



ARMENIA

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UN CONFERENCE TO REVIEW PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

Statement by Ms. Dziunik AGHAJANIAN, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the UN Review Conference. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support to ensure a successful outcome of this conference.

Mr. President,

The adoption five years ago of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was a milestone. It reflected the shared understanding of the common responsibility to stop the proliferation of SALW that had become a fueling agent in many conflicts throughout the world causing grave human suffering and posing continuous and non-diminishing threat to security and stability in the regions concerned. It also demonstrated the expressed commitment of the Member-States to devise and undertake cooperative mechanism to fight this scourge on all levels--bilaterally, regionally and globally. The Program of Action was the rightful response to the increasing awareness of the threat emanating from the illicit trade in SALW to international peace and security, and to stability and sustainable development worldwide.

Mr. President,

Armenia views the PoA as a starting point of a long, effort-driven process that requires implementation, review, updating and follow-up. Closing all the legal loopholes both at national and international levels that would allow for the proliferation of the SALW to proceed unimpeded is a priority. The adoption of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small arms and Light Weapons by the General Assembly in 2005 is a significant achievement in the implementation of the PoA. The establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on Brokering, which would commence its work following the Review Conference, is the next step in this direction.

The Armenian Government declared combating of small arms proliferation as a priority for its national security from the very first years of its regained independence. The effective disarmament carried out at the time and reintegration of ex-combatants into the society attests to the Republic's success in establishing stringent control over the possession, manufacturing and

trading of SALW on its territory. It keeps accurate records of the numbers of combat, civilian and service arms and weapons. The circulation of unmarked SALW in the Republic of Armenia is strictly forbidden. Any uncovered such weapon is subject to destruction, and the existing legislation provides a range of measures to that end.

During the last five years Armenia has improved its national legislation to increase the effectiveness of its efforts towards combating all types of illicit trafficking. The new laws and regulations allowed for a more complete and stricter oversight in this field, including enhanced export-control regime. The changes introduced in the Criminal Code expanded its scope by directly addressing criminal offenses on illegal manufacture, possession, stockpiling, acquisition, sales, transportation and theft of arms and ammunition or explosives, and defining criminal offences on inaccurate stockpiling of arms or negligence thereof.

Mr. President,

Cooperation in all aspects is a key to the successful implementation of the PoA. Measures have been undertaken to increase the cooperation in fighting against illicit trafficking of SALW within the OSCE and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Armenia effectively cooperates with both of these organizations to that end.

Information sharing, detailed analysis of lessons learnt and best practices developed is one of the ways to enhance the implementation of the PoA. In this regard, we consider the Best Practice Guide on Marking, Record-keeping and Traceability of SALW which became an integral part of the OSCE Handbook of Best Practice Guides on SALW a very useful tool.

My country attaches great importance to public education and awareness raising as one of the most productive tools in combating illicit circulation of small arms, in post-conflict societies in particular. Development being an integral part of the security architecture, they can be considered as part of both development and humanitarian /post-conflict recovery agendas of the countries concerned, and efforts to provide assistance to that end could be highly rewarded. In this respect, I would like to express our support to the " Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development" adopted on 7 June which explicates the linkages between armed violence and development.

Enhanced transparency through information sharing is a crucial element in effective combating against illicit SALW. Further steps could be taken to enhance the cooperation, such as:

establishing a full-scale cross-border and regional cooperation to increase the effectiveness of a regional fight against illicit trafficking, establishing a regional mechanism of dialogue and consultation between law enforcement agencies of the region on matters related to SALW, establishing a regional register of small arms and light weapons, as well as other cooperation mechanisms, such as specific sub-regional transparency and confidence-building measures with a view to combating illicit trade in SALW, harmonization of national export control laws and regulations, exchange of national lists of registered brokers that can be carried out within sub-regional or regional frameworks.

Such initiatives for regions, such as the South Caucasus can prove to be fruitful and may contribute to the conflict resolution efforts by preventing further arms race in the region and serving as an important confidence-building measure.

In conclusion, Mr. President, allow me to empathize the importance of a closer co-operation among various sub-regional, regional and international organizations in order to achieve greater progress in implementation and further development of respective provisions of the UN Program of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects.

Thank you, Mr. President.