



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
201 EAST 42ND STREET, SUITE 405 • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
TEL: (212) 557-5001 • FAX: (212) 557-5009

(Check Against Delivery)

Statement

By

H.E. Ambassador Robert G Aisi
Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea
to the United Nations

at the

Preparatory Committee of the Review Conference - United Nations
Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit
Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects

January 11, 2006

Mr Chairman,

Let me first commend you for your efforts in preparing for this Preparatory Committee. You have the full support of the delegations of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). As the current Chair of the PIF, I make this statement of behalf of Australia, Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Papua New Guinea.

The members of the PIF welcome this opportunity to review the implementation of the 2001 Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects and to set goals for work on further implementation.

Looking back over the past 5 years, countries in our region have continued to struggle with the uncontrolled flow and misuse of small arms and light weapons, which can have devastating effects on individuals and their communities.

However, we have taken practical steps at the regional level to combat this problem and to create sustainable solutions. We have continued to use the Program of Action as a guide to direct and measure regional action.

Mr Chairman,

The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) is an excellent example of regional cooperation to combat the destabilising results of small arms proliferation. Deployed at the request of Solomon Islands in July 2003, RAMSI partners (Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and Tonga) helped restore law and order, in large part to the collection and destruction of some 3600 weapons and over 300,000 rounds of ammunition. We are pleased to report that the focus of the RAMSI Mission has now moved from conflict resolution to longer-term social and economic stability activities.

In the case of Bougainville, following a civil war that lasted 16 years, the island was recently declared weapons-free. This was accomplished by a weapons collection and disposal program, monitored by a UN Observer Mission which included Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu. The first elections in autonomous Bougainville were held successfully in June last year.

Stockpile management and security also remains a strong priority for the region, with the leakage of weapons from official stocks a major source of illicit guns and subsequent criminal activity. Working in partnership with Australia and New Zealand, PIF countries have made real improvements in this area. New armouries have been constructed in PNG, Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru and Samoa. Further capacity building in this area will remain the focus of work in the next review period.

With regard to implementing relevant laws, the PIF developed a common regional approach to weapons control (The Nadi Framework) which focused on the illicit manufacture of, and trafficking in, firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials. This is also an area for continued work.

PIF countries also continue to pursue efforts at the national level which complement regional work. My own country, Papua New Guinea, held the Goroka Guns Summit in July 2005, following cross-country consultations by the PNG Government's Gun Control Committee. The Summit proposed over 200 recommendations, which are currently before the PNG cabinet.

Mr Chairman,

Much work has been done, but much remains to reach our goal of eradicating the problem of illicit SALW. The members of the Pacific Island Forum look forward to participating actively in the Review Conference and to setting priorities for the next 5 years.

Thank you.