

Islamic Republic of

I R A N

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

**Statement by H.E.Mr. Manouchehr Mottaki,
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Before 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
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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

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Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the great pleasure to address this Conference which has the mandate to review progress made in the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. I would like, at the outset, to congratulate you for presiding over this important conference. I would like also to express my appreciations to H. E.Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts and to the governments and institutions that have contributed to the implementation of the Programme of Action since its unanimous adoption in 2001.

We are living in a world that is characterized by interdependency of states' security, interests and concerns, among them concerns over the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Regrettably, illicit weapons continue to inflict human tolls, mostly innocent children and women. Hundreds of millions of small arms are already in circulation worldwide of which more than half are in civilian hands. The continuation of internal strife, the spread of insecurity and the increase in drug trafficking

have rendered the international measures less effective in preventing and combating the existing trend of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. On the other hand, it is clear that the overproduction and supply of these weapons facilitates their entry into regions of tension. An exclusive focus on the demand aspect of this problem is unlikely to present a sustainable solution. It is necessary that major arms producers undertake a more serious commitment in this respect. More efficient mechanisms are required to end regional conflicts and to build peace in the post-conflict situations. United Nations should take serious steps to this end. Unless the people are reassured that peace is restored and security is well in place, the demand for illicit weapons not only will not decrease but will also increase.

The 2001 UN Conference was a milestone event that succeeded in setting norms and measures for combating the illicit small arms and light weapons. These measures and undertakings should be fully implemented. The international community has a major responsibility in this regard and should do its utmost to fight the menace of illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, which is also linked to other problems such as drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism.

It must be recognized that despite many setbacks in the field of disarmament in recent years, including the failure to address the issue of disarmament in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, there have been a number of positive developments in the area of small arms and light weapons. The Heads of States expressed their support for the implementation of the Programme of Action in the Outcome Document. Entry into force of the Firearms Protocol in 2005, the adoption of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons at the 60th Session of the GA and its decision to establish a Group of Governmental Experts to consider further steps to prevent illicit brokering are all positive steps in follow-up of measures of the Programme of Action.

Since 2001, member states have taken positive steps in implementing the measures agreed in the UN Programme of Action. The reports submitted by more than 130 member states show that many countries have moved towards the fulfillment of their commitments. They have established or appointed National Point of Contacts and National Coordination Agencies which is an indication of their political will to carry out the commitments in the Programme of Action. However, stock must be taken of the significant differences in national capacity of member states and the specificities of different regions.

Promotion of international cooperation and assistance, in particular financial and technical assistance is key to boosting national capacities and furthering the implementation of steps in the Programme of Action. Special attention should be paid to the nations recovering from war and those

affected by internal conflicts. As long as the root causes of conflicts like poverty, underdevelopment, injustice, application of prejudicial treatment and double-standard, aggression and hegemonic tendencies are not curbed, a sustainable solution to the problem of illicit trade in small arms remains beyond reach even with having a comprehensive international instrument in place.

A strict national control over the transfer of arms, based on the national legislations is a must in the implementation of the Programme of Action and such control can help prevent further escalation of the problem. However, we should also not lose sight of the fact that millions of small arms are already in the illicit trade, and their collection needs extensive preparatory work. It would be illusive to assume that by developing new and ambitious instruments, which would only add to the undertakings of member states, without actually and practically helping them to address the main issues, the challenge of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons can be countered. We must, at the same time strive to promote a culture of dialogue, peace, education and public awareness, resisting hegemonic tendencies and dominance, preventing prejudicial treatment and application of double-standard and more importantly try to spread a spirit of seeking justice and compassion.

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

The Islamic Republic of Iran which has suffered greatly from illicit weapons, drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism has made significant progress in implementation of the Programme of Action. And, we have done that despite many problems and constraints imposed on Iran for many years.

As a transit route for drug trafficking and illicit trade of small arms in the region, Iran has sustained a great deal of human and material losses. In the last two decades, my country has endured much more than its fair share of the cost of fighting against heavily armed drug traffickers. Regrettably, the bitter fact that Iran has offered more than 3400 of its military and law enforcement personnel as martyrs in this fight is often underrated.

In the course of the past 25 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has continued to be subjected to different acts of terrorism. A notorious terrorist group, which was long supported and sheltered by the regime of Saddam Hussein and ironically continues to enjoy the protection of foreign forces in Iraq , has carried out, during this period of time, more than 612 acts of blind terrorism against innocent civilians and officials in Iran, using different kinds of small arms and

light weapons, which they received from foreign sources.

Incidentally, today coincides with the 25th anniversary of one of the worst cases of terrorist acts in human history against my country. On that day, Ayatollah Beheshti, the then head of Iran's judiciary along with 8 ministers, 27 of my colleagues then as the members of parliament, and many other officials attending a political meeting were targeted in a savage terrorist act by the group I mentioned above and were martyred. I wish to commemorate these martyrs of peace and justice.

Mr. President,

Existence of large number of illicit small arms in the neighboring countries affected by conflicts, which according to some estimation exceeds more than 10 millions, is another major source of concern for Iran. We have taken strict measures to prevent the flow of such illicit weapons into Iran and are working with our neighbors to enhance cooperation in this endeavor.

In this context, I am happy to report that upon my initiative, the first trilateral meeting of Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran was held last week to promote security cooperation, particularly at borders. Furthermore, the Ninth Foreign Ministers' Meeting of Iraq's neighboring countries will be held in Tehran on 8 and 9 of July, and it will undoubtedly help to promote stability and security in Iraq. Preventing the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons to and from Iraq is a top priority for security and fighting terrorism in the entire region.

Unfortunately, undue restrictions imposed on Iran in contravention of the commitments made in the UN Programme of Action, have limited our access to the technical assistance needed for combating the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in the region. We are compelled to invest in developing technologies which are in the market but not available to the developing countries.

Given the problems of drug trafficking which is linked to the illicit trade of arms, terrorism and organized crime, the Islamic Republic of Iran has the highest motivations to support the UN Programme of Action. In our view, the implementation of the UN Programme of Action is the most appropriate measure in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

As a result and since the adoption of the programme of Action in 2001, the Islamic Republic of Iran has put in place a range of schemes and concerted measures at national, regional and

international levels to follow up and fulfill its obligations under the Programme of Action. They include:

1. A comprehensive and revised set of regulations for effective control over transfer of arms and preventing illicit trade in small arms and light weapons;
2. Strengthening the relevant national laws and regulations banning and punishing the smuggling and illicit trafficking of any kind of weapons and ammunitions;
3. Founding of a Central Commission for monitoring over non-military arms and ammunitions;
4. Public educational campaign to raise public awareness about the dangers associated with illicit weapons and encouraging the delivery of such weapons to the authorized officials.
5. Strengthening border control measures to prevent transfer of illicit arms into Iran.

Mr. President,

I would like to reiterate my country's strong determination to combat the menace of illicit trade of small arms. We do recognize that this problem is of a regional and global nature. No country can settle this issue alone. International cooperation and assistance is the key to the success in this campaign. Providing assistance, particularly technical assistance to the States at the forefront of fight against illicit weapons would contribute to better implementation of the Program of Action. We hope that our collective effort would lead to a more secure and a safer world for all nations.

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

I cannot conclude without commemorating the innocent victims of Sardasht and Halabche who fell victim to the use of chemical weapons by Saddam Hussein's regime eight years ago today. Preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is our goal today in our meeting. However, fighting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction will always remain our greater goal. The Islamic republic of Iran as the most recent victim of the use of chemical weapon and terrorism, the two main threats the world faces today, will spare no effort to promote international peace and security on the basis of justice and free from any and all discriminatory and double-standard considerations.

Thank you Mr. President.