

Royaume de Belgique

**Déclaration de la Belgique à la Conférence d'Examen des Etats
Parties au Programme d'Action des Nations Unies sur le Commerce
illicite des Armes Légères et de Petit Calibre sous tous ses aspects**

**prononcée par S.E. Monsieur Karel De Gucht,
Ministre des Affaires Etrangères et Président en exercice de l'OSCE**

New York, 26 juin 2006

Mr Chairman,

Let me start by quoting from the OSCE Strategy to address threats to security and stability in the 21st century, adopted in December 2003 :
“The OSCE will meet the new challenges on the basis of important strengths, namely its broad membership, from North America to Europe and parts of Asia, and its multidimensional concept of common, comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible security. Many of the threats of a political-military nature, such as destabilizing accumulations of conventional weaponry, illicit transfers of arms and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, remain of great concern to the OSCE Participating States. Armed threats posed by terrorists and other criminal groups require particular attention.”

It should thus come as no surprise that the OSCE has been setting the trend by devoting particular attention to the development of common standards and guidelines on some of the key issues related to the arms trade. Building on the Small Arms and Light Weapons Document, adopted in 2000, the OSCE agreed in 2004 on Principles for the Export Control of MANPADS, on Standard Elements of End User Certificates and Verification Procedures for Small Arms Exports and on Principles on the Controls of Brokering in Small Arms.

It is interesting to see how, occasionally, the international system advances on the basis of concentric circles. In certain areas of its work on small arms, the OSCE has been able to benefit from previous work done

in more restricted circles, such as the EU or the Wassenaar Arrangement on Conventional Arms Export Control. One could hope that the UN community would also be inspired by the results achieved by some of its regional organisations such as the OSCE.

I am confident that the OSCE stands ready to support the work of the United Nations and to promote all possible synergies between regional organisations and arrangements. Concrete examples of division of labour can be given, such as the small arms and ammunition project in Ukraine, whereby the OSCE deals with the ammunition and NATO is in charge of the weapons destruction. Similar constructive interaction between the OSCE and the EU can also be mentioned. The aim is to avoid duplication and to maximize the impact through well coordinated action.

The OSCE is resolved to work for the earliest possible full implementation of the UN Document on Marking and Tracing. The OSCE equally supports establishing a Group of Governmental Experts on Brokering to be convened as soon as possible. Principles, criteria and procedures agreed upon in the respective OSCE Decision on brokering will be initial input to this work and could serve as a basis for further deliberations in this Group.

Mr Chairman,

The OSCE has played an active role on issues of non-proliferation, export and transfer control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and has made an important contribution towards countering the threat posed by their destabilising accumulation and uncontrolled spread. Building on, inter alia, the OSCE Document on Small Arms and the Best Practice Guides, and in the spirit of the OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century, the OSCE welcomes discussion on the development of global guidelines, criteria and standards on relevant issues addressed by the UN Programme of Action, including those related to the control of transfers of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

On the issue of assistance and international co-operation, the OSCE has gained some experience in building mechanisms to match the supply and demand. These include the drafting of a feasibility study for projects and the coordination of assessment missions in the field. The organisation could thus usefully contribute to the interesting work undertaken by UNIDIR in this area. Concrete assistance projects are targeting Tajikistan and Belarus.

More detailed information on all these questions will be made available during this conference. The OSCE will intervene under the agenda item referring to the work of regional organisations. The OSCE Secretariat will launch an OSCE side event on July 3rd under the title: "From Norm-Setting to the Implementation of Commitments; the OSCE Contribution to the UN Programme of Action". I warmly invite you to profit from this opportunity to advance our common cause.

Mr Chairman,

Combating the illicit arms trade is an important part of the global human security agenda. Our official action in this field has everything to gain from an active and transparent interaction with civil society and the Non Governmental Organisations. The input of NGO's to some of the OSCE meetings has proven quite stimulating. Sometimes NGO's play a crucial role in advancing our understanding of the actual output and effect on the ground of the OSCE normative work on small arms. I could thus wholeheartedly recommend that all of our Nations would recognize the potential of working with civil society and the NGO's in this field.

Finally, let me express the conviction that the OSCE will continue to deepen its work on small arms and light weapons. During recent meetings in Vienna, some interesting initiatives have been announced. I noted in particular the idea of addressing the problem of illicit air transportation of small arms involving in certain cases private air companies operating in the grey zones of not entirely controlled airspace or too vague regulations. I also noted proposals to deal with the problem of unlicensed production and to increase the role of the OSCE field missions in the area of weapon collection and tracing. Further OSCE work on these issues may inspire in due time the United Nations.

Mr Chairman,

Ours is a very rich agenda. Let us move in the right direction with vigour and commitment. I can assure you that Belgium and the OSCE stand ready to contribute to the success of this conference.

Thank you.