

GHANA



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STATEMENT

BY

**THE HONOURABLE NKRABEAH EFFAH-DARTEY MEMBER
OF PARLIAMENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GHANA
NATIONAL COMMISSION ON SMALL ARMS**

PRESENTED TO

**THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE TO REVIEW PROGRESS MADE IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAME OF ACTION TO
PREVENT COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN
SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS**

NEW YORK, 11 JANUARY 2006

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation wishes to congratulate you on your election to the position of chairman of this preparatory committee meeting, as well as members of your bureau. Our sentiment is also premised on the fact that coming from a region which has had practical experience of the horrendous impact of SALW, we share your expectations of a successful meeting as a prelude to the forthcoming Review Conference, which among other things would review the 2001 Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman

Before going further, permit me to associate my delegation with the statement made on 9 January 2006 by the distinguished delegate of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

Five years after the UNPOA, we cannot but admit that progress has been made in the fight against illicit small arms and light weapons. However, it is also true that a lot needs to be done as eloquently demonstrated by the astronomical and alarming number of illicit SALW still in circulation worldwide. These weapons of mass destruction continue to kill and maim thousands of people each week, regrettably innocent civilians. Again, there is a close relationship between illicit small arms and light weapons and social insecurity, as a result of acts of terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime. These lethal instruments are indeed the weapon of choice of miscreants of society.

Mr. Chairman,

Humanity's existence is being severely challenged by the menace of small arms and light weapons, and it is against this backdrop that the upcoming Review conference should be seen, as a major indicator, to identify the loopholes in the Programme of Action, to iron out the creases and to hammer out a much tighter realistic, practical and forceful Programme of Action in order to make the world a safer and more peaceful place.

Mr. Chairman,

Records show that since 2001 a lot of resources have been committed for processes to combat the proliferation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. At the local, national, regional and international levels substantial progress has been made, at least in the domain of consciousness, awareness, and acknowledgement of small arms as a problem.

We in Ghana would want to see further steps being taken, in the form of a stronger and tighter international protocol being adopted to bind members not only to combat the illicit trade but also to restrict production and marketing of these small arms and light weapons. To this end, it is my delegation's candid position that a review of the progress attained in the POA should be our foremost preoccupation.

Undoubtedly, the forthcoming thematic discussions would highlight the commitment of member states to the POA and also the different levels of implementation from country to country and region to region. To attain a comprehensive global successful implementation of the POA, it is pertinent therefore for this meeting to focus on the issue of international cooperation and assistance, since capacity building of

countries without the requisite resources is imperative, if we are to overcome this scourge.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, even though the task looks very daunting, we think that with determination and goodwill on the part of all, we should be able to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves. We can control our borders, we can exchange information, we can mark all weapons in the system and keep effective clean records. Mr. Chairman, we can manage stockpiles of small arms, we can destroy the confiscated illicit weapons. At all levels, we can cooperate internationally and hopefully overcome this sleeping threat to our survival.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.