

July 11, 2005

**Statement of the State of Israel**

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The Second Biennial Meeting of States on the Implementation  
of the Programme of Action of the 2001 UN Conference on the  
Illicit Trade in SALW in All its Aspects

New York, July 11-15, 2005

Thank you, Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, upon the assumption of this task. Your extensive experience, known so well to our delegation, gives us the confidence in your leadership and wise guidance as you lead us through the important deliberations that we will hold in the coming days. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Allow me also to convey my people's sincere condolences and our deep feelings of solidarity with the people of the UK in the aftermath of the horrendous terrorist attacks that occurred in London last week.

Mr. President,

The phenomenon of illicit proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons has affected many societies worldwide,

causing superfluous suffering especially to civilian populations, who too often pay a high price. This phenomenon exacerbates internal conflicts, promotes terrorism and fuels crime, thereby increasing human suffering and threatening peace and security. Not only does it generate a humanitarian problem but it also has a considerable impact upon all levels of society, be it economic or social, by posing a serious threat to peace, human security and safety, post- conflict development, and reconciliation.

Over the years, the international debate and initiatives related to small arms and light weapons have raised public awareness of the humanitarian problems caused by illicit activities. This debate has also helped define and clarify different aspects of the issue.

Accordingly, small arms and light weapons must be controlled and restraints must be instituted, but in a way that will take into account legitimate security needs while at the same time preventing unnecessary human suffering and the loss of innocent life. We are certain that for many states the POA is not merely another theoretical exercise but rather daily practice.

By adopting the United Nations Programme of Action in July 2001, the international community has expressed its determination to put an end to this scourge. The POA is therefore a significant milestone and an important contribution that, if implemented, will enable states to better curb illicit trade in SALW.

As we are gathered here, four years after its adoption it seems that the conference in 2001 has marked the beginning of a promising process. Though much has been achieved, it seems that there is still a need for many aspects of the POA to be implemented. At this very moment, as we proceed with our deliberations, human suffering caused by small arms and light weapons continues. This suffering is often aggravated by the

widespread use of small arms and light weapons by terrorists, organized crime and for the purpose of human rights repression. As long as illicit transfers of SALW occur the wellbeing and the future of many civilians is hindered and the prospects for peace and security remain uncertain.

Mr. President,

For Israel, it is self-evident that the international fight against terrorism and illicit trade in SALW must begin at home: it can only succeed if every single state makes a sincere commitment to prevent SALW from falling into the wrong hands, in particular those of terrorists. We believe that states must prove their commitment to implement their policy and to exercise control over SALW by their deeds. These controls must encompass strong legislation related to all aspects of SALW, including licensing, production, and the possession of all small arms and light weapons. Moreover, states must enact laws and regulations ensuring robust export controls including regulating brokering activities. Such measure are not merely the objective in itself, but rather means to ensure that no arms reach the hands of those seeking to create impediments to normal day to day life of many people around the world.

In this context my government welcomes the positive outcome of the Open Ended Working Group under the chairmanship of Ambassador Thalman of Switzerland, on the International Instrument for the Timely and Reliable Identification and Tracing of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Though we regret the fact that the instrument has no reference to terrorism, we view this new instrument as another means for enhanced cooperation between states in the attempt to curb illicit SALW including in the hands of terrorists. Two of the three pillars of this newly adopted instrument, are not only a national prerogative but are also a national responsibility. These are namely, to ensure that each and every SALW is properly marked and accurate records are kept. Without the

implementation of these principles nationally, one cannot foresee cooperation in tracing illicit SALW. Israel's experience and practices in the field of marking and record keeping of SALW are in line with the provisions of this instrument, and we stand ready to cooperate with other states to implement this instrument.

Mr. President,

Now, as we stand at what we hope is a new era, there is a firm Israeli desire to cease hostilities. The government of Israel is about carry out its decision of disengagement from the Gaza strip and northern part of the West Bank. We expect the Palestinian Authority to implement its commitment to collect all SALW from terrorist organizations, bar terrorists from obtaining SALW and munitions as well as deny the financial and other resources to acquire them. This is a fundamental and crucial step for progress in the peace process.

For Israel as well as for other states in our region and the international community, the implementation of the UN Programme of Action has become even more relevant. This situation presents an opportunity for the measures set out in the Programme of Action to be implemented in order to prevent small arms and light weapons smuggling in the region. A firm determination should be demonstrated by all in this regard.

Mr. President,

Israeli civilians have been particularly vulnerable to the effects of illicit transfers and use of SALW. The terrorist attack in Mombassa in November 2002, where anti-aircraft missiles were fired at an Israeli civilian aircraft carrying more than a hundred passengers, highlights the problem of Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) falling into the wrong hands, especially those of terrorists. There must be safeguards to ensure that these weapons are not supplied to clients that may transfer them to

terrorists. In this regard, the government of Israel has incorporated the Wassenaar guidelines on the transfer of MANPADS. We also welcome the UN's first committee resolution 59/90 on MANPADS initiated by Australia. We are particularly encouraged by clear call in its provisions not to transfer MANPADS into the hands of non-state actors. We believe that in order to address this problem, a comprehensive approach should be adopted. The problem of MANPADS encompasses a variety of issues, such as prevention of transfers to terrorists, airport security, aircraft protection, scientific cooperation, collection and destruction of old missiles, safeguarding storage facilities, technological advances, etc. My government is looking at the possibility to better address the MANPADS problem in both the UN framework and other appropriate fora.

Mr., President,

The international community is now engaged in a process that has proved to be positive in eradicating illicit trade in SALW. It has expressed its determination to make a sincere effort to reduce human suffering caused by illicit proliferation and use of SALW. This process is a clear manifestation of a common policy of all states. The achievements of this process are due to an incremental approach. The ability to create common ground for both humanitarian and security consideration is significant in itself. Therefore the strength of this process still lies with the consensus we are able to achieve. The task still awaits us while addressing the issue of illicit brokering and preparing for the review conference next year. Israel is looking forward to continue to actively participate in POA process and as we have done in the past we would continue to contribute to its success.

Thank you.