

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

--

**MESSAGE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
SECOND BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES TO CONSIDER
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
New York, 11-15 July 2005**

*Delivered by Mr. Nobuyasu Abe,
Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs*

I send my best wishes to all participants in the second Biennial Meeting of States on 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. Since the adoption of the Programme of Action, States have nationally and collectively demonstrated their steadfast commitment to working together, within a multilateral framework, to address the accumulation and proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. I am delighted to note the progress so far. More than 60 States have established national coordinating bodies, and many have developed national action plans to address the problem of proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. Minimum common understandings on transfer controls have begun to emerge, thanks to enhanced dialogue among States; and serious efforts are being made to continue to build the capacity of States to implement the Programme of Action and to improve the quality of national reports.

But we must not relax our efforts combat the scourge of illicit small arms and light weapons, which continue to kill, maim and displace scores of thousands of innocent people every year. This Second Biennial Meeting of States comes at the conclusion of the work of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. I am encouraged by the working group's agreement on a draft instrument. It is an important step towards realizing commitments under the Programme of Action, and I am hopeful that it augurs well not only for the success of the Second Biennial Meeting but also for the 2005 World Summit this September.

In my report "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All", I urge the international community to expedite negotiations on a legally-binding instrument to combat illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons. I hope the World Summit will provide high-level impetus toward this goal. My recent broad-based consultations on this issue were constructive and highlighted areas of major concern to be addressed further by the General Assembly -- mandated Group of Governmental Experts.

Next year, Member States will convene for the first Conference to review the implementation of the Programme of Action. I am hopeful that they, and representatives of civil society, will seize the opportunity of this Biennial Meeting to compare experiences and lessons learnt, with a view to identifying actions needed to enhance further the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels.

In all these processes, the United Nations and I remain firmly committed to assisting the world community in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. In that spirit, I wish you a most productive conference.