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Statement by H.E. Ambassador Zhang Yishan
Head of the Chinese Delegation and
Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the UN
at the Preparatory Committee for the UN Conference to
Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the
Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and
Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects

(9 January 2006, New York)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, please allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to congratulate you on your election to the Chairmanship of this Preparatory Committee. I believe that, with your rich diplomatic experience and outstanding wisdom, you will surely guide this meeting to a success. Please rest assured of my delegation's full cooperation for the success of the meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the adoption of the Programme of Action (PoA) by the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in 2001, the international community, guided by the PoA, has made sustained efforts to combat the illicit trade in SALW in all aspects and has achieved a series of encouraging progress.

Two Biennial Meetings of States to consider the implementation of the PoA have been successfully held to review the implementation of the PoA at the national, regional and global levels and examine lessons learnt. The international instrument on marking and tracing of illicit SALW was timely concluded last June, and the broad-based consultations on further steps to combat the illicit brokering have been conducted smoothly. Regional efforts and cooperation in combating the illicit trade in SALW have been vigorously carried out. To implement the PoA, many countries have actively developed and improved national legislation, and enhanced efforts in institution and capacity building. The international cooperation in combating the illicit trade in SALW has been further promoted. Generally speaking, the international efforts to combat the illicit trade in SALW are proceeding smoothly and orderly according to the roadmap depicted by the PoA.

At the same time, we should also be aware that there is still a long way to go in the implementation of the PoA. The illicit SALW still pose severe threats to the security and stability of some countries and regions, and endanger the life and property of innocent civilians. Terrorism and transnational organized crimes, to which the illicit trade in SALW is closely

linked, are yet to be fully curbed. It should be particularly emphasized that, affected by different regional security situations and due to the gaps in economic, technological and human resource development, some regions and countries are still confronted with many difficulties in implementing relevant provisions of the PoA, particularly the lack of necessary resources and input in legislation, law enforcement, capacity and institution building in such areas as border control, information exchange, marking, record keeping, stockpile management, and confiscation and destruction of illicit SALW. International cooperation and assistance are greatly needed in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

The coming Review Conference will represent another important milestone in the process of combating the illicit trade in SALW. The international community should, as mandated by the PoA, take the opportunity to earnestly review the implementation of the PoA at the global, regional and national levels, assess the achievements and experience over the past five years since the adoption of the PoA, reaffirm the purposes, principles and various provisions of the PoA, and identify priorities of the future work. We hope that the Review Conference will achieve substantial results on the basis of consensus, so as to further and effectively promote global, regional and national efforts to combat the illicit trade of SALW.

China welcomes any constructive proposals and measures that will contribute to combating the illicit trade in SALW and is ready to have extensive and in-depth discussions with relevant parties. However, it should be pointed out that the objective of the review process should be promoting the full and effective implementation of the PoA and effectively combating and eradicating the illicit trade of SALW ultimately. Therefore, we should never divert efforts from our priority task, which is to combat the illicit trade in SALW. Our efforts should focus on seeking ways to resolve the most difficult and urgent problems in implementing the PoA. At the same time, we should try to avoid any premature and controversial new topics that will distract our attention and even undermine existing international consensus, which will complicate the review work and affect the orderly process of international community to combat the illicit trade in SALW. Whether this point can be well managed concerns the achievement of substantial progress

by the PrepCom through consensus, as well as the success of the Review Conference itself. We hope relevant parties will be cautious in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

The priority task of this PrepCom is to address the procedural issues concerning the Review Conference, making full preparations for the Conference. At the same time, participants in the PrepCom may also take the opportunity to express views on specific measures to implement the PoA.

China believes that the Review Conference should focus its substantial efforts in the following aspects:

First, further identify the primary responsibility of States in combating the illicit trade in SALW and promote States, in light of their national situation, to continuously enhance their capacity and institution building, and strengthen the management and control of the production, transfer, transportation, use, stockpiling, confiscation and destruction of SALW, so as to more effectively prevent SALW legally manufactured and transferred from ending up in the illegal channels.

Second, encourage States to press on with the implementation of the follow-up of the PoA, including effective implementation of the international instrument on marking and tracing of illicit SALW, and the timely initiation of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on combating the illicit brokering in SALW.

Third, take further feasible measures to enhance international coordination and cooperation, and give full play to the leading role of the United Nations. The coordination and cooperation between law enforcement bodies of different State, such as the police and the customs departments, should be enhanced. Developed countries should actively provide assistance to developing countries in terms of institution building, tracing cooperation and personnel training. Regional coordination and arrangements should be encouraged in light of different local situations.

Fourth, further promote international assistance in the economic development of relevant countries so as to eradicate starvation, poverty, social injustice and other security hazards. This, in turn, will remove the root

causes of illicit SALW.

Mr. Chairman,

The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to the issue of combating the illicit trade in SALW. It has adopted a series of earnest steps to faithfully implement the PoA, and has actively participated in relevant international efforts.

China has established a relatively comprehensive domestic legislation, including the Law on the Control of Firearms, the amended Regulations on the Administration of Arms Export and an attached Control List. In accordance with relevant laws and regulations, the Chinese Government has exercised strict administration over the production, stockpiling, transportation, trade, use and confiscation of SALW, and adopted a series of export control measures that match international practices, including the licensing system for SALW export. China continuously increases funding in capacity and institution building. The Information System for Firearms Regulation developed by China's law enforcement authorities is now ready for broader application. Efforts to optimize the marking system for SALW and develop counterfeiting techniques are carried out smoothly. As to international exchange and cooperation, China has rendered assistance within its own capacity to relevant countries and regions. China's competent departments have kept regular contacts with their foreign counterparts and relevant international organizations. Last April, the Chinese Government, together with the United Nations, Japanese and Swiss Governments, successfully held a workshop on SALW in Beijing.

China will continue to actively participate in the PoA review process in a constructive manner and is ready to exchange experience and promote cooperation with other parties during the process, in a joint effort to move forward the multilateral process of combating the illicit trade in SALW.

To conclude, I would like to wish the smooth accomplishment of this PrepCom's mission and a complete success of the meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.