

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



**Statement by
Mr. Harald Aspelund
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Iceland to the United Nations**

**at the
the United Nations 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, 28 June 2006

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election as President of the Conference. My tributes also go to the other Members of the Bureau.

Iceland, as a member of the European Economic Area, aligned itself with the statement of the European Union, delivered by Austria at the commencement of the general debate, but I would like to make a brief remark in my own national capacity.

Mr. President,

There is wide diversity of views regarding issues on ways to tackle illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, but there is full recognition that uncontrollable spread of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons has caused far-reaching human suffering with damaging socio-economic consequences and exacerbation of conflicts. Hundreds and thousands of people are killed every year by such weapons and majority of these victims are civilians, in areas of conflicts, or of violent crime and terrorism. This fact in itself calls for political action. The nature of the problem requires concerted action between states, intergovernmental organizations and civil society.

During the past decade the international community has increasingly responded to calls for action. The universal nature of the UN makes it particularly well positioned to address this issue. In the Millennium Declaration, the Heads of States and Governments undertook to take concerted action to end illicit trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons; the 2001 Conference set out a strategy for restricting the illegal trade and our task now is to review the progress made. Number of other arrangements, regional and international, have been made.

Mr. President,

Iceland does not manufacture or trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. We fully support the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action. Much remains to be done when it comes to implementing the Programme of Action. Our goal at this meeting must be to complement, elaborate, or enhance, the Programme of Action and its implementation. We understand that the efforts must be comprehensive. Issues we have to tackle include marking and tracing, brokering regulations and transfer controls. In order to be effective, the fight against the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons must be expanded to also include ammunition.

We are of the view that the gender dimension must be taken into account. The fact is that the damage that women suffer from the availability and misuse of guns is disproportionate to their role as owners or users of these weapons.

We are also concerned about the impact armed conflict has on children; whether it is the result of children's direct involvement in hostilities or they are harmed by the widespread repercussions of armed conflict on their societies in general.

Finally Mr. President,

Iceland supports proposals on the establishment of common international agreement for the trade in all conventional weapons, a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty, to be negotiated within the United Nations.

Thank you Mr. President.