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PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement
of

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at

**Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider 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**

United Nations
New York
July 11, 2005

**Mr. Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. It is my great pleasure and honor to address the meeting today at the occasion of the 2nd Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Action Plan on Small Arms and Light Weapons.
2. As you all may be aware, wars and civil unrests that happened in Cambodia from the 70s through to the late 90s created circumstances, which were prone to the proliferation of all types of arms and weapons. The 1991 Paris Peace Agreement for political settlement in Cambodia along with the general election organized under the auspices of the United Nations in 1993 marked the starting point for Cambodia to embark on collection of arms and weapons. However, these efforts faced many challenges as pockets of the Khmer Rouge resistant movement were still active in certain parts of the country before they totally collapsed in 1998 and the government was able to gather strength in collecting and registering arms and weapons.
3. The decisions of the UN Conferences on Small Arms and the first Biennial Meeting of States which clearly set out specific agenda for making the world a safe place through collection and destruction of arms and weapons, have been effectively adopted by the Royal Government of Cambodia and reinforced our position to join other countries in our efforts with regard to implementation. While more work needs to be done in years to come, the past two years have been a great success for the Royal Government of Cambodia in its efforts, commitment, and determination to have control on Small Arms and Light Weapon.
4. More than a hundred thousand of small arms has been collected and destroyed. Awareness programs have been conducted nationwide to appeal for the public participation in our efforts. Such programs are designed with an understanding that while recognizing that a majority of arms and weapons are in the hands of defense and armed personnel, a sizable number of the arms and weapons have also found their

places in the possessions of the civilian population, whose sole purpose has been mainly to protect their own safety.

5. Having the nationwide public participation in mind, six national projects including weapons collection, destruction, registration, safe storage, maintaining public awareness, and searching for hidden stockpiles have been designed by the Royal Government of Cambodia in conjunction with the programs which are supported by the generous assistance and cooperation of the European Union and the Japanese Government that concentrates on a participatory approach by which Government and the public are the beneficiaries in the projects implementations. While the significance of each project is equal, special emphasis has been given to the “Weapon for Development” program in which incentive program is established and offered to the public and community to provide and/or to report to us regarding weapons and their stockpiles which lead to collection and destruction. The incentive development that has been offered to the communities so far included schools, boreholes, and appropriate agricultural tools. Thus far, the program has highlighted great success as can be seen in the big quantity of arms and weapons gathered, and promotion of development in rural Cambodia.
6. The aforementioned success would not be made possible without the assistance, cooperation and support availed to us by EU-ASAC, the Government of Japan and other donor countries. For that, may I take this very opportunity, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, to express our profound and sincere thanks to the European Union, the Government of Japan, and friends for their assistance and support. I am confident that your continuing cooperation will be a key factor for the Royal Government of Cambodia to successfully complete its mission in implementing the above six stated projects.

Mr. Chairman,

7. I also would like to take this opportunity to inform you that the Royal Government of Cambodia has already submitted the 2004 Report on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons last October. Regionally, the Royal Government of

Cambodia has also worked with ASEAN member countries in combating arms trade and weapons smuggling. Just recently, our ASEAN Senior Officials Meetings on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and SOMTC + 3 (China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea) were held in Cambodia which also addressed the issues of arms smuggling and concerted commitment among all countries to fight this problem.

8. While the undertaking of the six projects on the ground has been met with great success, the Royal Government of Cambodia has also embarked on developing necessary legislations for small arms and explosives control. Specifically on 26 April this year, our National Assembly adopted “Law on the Management of Weapons, Explosives and Ammunition” setting out issues of supply and transportation, repair and production of weapons, explosives, and ammunition, and penalties. Moreover, the UN Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components, and Ammunition has also been submitted to the Council of Ministers and on to the National Assembly awaiting for ratification.
9. Finally, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to express my full support to the UK initiative for the need for common criteria and guidelines for SALW transfers. Cambodia trusts that the initiative will be greatly beneficial to states and their efforts to combat against Small Arms and Light Weapons throughout the world.
10. Last but not least, I would like once again to express our sincerest appreciation for the opportunity to attend this very important meeting. Such gathering, in my opinion, shows our concerted commitment and determination to make the world safer for our peoples through proper and systematic collection, destruction, and registration of small arms and light weapons. In the mean time, the Royal Government of Cambodia, being the successful State in Small Arms and Weapons control, wishes to appeal for continuing support and assistance from all concerned UN Agencies, donor countries, and international community so that our limitations of skills and resources can be overcome accordingly to undertake the complicated tasks with success. Your support and cooperation in whatever way you can will be much appreciated.

Thank you for your attention.