conference a complete success.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.