

**STATEMENT TO THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL
ON THE QUESTION OF SMALL ARMS**

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By

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**Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to the Council the Report of the Secretary-General on small arms (document S/2006/109), which is submitted pursuant to the request made by the President of the Security Council in his Statement of 17 February 2005 (document S/PRST/2005/7). This is the third of the follow-up reports on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on small arms (document S/2002/1053) of 20 September 2002 on ways and means in which the Security Council could contribute to dealing with the question of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in situations under its consideration.

These recommendations covered four main topics: firstly, the implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons; secondly, Security Council mandated sanctions and arms embargoes; thirdly, conflict-prevention and peacebuilding and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; and fourthly, confidence-building measures.

As in previous years, the present report was prepared by the Department for Disarmament Affairs in close consultation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), which contributed information on the initiatives undertaken in their respective areas of competence.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,**

The Security Council's annual open debate on small arms is an important forum, within the United Nations, for the consideration of the issue of small arms and light weapons. It underscores the recognition by the Council of the threat posed by the illicit trade in and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons to international peace and security. We have all witnessed the concrete manifestations of this threat in most of the recent conflicts, where small arms and light

weapons have been used to cause widespread human suffering along with social, political and economic instability in the regions directly involved in those conflicts, as well as the countries neighbouring such areas.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,**

The present report underscores continuing progress made in important areas addressed in the recommendations of the report of 2002.

An important step forward in the global struggle against the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons is the recent adoption by the General Assembly of a politically-binding international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. This instrument contains key provisions aimed at facilitating the work of law enforcement officials as they attempt to trace illicit weapons. The challenge now is to take the necessary steps to ensure the full implementation of this instrument. In this context, serious consideration should be given to international cooperation and assistance to States that so request in developing the appropriate tools, the technical expertise and infrastructure necessary for the implementation of the provisions of the instrument.

The report highlights, as an important development, the entry into force of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in

Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The realization of this instrument's potential as an effective tool in the efforts to prevent and combat transnational organized crime depends on its wide acceptance by States. The Council may thus wish to encourage States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Protocol.

An encouraging sign of progress is the increased focus on understanding the link between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the illicit exploitation of natural resources and on measures to help sever such links.

In terms of actions to prevent the diversion of small arms and light weapons to the illicit market, the decision of the General Assembly, at its sixtieth session, to establish a group of governmental experts to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons is an important step in the right direction. The Group will commence its work in November of this year, with two more sessions to be held in the course of the first half of 2007.

The report also underscores that despite the progress made so far, more needs to be done in order to fully implement some of the recommendations being considered by the Council today. In this regard, I would like to point out the need to support States in their efforts to build the necessary capacity to adopt measures aimed at

further improving the effectiveness of arms embargoes imposed by the Council. Such support could include technical assistance for improved monitoring of national air spaces and land and maritime borders as well as the development of means to identify and prosecute those that violate arms embargoes. I would also like to highlight the need to intensify efforts to systematically integrate longer-term small arms and light weapons control measures in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in post-conflict situations.

I also wish to emphasize the recent achievements of the CASA mechanism, particularly the development of a strategic framework and an Internet Database and the initiatives undertaken to raise awareness of the mechanism among United Nations offices in the field. These initiatives are intended to strengthen the mechanism's coordinating role, within the United Nations system, as well as its capacity to better respond to requests for assistance from Member States. The sustainability of these efforts can only be secured with the support of Member States.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,**

In June, 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 will be convened. The intensity of the debates during the session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, which was held in January

of this year, confirmed, on the one hand, that States remain as committed as they were in 2001 to tackle the challenges posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. On the other hand, the wide diversity of views expressed regarding a number of issues and possible approaches for furthering the question of small arms and light weapons on the international agenda is symptomatic of the complexity of the challenges posed by the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons and its multifaceted nature.

The Secretary-General is encouraged by the continued efforts of the Security Council to address the challenges posed by illicit small arms and light weapons in the context of matters under the Council's consideration. I am confident that today's meeting will enhance the determination of Member States in their efforts to seek concrete measures to strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action on SALW, as well as to identify the best approaches to addressing the areas of continued concern.

I thank you