



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UN REVIEW CONFERENCE ON PROGRAM OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT
AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Statement

By

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to the United Nations

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Statement by the Albanian Delegation
UN Review Conference on Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the
Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons
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Mr. President,

Albania is delighted to participate in this SALW Review Conference and to make its contribution to this important process. This delegation has aligned itself with the statement of the EU with regard to the Review Conference on the SALW and PoA. We feel that an additional intervention on highlighting some views shared and actions taken by my country need further elaboration.

1. We would like to express our full engagement in implementation of the UN Plan of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects. We believe that this Conference will be an opportunity to evidence the progress already done and to identify key issues that need a common approach to reach attainable and realistic goals. We believe that this Conference will consider and/or analyze further steps in order to effectively enforce and implement the PoA.
2. Albania realizes and recognizes that illegal trade of SALW has a real actual and/or potential negative impact on development, peace, security and human rights.
3. Albania is an active partner of the international community in the fight against terrorism. We are fully aware that there is a strong and direct nexus between terrorism, organized crime, human trafficking, illegal drugs, precious minerals and illicit trade of SALW. On this issue, Albania is successfully carrying out an uncompromised, zero tolerance and determined fight against organized crime, illicit trafficking and contraband, corruption and other related phenomenon. In the meantime, still on a national level, Albania is doing its part on satisfactorily fulfilling its obligations under the UNPoA. On an institutional framework, law enforcement mechanisms are fully cooperating and coordinating their efforts with other branches of the Government in order to identify violations of law and prosecuting perpetrators and/or violators. The International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit SALW, adopted by the General Assembly in December 2005 is an important framework that deserves to be effectively applied and further enhanced reckoning the actual and/or prospective needs. We believe that this Conference will have a positive impact on fully implementing this instrument.
4. Albania has partially accomplished its obligations with regard to Section III of the PoA. More specifically, Albania has entered into the following multilateral agreements: a) Stability Pact SALW Regional Implementation Plan; b) the OSCE Documents on SALW and Ammunition Stockpiles and c) more recently by aligning itself to the EU Code of Conduct thus making substantial commitments towards responsible international arms transfer control.

5. Substantial, continuous and institutional exchange of information between national and international institutions specialized on this particular matter, is of extreme importance. Regional framework on this regard has its own relevance of unique character and needs to be further enhanced. To have a better implementation of the all aspects of the PoA, the technical and financial assistance is of major importance.

6. PoA is a thoroughly complex instrument. Its implementation needs to be effectively done by the high standards already binding us all and to resonate the importance that all of us do give to this particular matter which has an impact on all of us, differing only by a slight variation on the degree and timing of that negative impact. Thus, it is important to establish a commonly shared and accepted mechanism to manage the implementation of key aspects of the PoA, including but not limited to weapons collection and destruction, stockpile management and security, safe and secure destruction of ammunition and munitions, national controls on SALW production and transfers.

7. My country has given full and strong support to all initiatives, plans, goals and obligations under international law, as well as to the politically binding documents. Albania has made and will continue to make also its contribution with regard to the common goals and efforts on SALW.

Mr. President,

8. Albania has proposed the inclusion of the following paragraph into the Final Declaration of this Conference, which reads:

« To exercise the highest degree of responsibility in the import, export, transfer and re-transfer of small arms and light weapons, according to State's existing responsibilities under relevant international law and including the use of authenticated end-user certificates, and to apply global guidelines for national controls governing transfers of small arms and light weapons with the view to avoid their diversion to the illicit market, and to non-authorized uses or users. »

We believe that the Final Declaration will reflect it by including the specifically expressed language.

Mr. President,

9. I would like to briefly go over a few achievements and accompanying problems linked to the management of SALW with regard to the implementation of the PoA.

- i. In 2005 a comprehensive survey of the SALW situation was conducted in Albania.
- ii. A number of national initiatives are undertaken with regard to trafficking of SALW, including:

- Development of a “National Strategy against Illicit Trafficking and Organized Crime”;
 - Establishment of a Task Force that coordinates the efforts of Law Enforcement authorities and Customs in the fight against illicit trafficking and contraband;
 - ‘National Strategy to Control SALW”;
 - Establishment of a Special Agency headquartered in General Directorate of Police Forces with branches in 12 administrative districts all around the country;
 - Establishment of an Agency that deals with the fight against Organized Crime and Protection of Witnesses.
- iii. In the past two years, the collective weapons collection was not ongoing, but the UNDP in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has reformulated the SALWC project into SSSR project as a big step towards creating a more secure environment in Albania, by introducing the community based policing activities at grass roots levels in five communities. This helped in building mutual trust and respect between the police and public in a team efforts to crime reduction and conflict resolution. In addition, through out daily routine police activities the Ministry of Interior reports few hundreds of collected weapons every month, majority of which was surrendered by ordinary civilians and a small number taken from criminals.
 - iv. Destruction has been ongoing since the year 2000 following agreements with donors such as UNDP, and the Governments of some countries. Throughout these years Albania has gained expertise through training and support, however various technical challenges still remain. Unfortunately the recent detonation in the region of Tepelena was unexpected. The issue is under investigation by the Albanian authorities. The MoD experts have had continues demilitarising experience in the field including Tepelena, however, the recent event shows that Albania continues to depend on further donor support and expertise in order to fully demilitarise remaining surplus SALW and ammunition without incidents.
 - v. In addition, in the past year border management and controls are being strengthened with the support of the international community, including UNHCR, EUMM, IOM, ICITAP and PAMECA. A good regional example is the bilateral agreement signed between Albania and Macedonia in June 2004 on fighting the organized crime and terrorism.
 - vi. With the aim to strengthen the licensing process and transfer control system, Albania is currently preparing a new export-import law for arms and military goods. It is important to mention that this law includes the list of dual use goods tailored on basis on the EU list of dual use. Once the law is passed by the Parliament, we expect that this area of SALW control will consequently be further regulated. The goodwill to improve the legislation is very strong, therefore throughout this process the Albanian Ministry of Defense has called on a number of actors for support and consultation, including the UK and US Governments, Saferworld and the new EUSAC CTA in Tirana.
 - vii. Current activities also involve the cooperation of the Albanian Government with the newly initiated project EUSAC, and its Chief Technical Advisor. Our interests with EUSAC merge towards appointing a new inter-ministerial working group in revising the already existing National Strategy on SALW Control in Albania.

viii. Furthermore, the European Commission Presence in Albania in discussions with the Government of Albania has included the issue of SALW into its political dialogue mechanism, which compliments the framework of Albania in relation to the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU.

10. In conclusion, let me reiterate that challenges, accomplishments and/or partial failures, be these operational or institutional, confront countries involved as well as regions with a simultaneous direct or indirect impact. The response towards having more effective results will continue to demand the scrutiny and seriousness in implementing international agreements, the necessity of strengthening the institutional build up, an increasingly serious and continuous cooperation between all actors that have a stake in this process.

Thank you Mr. President.