
BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES
TO CONSIDER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
UN PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON
SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Statement by H.E. Ambassador John Freeman
Head of the UK Delegation to the Biennial Meeting of States
on behalf of the European Union

THEMATIC DEBATE INTERVENTION

Human Development, Public Awareness and Culture of Peace and
Children, Women, the Elderly and People with Disabilities

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Human development, Public awareness and culture of peace, Children, women and the elderly

Mr Chairman,

1. I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Croatia and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, Liechtenstein, Moldova and Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

SALW & development:

2. The uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons and high levels of armed violence pose a significant obstacle to human development. Every year thousands of people die and millions more are left injured by gunshot wounds. The misuse of small arms undermines people's livelihoods and economic security. It prevents teachers and children from going to school, places a heavy burden on healthcare services, obstructs the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance and threatens the physical security of aid workers. We welcome attention given to the link between security and development in the reports of the High Level Panel and the Secretary General, and call for further progress on this issue within upcoming events such as the Millennium Review Summit this September. The EU also calls on States and development agencies to increase the capacity to control small arms and reduce armed violence, and to routinely address armed violence and arms availability as part of their development assistance.

Children:

3. The EU also recognises the detrimental impact that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons can have on the welfare of women, children and elderly. We welcome the attention paid to small arms trafficking in the report by Secretary General's special representative on Children and Armed Conflict in February this year and note that full implementation of the Programme of Action could play a significant role in reducing the impact of armed violence on children.