



Check Against Delivery

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR CRISPIN GREY-JOHNSON  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GAMBIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT**

**THE 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  
12 JULY 2005**

***Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished delegates,***

At the outset, let me thank you and your bureau for your leadership in conducting the business of the 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. A tremendous momentum has been generated by the Programme of Action which we should all build upon in ways that will lead to a complete and fully effective control of this scourge.

***Mr. Chairman,***

The Gambia belongs to a region that has an estimated 8 million small arms and light weapons (SALW) in circulation – a situation that has resulted in untold misery and suffering for the people of that part of Africa, where marauding militias and mercenary gangs continue to threaten the security of governments and millions of their people. These small arms and light weapons are produced in other regions of the world and supplied indiscriminately to anyone who is able to pay.

The Gambia therefore considers it of paramount importance to control and stop this trade and to adhere to the provisions of the ECOWAS Moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in the subregion. We have put the structures and mechanisms in place to combat this heinous trade, and recently, we mounted a campaign to have our Firearms regulations enforced by the Police. The exercise resulted in the collection of numerous unlicensed small arms. The Criminal code of The Gambia allows for the prosecution and punishment of individuals illegally found to be in possession of any SALW. The Police can search, arrest and prosecute anybody deemed to have illegally possessed or inappropriately used any firearms. The Department of State for Defense reviews Government stocks on a quarterly basis and a database administered by the Military, showing the status of all available arms is used to track unmarked and surplus stocks if any. In collaboration with the Police, marking and tracing is done using the available database and police records.

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*Statement by H.E. Ambassador Crispin Grey-Johnson, Permanent Representative  
of The Gambia to the United Nations, at the Second Biennial Meeting on Small Arms*

*12 July 2005*

*Mr. Chairman,*

In spite of the widespread recognition of the dangers of this trade and the need to have it arrested, the flow of small arms and light weapons continues unabated. Illicit suppliers continue to ply their trade despite efforts to identify and curb the activities of their networks. Recent reports indicate that arms are still flowing into the Great Lakes Region with the same traditional suppliers still active. I am positive that the same can be said in respect of the West Africa sub-region. Numerous arms embargoes and sanctions continue to be busted. What all this indicates is that the Programme of Action needs to be fine-tuned in order to make the suppliers of these lethal weapons more accountable.

This fine tuning should be extended to include a ban on the sale of SALWs to non-state actors. The ease with which these actors have access to arms is indeed disturbing given the demonstrated links that exist between them and organized crime on one hand, and terrorism on the other. Our collective security requires us all to act in concert to tighten our controls over access to these arms and weapons especially by dubious individuals, mercenaries and militias. We should also put in place a rigorous monitoring and reporting regime to identify violators and bring them to book.

*Mr. Chairman,*

The Gambia fully supports the ECOWAS moratorium, and now that ECOWAS has strengthened its capacity to support the implementation of the moratorium, we shall hopefully see a more vigorous response by all stakeholders. We however believe that there is a need for increased technical assistance for capacity-building of our security agencies so that as individual entities as well as collectively, they would be more fully prepared to take on detractors and violators of the ban.

It is my hope that this meeting will bring us even closer to the attainment of our common objectives to combat and eradicate this scourge.

Thank you.

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