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**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**

General Debate

New York, 11 July 2005

Statement by

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of the Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Belarus to the United Nations**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me on behalf of the Delegation of the Republic of Belarus to congratulate you upon the election to the post of the Chairman. I am confident that under your leadership the work of the meeting will be active and fruitful. You can count on cooperation and support of the Belarusian Delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

Belarus attaches great importance to the practical implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects on national, regional and international levels.

Belarus submits to the UN Secretariat national information on the implementation of the Programme of Action on an annual basis.

The Programme of Action was significantly supplemented with the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted in June 2005. The character of the Instrument reflects the different approaches, as well as financial and technical capabilities of states to implement its provisions. Nevertheless, in spite of the difficult negotiations, the adoption of the Instrument in principle symbolizes the capacity of states to reach consensus on the way to solving urgent problems connected with illicit trade in SALW.

Belarus confirms its adherence to the international efforts in this direction. However, it is important to take into account the views of all states involved in this process in order for such a mechanism to become universal and effective in practice. Such an instrument, whether political or legal, will work only under the condition of reaching consensus on its basis.

Belarus gives necessary attention to introduction on the national level of internationally adopted norms and practice of combating illicit trade in SALW. In August 2004 Belarus adopted a law on acceding to 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.

Belarus welcomes the request of the UN General Assembly to the Secretary-General contained in resolution 59/86 of 3 December 2004 to establish a group of governmental experts to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons. We consider it important to clearly define the mandate of the group before it starts its work. Thorough preparation, including informational, will contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the group.

Belarus gives special attention to the issues of transparency and information exchange. Belarus prepares and presents on an annual basis national reports on its export control, arms and military equipment export policy (reports for the years 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004 are located on the web-site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus www.mfa.gov.by), as well as the national data for the UN Register of conventional arms.

Belarus traditionally attaches great importance to developing the regional dimension in the sphere of conventional arms. First of all it concerns the cooperation within the framework of the OSCE.

In 2004 the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation adopted a number of important decisions on SALW control. These decisions elaborate the principles of export control over man-portable air defence systems and the activities of brokers connected to SALW transactions. They also specify typical elements of end-user certificates and procedures of exported SALW verification. At present Belarus observes the above OSCE provisions and recommendations while taking decisions on the national level in the sphere of SALW export/import operations.

On the way to the practical implementation of the programmes connected with SALW Belarus made an official request for assistance in destroying SALW surplus and increasing the security of the SALW stockpiles locations at the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation in Vienna in September 2003. On 8 July 2004 the OSCE Permanent Council adopted decision 619 concerning the projects on providing assistance to Belarus in solving the SALW-related problems. At present the OSCE experts in close cooperation with the Belarusian side are preparing a final version of the project on attracting financial and technical assistance in connection with implementation of the project on securing the SALW in Belarus which will be presented to all interested states in the near future.

Taking into account the importance of the efforts on preventing of especially dangerous SALW, first of all man-portable air defence systems, from getting into the hands of terrorists, Belarus destroyed 14 MPADS "Strela-2M" in May 2005 as a good-will step.

Belarus believes that in future priority should be given to elaborating universal mechanisms on assisting states in solving the SALW-related problems, including in destruction of conventional arms surplus. Belarus considers it important to give this problem thorough attention within the UN framework.

It is worth considering a possibility of strengthening the cooperation between the UN and the OSCE in the sphere of SALW control, taking into account the solid basis elaborated on this issue within the framework of the OSCE.

Belarus believes it is important to consider this and other urgent issues during the 2006 Review Conference on the Implementation of the Programme of Action. The success of the Conference in many respects will depend on close interaction of the UN with regional organizations working in the sphere of international security and arms control, as well as on capacity of states to take into account each other's positions on the way to consensus. In view of the importance of this event for the future of the international cooperation in the sphere of SALW it is necessary to strive for searching of compromise wordings and common ground already at the preparation stage.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion let me express strong hope that during the meeting states will be able to share their experience on implementing the Programme of Action and outline ways to achieve consensus on its strengthening. In this regard I would like to wish to all participants of the meeting to have successful and fruitful work.