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Statement

By

H.E. Mr. SHIN Kak-soo

Ambassador

Head of Delegation of the Republic of Korea

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 Arms and Lights Weapons in All Its Aspects**

**12 July 2005
New York**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Second Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms and Light Weapons. I am confident that your proven leadership based on your long and diverse experience in disarmament arena, coupled with your thorough preparation for this meeting, will lead our discussion to a great success.

The Program of Action (PoA), since it was adopted in 2001, has been and will remain a cornerstone to address the issue of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) in all its aspects. Though it is not a legally-binding document, strong political commitment to its faithful implementation made by States enabled us all to strengthen national legislations to curb illicit transfer of SALW and enhance regional and international cooperation. In particular, the successful and harmonious conclusion of the negotiation on marking and tracing of illicit SALW last June demonstrated renewedly the strong political will of international community to root out illicit trade of SALW. As a staunch supporter of the cause for negotiating a separate document on marking and tracing, we wholeheartedly welcome and support adoption of the international instrument on marking and tracing and look forward to its full and faithful implementation. Despite its disappointing lack of legal power, the instrument, if efficiently implemented under the good will and strong political support of States, together with the PoA, will work as a mighty force to repel the ominous sway of illicit SALW. We also welcome the recent entry into force of the UN Firearms Protocol and look forward to its contribution to eliminating the illicit SALW.

Despite this remarkable progress and higher expectations for the better future, however, we cannot deny the gloomy realities where the proliferation of SALW still causes over 300,000 casualties annually in armed conflict alone. More alarmingly, this estimated harm is only the tip of the iceberg in assessing the broader and long-term socio-economic consequences of the illicit SALW in the affected countries. This disheartening but awakening statistics will not allow us any modicum of complacency on what has been achieved so far but rather reaffirm our determination to step up our efforts to fight against the illicit SALW.

Mr. Chairman,

The PoA has established a solid framework to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit transfer of SALW not only through legislations at the national level, but through cooperative and coordinated efforts at regional and international levels in areas such as capacity building, export control, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and promoting public awareness and culture of peace. As a comprehensive package of measures to combat illicit SALW, the PoA has yet to open a new horizon as well as to deal more effectively with the existing problems in its old horizon. As the two-year negotiation on marking and tracing came to its end, we believe it is now high time to seriously tackle the next significant issue of illicit brokering so that each and every challenge posed to the SALW is met by the international community in a timely and efficient manner. My delegation wishes to extend its full support to this endeavor, including the establishment of a group of governmental experts in the UN, and particularly appreciate the on-going efforts of the DDA to organize focused discussions on exploring appropriate steps to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit brokering in SALW. We see no more ideal combination of measures to combat the illicit SALW in all its aspects than to launch a three-pillared approach equipped with the PoA, the international instrument on marking and tracing, and a separate framework on illicit brokering, which has yet to be negotiated.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to the national implementation of the PoA, the Republic of Korea has faithfully fulfilled all its commitments under the terms of the document. The Korean government has developed and maintained very strict and effective measures for the control of military and non-military use of SALW throughout overall stages of manufacture, storage, management, transfer and dismantlement. The Republic of Korea has developed an electronic inventory of all its domestic military SALW through a computer program known as the Firearms Management System, which we found very effective in its operation. The Korean Government has also strengthened export control measures, particularly through introducing a catch-all control system developed under the framework of the Wassenaar Arrangements, in combating the illicit trade and proliferation of SALW.

The Republic of Korea will continue to make its share of efforts to collectively deal with SALW problem particularly by sharing its experience and expertise in the field of management and control of SALW, and by actively exploring other creative ways to accomplish the goals of the PoA. Accordingly, the Korean government has, in close consultation with the DDA and other relevant UN organizations, initiated a program to invite African experts to the Republic of Korea in order to widen mutual understanding and seek further ways to contribute in concrete terms to alleviating the problem. This initiative has been taken under our firm belief that the practical contributions to resolving the problems could be best consulted through a direct dialogue at expert level between the affected countries and my own country.

Mr. Chairman,

In implementing the PoA, one challenge will be how to secure its faithful implementation under the situation where a specific monitoring system is not available. In this regard, voluntary steps for enhancing transparency, such as national reporting, will certainly be conducive to promoting trust and cooperation among States. We are of the view that there is still a need to improve the reporting mechanism both in procedural and substantive aspects. We hope that the 2006 review conference of the PoA will make a good opportunity to address this issue.

Last but not least, my delegation wishes to highlight the commendable role that the civil society and non-governmental organizations have played in implementing the PoA. Although the primary responsibilities for controlling the SALW rest with governments, the NGOs, beyond doubt, have incessantly demonstrated their capabilities and competence in effectively combating the illicit SALW, particularly through their invaluable first-hand experiences and determined commitment to the eradication of harms and miseries caused by the misuse of SALW. In this regard, governments are strongly encouraged to strengthen their cooperation and partnership with the NGOs both in identifying and tackling the problems of SALW at the frontline and implementing the provisions of the PoA.

Mr. Chairman,

Needless to say, in fighting against the illicit trade in SALW, nothing will be more important at this stage than the faithful and effective implementation of the PoA by States. Pledging again our unswerving commitment to the cause of the PoA, I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and active participation in deliberations of the Meeting.

Thank you.