

27 August 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the second 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**

Madame President,
Mr. Deputy Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first congratulate you, Ambassador Ogwu, on your election as President of the Second Review Conference.

I am convinced that you, with your vast experience and great diplomatic skills, will guide this Conference to a successful outcome.

Eleven years ago, the United Nations General Assembly expressed grave concern about the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons.

The Assembly showed determination to reduce the human suffering caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, and to enhance respect for life and the dignity of the human person through the promotion of a culture of peace.

In light of this grave concern, the General Assembly took action and urgently adopted the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Our commitment represented a landmark consensus against the trafficking of small arms, and it gave us what turned out to be an essential tool, on the national, regional and international levels.

Today, we gather for the second Review Conference to mark that consensus, and to review our progress in realizing our commitments.

The General Assembly attaches great importance to the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and its consequences for the well-being of millions of people around the world.

The Assembly has regularly underlined the fact that the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects requires concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels.

The uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons in the illicit market continues to have severe consequences and poses a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, security, and sustainable development.

It is encouraging to see how much progress we have achieved since the adoption of the Programme of Action in 2001.

Various initiatives, including those of the United Nations, other international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society organizations, have contributed to increased awareness and implementation of activities on the national, regional and international level.

A growing majority of states have not only reported on the Programme of Action's implementation, but have also advanced legislations to restrict the flow of illicit small arms and light weapons.

Most such states have also established national coordinating bodies, and many have extended their preparedness for cooperation and assessment to other States in need of assistance for capacity-building in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Despite all the progress achieved, however, important challenges remain.

Small arms and light weapon outside government control continue to cause may-hem in many parts of the world.

Since the first review conference in 2006, the 2008 and 2010 biennial meetings of States have succeeded in providing useful guidance for national, regional and international efforts and cooperation.

Improving the effectiveness of cooperation and assistance remains a central theme.

This was further underlined and practically examined at the open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts, which addressed key implementation challenges and opportunities relating to particular issues and themes, including international cooperation and assistance.

It is key that we continue to work on advancing the implementation of the Programme of Action, so that the results of our intensive work here in the United Nations are felt by those people whose daily lives are affected by the threat of illicit small arms and light weapons.

Your flexibility and will for compromise during the coming two weeks will be essential for a successful meeting.

I have confidence in the ability of the Second Review Conference to continue the path of successful meetings, and to produce a substantive outcome that will further strengthen and expand implementation efforts based on the landmark consensus achieved eleven years ago.

In conclusion, let me reiterate my full support to your work.

Small Arms and Light Weapons remain a high priority on the General Assembly's agenda and your important work can substantially contribute not only to the advancement of this agenda, but also to the advancement of international peace and security at large.

I thank you.