



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM
OF LESOTHO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
KHOTSONG
204 East 39th Street
New York, N.Y. 10016**

STATEMENT

BY

**Ms. Lipuo Moteetee
Counsellor and Charge' d'affaires
of the
Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Lesotho
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**

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Mr. Chairman,

Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as the Chairman of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

As we are gathered here in New York to elaborate on issues concerning small arms and light weapons, it once again becomes very difficult to dispel disturbing thoughts and images of poor and hungry children, with no prospects for a better future, who instead of being provided with food and/or hope are supplied with deadly weapons. We are reminded of the havoc that small arms and light weapons continue to cause in many countries and the unnecessary loss of lives of innocent civilians, including women, children and the elderly. Nonetheless, Mr. Chairman, we are encouraged by the fact that the international community has come to acknowledge the fact that the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons is interlinked with and can exacerbate some of the greatest menaces that the world is faced with such as transnational organized crime and armed conflicts, some of the greatest impediments to sustainable development. The world has also come to realize that the challenge requires a global response.

Mr. Chairman,

Implementation of the Programme of Action is an ongoing process. Some of measures that the Government of Lesotho has taken in this regard include the construction of a safe and secure storage facilities for unlicensed, weapons that are confiscated or voluntarily returned by civilians. A National Focal Point has been established for the purposes of *inter alia*, the raising of awareness on the dangers of illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the coordination of the implementation of among others, the Programme of Action, the UN Protocol, the 2000 Bamako Ministerial Declaration and the SADC Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials. Furthermore, the Government is in the process of amending all relevant legislation.

Lesotho cooperates very closely with other countries in the southern African region. Apart from the fact that Lesotho is a party to the SADC Protocol, there exists between Botswana, Lesotho and South Africa, an Agreement on Defence Issues. It was under the framework of the Agreement that, Lesotho with the assistance of South Africa was able to destroy unserviceable, non-standard, excess and redundant small arms in November 2001.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate Lesotho's commitment to the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action and to regional and other global initiatives to combat the spread of illicit small arms and light weapons. My delegation therefore welcomes the agreement reached on an international instrument on tracing illicit arms and light weapons as a basis on which we can further build. Furthermore, my delegation is looking forward to the review conference to take place in 2006. I thank you.