



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**  
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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR RODRIGO MALMIERCA DÍAZ,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,  
DURING THE GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS OF THE PREPARATORY  
COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO REVIEW  
PROGRESS MADE IN 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, 9 January 2006.**

Mr. Chairman,

First and foremost, allow me to commend you on behalf of the Cuban delegation for your appointment as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. I wish to express you our recognition for the frequent and transparent consultations that have been carried out in the last few weeks, both in Geneva and in New York, with the purpose of organizing this meeting as efficiently as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

This year's Review Conference of the Programme of Action and its preparatory process, is undoubtedly of high importance and relevance. After almost five years of being approved, an estimated 200 million small arms and light weapons continue circulating the world over. In other words, for every 25 persons in the planet, there is an illicit light weapon.

In pointing out the aforementioned issue, we are not trying to play down the importance of the achievements reached in the implementation of the programme. We cannot deny the progress made in matters of destruction of surplus, improvement of the legislations, submitting national reports and the cooperation at different levels. Also, as a result of the initiatives concurred in the Programme of Action, an agreement allowing the States to identify and track down small arms and light weapons was reached.

My delegation considers that this is the right moment to reiterate some of its main positions on this issue, and to share some remarks on the conceptual framework that, in Cuba's opinion, should lead our deliberations.

As established on preambular paragraph 17 of the Programme of Action, the activities in the sphere of small arms and light weapons should be carried out without detriment to the priority given to the nuclear disarmament, the weapons of mass destruction and the conventional disarmament in general.

On the other hand, the State should continue to be the main actor in the implementation of measures to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It is the Governments who have the primary responsibility to tackle this phenomenon.

Last but not least, we consider vital the reaffirmation of all the States' right to manufacture, import and keep small arms and light weapons to meet their needs for security and self-defense, pursuant to Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Mr. Chairman,

For almost half a century our country has been the victim of the use of illicit small arms and light weapons by terrorist individuals and organizations that have committed acts of aggression against Cuba. As a consequence of these abhorrent acts, 3 478 people have died in my country, while other 2 099 have received damages to their physical integrity.

What is curious, and very worrying, is that some of these terrorist elements live freely in U.S. territory. Just a few weeks ago, several news media echoed the declarations made in Miami by the Cuban-born terrorist Jose Basulto, boasting about his actions against Cuba, precisely using this kind of weapons. Recently, in other news, reference was made to the seizure in the state of Florida of a stockpile of AK-47 and AR-15 assault rifles, kept by other Cuban-born terrorist living in the United States. Some of these arms had been erased their serial numbers, which makes them, as a matter of fact, illicit arms.

Our country strongly condemns the terrorist acts and is aware of the links existing between this problem and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

In consequence, our national legislation reflects adequately everything that concerns the regulations on possession of and trade in arms, as well as the identification and punishment of the offenders. Thus, in our Penal Code, in the Decree Law No.52/82 on Arms and Ammunition, as well as in the Regulations that implement it through Resolution 19/82, tackling this kind of actions is covered from the legal point of view.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba wishes to emphasize its support to the Programme of Action, as well as its willingness to meet the commitments taken on it. I can assure you that we are prepared to cooperate with those initiatives and practical measures that favor the international cooperation for the implementation of the Programme.

In this regard, Cuba supported the establishment of a governmental Group of Experts to analyze the steps that the States could take and increase the international cooperation in order to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, expressed in the resolution A/RES/60/81.

Right now, my country is working on the drafting of its Second National Report, according to the suggestions and queries stated by the DDA based on the analysis of the First National Report. In this regard, our country expects to have said report ready for the Review Conference.

About this meeting in particular, my delegation wishes to express that the mandate of the Review Conference establishes a review of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme and not an extension of the area of the Programme of Action. Therefore, if a consensus is reached on this extension, it should be carried out in a gradual manner, following the mechanisms previously agreed on by the States and not directly during the Conference.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, allow me to conclude wishing you success in your management and expressing you the willingness of the Cuban delegation to continue participating constructively in this important process.

Thank you very much.