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OPENING STATEMENT BY

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THE NETHERLANDS TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

**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
26 June – 7 July 2006**

NEW YORK, 27 June 2006

Mr Chairman,

It is my pleasure to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Review Conference, to thank you for the thorough consultations you have held in New York as well as in Geneva, and for the excellent draft final document. You and your team have already contributed significantly to a successful outcome of this conference.

Building on the remarks by the European Union Presidency, I would like to underline three issues that are of special importance to The Netherlands.

[Transfer controls]

First: transfer controls.

There is some progress at the national and regional levels in the adoption of laws and regional agreements on arms transfers. But too many grey areas remain. That is why global principles for the control of small arms transfers are badly needed.

Our final document needs to carry concrete language on this.

A wider topic – not limited to small arms – is the need to develop an International Arms Trade Treaty (A.T.T.) on all conventional weapons. This goes beyond the Programme of Action. But it is crucial to start tackling the issue consistently at the international level.

The Netherlands expects the discussion on an “A.T.T.” to take off during the upcoming General Assembly and will actively contribute to it.

[Illicit Brokering]

Second: coming to grips with illicit brokering.

Arms brokers differ from arms traders in the sense that brokers might never own weapons shipments, or might even never come near them. In fact, in a globalised world an arms broker needs only a mobile phone to work from any remote place, bringing interested parties anywhere in the world together. That is why sound regulation on arms brokering is vital for every country – even for states where arms trade is a state monopoly; for states where small arms are not a problem; or for states with secure borders.

Together with Norway, the Netherlands has been actively involved in promoting the need for effective regulations of arms brokering activities. In the coming year, we expect the UN Expert Group on illicit brokering to come forward with clear-cut and broadly supported recommendations on further national and regional steps that need to be taken. The Group should also report

on the need of an international instrument or global regulations on brokering of small arms and light weapons.

[Implementation and follow-up]

My third point is an improved implementation of the Programme of Action. We cannot reach our goals without introducing measurability in our work; agreeing to concrete targets not unlike the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, we need a more effective identification of needs, a stronger commitment of resources, and a much bigger effort in joint capacity building. That is precisely what 42 states, including the Netherlands, have committed themselves to last month in Geneva, at a Ministerial meeting on Armed Violence and Development organized by Switzerland and UNDP.

Putting the Programme of Action truly into effect requires a structured approach. It means that national plans on reducing illicit small arms and armed violence must be part of an articulated broader vision on a nation's future development.

Last year, in its Resolution 60/68, the international community acknowledged this. It called for developing, where appropriate, comprehensive small arms and armed violence prevention programmes that are integrated into national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies.

Also, the OECD decided that contribution towards curbing small arms proliferation may be classified as official development aid.

Combined, all Member States now have the opportunity to put the holistic vision of last year's Summit Outcome into practice. When measures to tackle illicit arms availability are embedded in broader frameworks, donors will much better be able to provide additional funds for such programmes. This is crucial for enhancing of the Programme of Action.

Mr Chairman,

Our insistence on a more structured and coherent approach links directly to the proposal for follow-up meetings we circulated.

Almost by definition, meetings under a Programme of Action must be action-oriented and operational, creating a platform for matching well-identified needs with committed resources.

We don't necessarily need more meetings. But we need better ones. At this Review Conference, we can take important steps to bring that about. So that we turn the Programme of Action into a true action-programme.

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