



# NORWAY

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## STATEMENT

by

**H.E. Ms. Mona Juul**  
**Chargé d'Affaires**

**at the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the  
Implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat  
and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arm and Light Weapons in  
all its Aspects**

**New York, 11 July 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first of all to congratulate you on your election and to thank you for all you have done to prepare for this second biennial meeting of states on the implementation of the programme of action on illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. At the end of this week I am confident that we will all have a much clearer idea of how far we have come in our common efforts and where we need to do more in the lead-up to next year's review conference of the programme of action.

The issue of small arms is not one that captures the large headlines. It tends to be seen as a collection of individual stories of misfortune rather than a problem that concerns us all. But when we add up the individual stories, we see the enormity of the problem. More than 500.000 people are estimated to lose their lives annually through the use of these weapons. We can only imagine the human, social and economic costs in family members lost, hospital beds occupied, societies destabilised and development denied.

Norway has for many decades been a major supporter of UN development and peace initiatives. Our commitment to the Programme of Action reflects our recognition that the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons seriously undermine these efforts.

Armed violence, and the fear of violence, is one of the most pressing problems of the world's poorest regions. Unaccounted arms transfers to conflict regions continue at a disturbing rate, often linked to the illicit exploitation of natural resources and trade in illegal drugs, providing a vicious circle of instability and crime-based economies.

Although small arms themselves do not cause conflict, easy access to them makes violence more lethal and conflict more protracted. The Millennium Development Goals are unattainable in such an environment, and these issues are at the very heart of the present UN Security, Human Rights and Development Agenda. This needs to be the starting point of how we deal with this problem.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons needs to be addressed in two ways. Governments must develop better laws, regulations and policies to prevent arms being supplied into the wrong hands. Just as important is to work, from a humanitarian and development perspective, with the communities that are affected by armed violence.

We are pleased to see that some programmes directed at dealing with small arms and light weapons have had a humanitarian perspective, in order to protect civilians and lessen their exposure to small arms and light weapons. This work needs to continue. However, we also need to move further by focussing on the issue of small arms and light weapons in relation to development. The illicit spread of small arms and light weapons contributes to the destabilization of societies in such a way as to make sustainable development an impossible dream. Unfortunately, many developing countries, sometimes labelled as being at peace, are as violent as some war zones. We should therefore aim to bridge the divide between security and development concerns. Some important work has been done already, but much remains to be done.

The most high-profile initiatives have been those to disarm ex-combatants, seen as key components of post-conflict peace building. Without successful disarmament, conflicts are more likely to re-ignite, plunging societies into renewed violence.

Specific small arms programmes are needed in countries recovering from conflict and in those that suffer from other forms of armed violence. Some of the most interesting are arms for development programmes, especially in Sierra Leone, Mozambique, and Cambodia, which could serve as a source of inspiration in this regard. A key partner in all these endeavours are civil society organisations and faith based groups.

In addition to specific initiatives, sensitivity to small arms issues could be integrated into wider development and humanitarian programmes. Areas which would benefit from such small arms mainstreaming include:

- Education (especially peace education)
- Gender identity and relationships;
- Healthcare;
- Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs);
- Security sector reform.

Most importantly, and especially relevant to this meeting, we need to look at how we can make it meaningful for war-torn societies to make the transition from a conflict economy, which may be profitable for a few, to a peace economy which may be profitable for the wider community. A key component of that transition is to ensure that the illegal trade in weapons -often purchased by conflict goods- is curtailed. The humanitarian development community needs to ensure that it does not inadvertently help to fan the flames of conflict. One important initiative may be to pre-screen aid flights to avoid that known arms traffickers are employed by humanitarian agencies.

From a development and humanitarian perspective our key motivation is to make people safer. Insecurity is a reason why people acquire weapons. Making people safer requires concerted efforts by governments, law enforcement and civil society groups. It is a difficult task, but a vital one.

As governments tackle small arms from a development and humanitarian perspective, they must also work together to prevent the further proliferation of small arms into areas of concern. A key part of this is to control the illegal trade in weapons.

The UN Programme of Action remains a key global instrument to control illicit arms trafficking. It recommends an important set of measures that will help to prevent the diversion of arms into illegal markets. Hopefully, this meeting will show that the Programme of Action has been helpful for countries affected by small arms problems. We can only claim success if we can show that action has been taken that helps people affected by armed violence. Public awareness around these issues has grown considerably, not the least due to the efforts of civil society and numerous NGOs. This has been and will be an important basis for political action. We need to work on several tracks to speed up the implementation of the Programme of Action. Much administrative and legal work has been done, but more remains to streamline national legislation and harmonise it with that of neighbouring countries.

Regional efforts are of particular importance, in the light of shared challenges and similar experience. Norway has assisted such efforts and will continue to do so. Civil society representatives have proved to be constructive partners in this regard.

Three important means of preventing illegal trafficking in small arms identified in the Programme of Action are marking and tracing, controlling arms brokering and destroying surplus weapons. All these issues can best be addressed via international cooperation, and Norway is an active partner in these efforts.

Norway is pleased that the report by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change noted the threat to stability posed by small arms and light weapons and recommended that Member States should expedite and conclude negotiations on legally binding agreements on the marking and tracing, as well as the brokering and transfer, of small arms and light weapons. We are even more pleased that the Secretary-General supported this recommendation in his report "In larger Freedom". Now it is up to us, the Member States, to act on these recommendations and make them part of the September Summit outcome document.

The question of marking and tracing is of prime importance to improve international co-operation on preventing the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons. We commend the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group to negotiate an international instrument for this purpose, which produced agreement on a politically binding instrument just three weeks ago. While we would have liked to have a legally binding instrument which included the issue of ammunition, we are nevertheless pleased that it proved possible to reach agreement on a political instrument. It is an important step in the right direction. We commend ambassador Thalmann for his tireless efforts to steer the Working Group towards a successful outcome. Now it is up to the General Assembly to adopt the proposed instrument and to send clear signals as regards dealing with the question of ammunition. My country will be happy to co-operate with like-minded nations to ensure that we will achieve this.

The next step to deal effectively with the issue of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is to develop effective national legislation on brokering and to enhance international co-operation in this area. Through the Programme of Action we have committed ourselves to develop adequate national legislation and administrative procedures, including measures such as registration of brokers, licensing or authorisation of brokering transactions and appropriate penalties for all illicit brokering activities performed within the relevant State's jurisdiction or control.

Since 2001 we have witnessed the development of six regional and multilateral agreements concerning brokering, ranging from the UN Firearms Protocol to politically binding statements by regional organisations such as the OAS Model Regulations and the OSCE Principles on the Control of Brokering in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Between them these agreements cover over 120 governments, including all the world's major exporters of small arms and light weapons. They already constitute a very broad agreement on the elements of effective international co-operation in dealing with illicit brokering. What has yet to be achieved is a larger common understanding on such issues as extra-territorial jurisdiction and financing. Since the

last Biennial Meeting of States Norway has, together with the Netherlands, supported a number of regional and international activities to promote better understanding of the brokering issue. We now urge all Member States to agree at this year's General Assembly on the mandate for a Governmental Group of Experts, to be set up in 2006, to look into ways of enhancing international co-operation on combating illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons.

One of the Cold War's enduring legacies is large stockpiles of small arms, light weapons and ammunition intended for a different age, but now often left in a state of poor management under hazardous conditions. We know that many of these weapons found their way into the conflict areas of recent years. There is now greater awareness of the nature of the problem and a number of commendable collection and destruction programmes have been initiated through the UN, NATO, OSCE, and nationally by countries like South Africa. Norway contributes to a number of these programmes, but much more needs to be done.

In addition to the important work that is being carried out via the Programme of Action, we believe that there are two further areas where the proliferation of small arms could be addressed.

First, is the question of civilian ownership of small arms and light weapons. It is a well-known fact, documented by many NGOs, that most illicit weapons start as licit weapons before they become diverted through theft, smuggling or other criminal acts. Controlling civilian ownership is obviously one important factor in reducing the supply of weapons to illicit markets.

Second, we are interested in efforts to secure agreement on an Arms Trade Treaty covering all trade in conventional weapons. We support the British initiative to enlist the broadest possible support for this idea within a United Nations framework, with the aim of agreeing on a legally binding treaty. It is vital that all major arms exporters and importers join this process and that no country chooses to opt out of existing control arrangements in the meantime. It is also vital that this effort is seen as complementary to and not alternative to the efforts to agree on a legally binding instrument on illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons.

We all agree on the seriousness of the issue of illicit small arms and light weapons, but we still have a way to go when it comes to developing effective international co-operation arrangements to deal with the challenges. I hope that this debate will serve to remind us of this, give us some practical ideas about what we can do and inspire us all to work more effectively towards that end.

Thank you for your attention.