

# GHANA



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***STATEMENT***

***BY***

***HON. KWAKU AGYEMAN-MANU  
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR INTERIOR***

***AT THE***

***UN CONFERENCE TO REVIEW PROGRESS MADE  
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME  
OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE  
THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT  
WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS***

*New York,  
June 27, 2006*

Mr. President,

Permit me to join other speakers in extending warm felicitations to you on your assumption of the chair of this important conference. We are confident that with your astute leadership and guidance, a positive outcome will be attained.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group Union.

Mr. President,

The problem of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons has been generally recognized as a global menace as it impinges on political stability, promotion of human rights and democracy as well as the pursuit of socio-economic development. Moreso, is its close link to international terrorism, the bane of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and organized crime.

Mr. President,

Five years after the adoption of the UNPOA, we can not but admit that laudable gains have been achieved to contain the scourge. It is equally in axiom that much needs to be done, since the community of nations continues to grapple with the adverse consequences of illicit trade in SALW as lucidly demonstrated by the astronomical and daunting number of illicit SALW in circulation and the devastating wrought they inflict on their victims.

Coming from a region that has sadly witnessed the grave havoc and mayhem that SALW have caused owing to their easy availability and indiscriminate use, we remain convinced today, as we were previously, that contrary to its designation, SALW are real weapons of mass destruction. It is in this regard that Ghana is fully committed to the implementation of the UNPOA, as well as the ECOWAS moratorium, which was recently converted into a legally binding convention. Similarly, we completely subscribe to Africa's common position on the issue, as eloquently outlined after the Windhoek conference from 14-16 December 2006, which among others, reaffirmed that curtailing the proliferation of illicit SALW was imperative for the well-being of member states.

Mr. President,

Ghana has had its fair share of the negative impact of the proliferation and misuse of SALW on rule of law, political stability and development in general. Consequently, as part of its efforts towards implementing the UNPoA and ECOWAS Moratorium, a national baseline survey on the proliferation of illicit Small Arms in Ghana was commissioned by the Government of Ghana and conducted by the African Security Dialogue and Research [ASDR]. This survey formed the background document for a National Strategic Conference on Small Arms held in Accra from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 2006, which brought together the donor communities, the security operatives, civil society organizations and local craft producers of Small Arms to foster dialogue and build consensus for a National Plan of Action (NPOA).

Mr. President:

The National Commission has also embarked on a number of activities all geared towards the realization of the objectives of the ECOWAS Moratorium which re-enforces the United Nations Programme of Action (PoA), including,

- Crisis prevention
- Awareness Raising & Sensitization
- Encouraging people to register and or renew their Small Arms licenses
- Putting together a more reliable data on firearms.

On awareness raising, the Commission has targeted conflict prone areas to bring to their notice the impact of SALW on national and sub-regional developments. To re-enforce this, weapons-free clubs have been established in a number of first and second cycle institutions in Ghana.

Mr. President,

The Commission has further developed at its secretariat a Small Arms Incidents Media Database, which captures small arms related cases reported countrywide in the print media on daily basis in order to ascertain areas noted for armed related violence. The Commission is also collaborating with the Security Agencies to capture a report on all arms related cases

recorded at all Police stations in the country. To stem the illegal transfer of SALW into the country, the National Commission is continuously working on an integrated SALW control strategy along Ghana's borders with primary focus on the western corridor.

Though Ghana has never experienced any armed conflict on a large scale, there are pockets of low intensity communal conflicts. On the other hand, Ghana has a gun production culture which was initially tailored to meet her socio-cultural demands. Despite the gun production culture, the activity is banned by law. Irrespective of this ban the production has grown to meet the demands brought about by general insecurity as criminals take advantage to cause mayhem.

These weapons are not registered since they are illegal to manufacture. To retrieve these guns from society the Police/Military usually cordon and search. Despite the cordon and search, the main strategy being adopted with the assistance of the UNDP is the development of alternative livelihood programmes for those engaged in the industry.

Mr. President,

A national stock-taking exercise of small arms confiscated or surrendered to the security agencies is ongoing. These weapons are earmarked for destruction as part of Ghana's commitment to fulfill her international requirements on SALW. In this regard Ghana has destroyed over 2000 assorted weapons since 2001.

The legislative instrument which governs firearms has been reviewed and is currently before Parliament for discussions. The draft legislation has been designed to contain tighter controls on licensed arms dealers, oversight responsibilities for transfers from entry points to armouries to prevent transit leakages, stiffer sentences/fines for illicit assembling and manufacturing and illegal possession.

Mr. President,

Ghana is consistently making inroads in the fight against the proliferation of arms, and sustaining the momentum would require financial and logistical support which the government of Ghana alone cannot address. In this regard, Mr. Chairman, it is my delegation's views that strengthening

of international cooperation and assistance, especially, financial and technical is paramount, since majority of developing countries lack the capacity to fully implement some of the provisions of our national POA

Another crucial area of grave concern to my delegation and therefore meriting appropriate effective international commitment in transfer control, particularly to armed rebel groups, warlords, vigilantes, organized criminals and terrorists. We will be the first to admit the sovereign right of states to acquire weapons for self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter as well as law enforcement. It is our firm conviction also that states have the responsibility to ensure that weapons legally acquired do not end up in the hands of non-state actors to fuel violence and conflict. We equally acknowledge that a number of countries legally authorize the possession of small arms by citizens, if they so qualify. However, this should not be an impediment to efforts towards formulating measures to stifle the flow of illicit SALW to societal villains. It must be stressed that the envisaged measures should be transparent, non-discriminatory and non-selective.

Mr. President,

Our quest for effective transfer controls would be a mirage unless the issue of brokering is adequately addressed. The activities of brokers, especially, illegal ones, are centered in the illicit trade in SALW.

Mr. President,

The fight against illicit SALW may not be wholly attained unless it is extended to cover ammunitions and explosives since they are the real lethal weapons that maim and kill innocent civilians.

Finally, Mr. President, it is our utmost responsibility to seize this opportunity to adopt robust and realistic measures not only to consolidate the achievements of the past five years, but also facilitate the acceleration of the comprehensive resolution of this menace. The challenge may be daunting, but with the requisite political commitment we should surmount the hurdles. We can not and should not betray the trust the peoples we represent have reposed in us, with particular respect to their security and safety.

I thank you, Mr. President.