



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Presentation on Problems, Experiences and Achievements
of Cambodia's Small Arms and Light Weapons Projects
At
Review Conference of the Program of Action
On Small Arms**

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**New York
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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please bear with me. I would like to share with you where and how the situation of small arms and light weapons in Cambodia has been taking root and rooted out.

Background

Some countries have a scar of either war of insurgency, secession, colonization, genocide and poverty. But Cambodia has scars of all the above wars - more than 10,000 days. The Cambodian people were forced to become refugees, displaced persons and victims of armed conflicts. Even now, in the aftermath of the wars, we still feel nostalgic over disabled persons who lost their limbs because of weapons and mines.

Anyway, three decades of war was peacefully settled by the four Cambodian factions in late 1991. The integration of factional forces was partly undertaken, because the Khmer Rouge faction refused to be disarmed by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The Khmer Rouge was unwilling to participate in the UN sponsored general election in 1993, but hid themselves in the jungle.

Consequently, the three Cambodian factions: the State of Cambodia, the FUNCINPEC and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front retained possession of their arms against the attack from the well armed Khmer Rouge force. The members of three Cambodian factions became integrated unit in the society after UN sponsored elections in 1993. The coalition government was newly formed and jointly led by Co-Prime Ministers. Post-conflict construction program was contributed by granted aid programs of donor countries.

The political situation was in a shaky ground. All three members of the coalition government didn't trust each other. However, arms and ammunitions were uncontrollable and scattered around the country.

Members of each Cambodian faction could possibly carried their arms even into restaurants, hotels, markets, schools, pagodas and ministerial locations.

Rules and regulations to control arms and weapons were non-existence, because of the inability of UNTAC to disarm the four factional Cambodian armed forces during its presence in 1991 to 1995.

One could hear a gun shot almost everywhere from 1991 to 1998. The firing shot was a process to test the weapon after the clean up was performed. Often the gun shot was taken place during celebration of New Year and wedding. It was aimed at the sun, the moon, the sky, the rain, the strong wind, the flying bird and other objects. The ordinary Cambodian citizens were fearful and unprotected from small arms.

After 1998 election, Cambodia was ruled by a CPP-FUNCINPEC coalition government. But the coalition is led by Samdech Prime Minister Hun Sen of the CPP. Samdech Prime Minister set a social scheme to surrender weapons for betterment of the livelihood of children and members of the Khmer Rouge through the integration assistance program such as easy access to schools, land possession, and job in the government.

As the result of such scheme, the political and military structure of the Khmer Rouge was completely destroyed. Leaders and cadres of the Khmer Rouge were integrated in the society in late 1998.

Nevertheless, the Cambodian people were still the victims of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. With strong determination of the Royal Government of Cambodia, their excessive accumulation by those year endless wars was addressed at the end of 1998.

Convinced of the impact of ownership and misuse or improper use of arms and weapons, the Royal Government of Cambodia had put in place a concrete policy on arms and weapons management. The policy enforced relevant rules and regulations on arms and weapons collection, prohibited illegal use of arms and weapons in public and restrained arms and weapons ownership. To ensure its success, a National Commission has been established for the purpose of monitoring and reporting on the policy.

In compliance with the Reform of Policy of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Law on Management and Control of Weapons, Explosives and Munitions was finally adopted and came into force on 1st June 2005.

External Cooperation and Assistance

Consequently, right after the Cambodia launched its own efforts to cope with arms collection, we were proud to get prompt assistance of EU/ASAC which began to tackle the problems, in April 2000 by initiating a comprehensive plan having an impact on the Cambodian weapons security situation. The initial assistance covered five projects. Unfortunately, EU/ASAC's mission come to a complete end today (30th June 2006). However, the Cambodia has other core cooperation partner: Japan Assistance Team for Small Arms Management in Cambodia (JSAC) that has been in Cambodia since April 2003. For the time being, JSAC plays a very important role to support the Ministry of Interior in the following projects:

- 1- Weapons Reduction and Development for peace,
- 2- Weapons Destruction,
- 3- Safe Storage and Registration,
- 4- Public Awareness, and
- 5- National Commission Support

I take this opportunity to inform all of you that so far Cambodia manage to destroy 200,000 units of small arms and light weapons in which :

- 40,000 destroyed by the Royal Government of Cambodia per se.
- 144,000 destroyed by the RGC with the cooperation of EU/ASAC
- 16,000 destroyed by the RGC with the cooperation of JSAC

So far, easily speaking, JSAC managed to set up effective stockpiling and registration systems, support the police by providing necessary materials and training in order to improve actual security officers' skill and residents' confidence in security forces. Cambodia expresses its profound appreciation for JSAC's continued support which would be a crucial complement to its efforts to eradicate violence by arms in order to achieve economic and social development.

My distinguished colleagues,

You have heard the deliberation of the Cambodian delegation on where and how the situation of small arms and light weapons in Cambodia has been taking root and rooted out.