



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Statement by

Ambassador Stanislas KAMANZI,

Delivered at the

Second Biennial Meeting of States on the Implementation of
the UN Programme of Action on Preventing, Combating and
Eradicating the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light
Weapons in All Its Aspects

12 July 2005

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Mr. Chairman,

1. I would like to begin by joining other delegations in congratulating you and members of the bureau on your election. We wish you and your team every success in your work and pledge our full support and cooperation in the tasks ahead.
2. We would like to associate ourselves with the Statement of the African Group delivered yesterday by the distinguished delegate from Nigeria.
3. The proliferation of and illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons has devastated the countries of the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa over the last decade. In no other part of the world is the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade more urgently required.
4. There should be no doubt that although we speak of **'small arms'** and **'light weapons'**, the effects of these weapons can neither be described as **'small'** nor **'light'**. Indeed, claiming tens of thousands of lives each year, either through conflict or crime, **they are the real weapons of mass destruction.**
5. The trade that enables these weapons to get into the hands of dangerous, non-State militia like the genocidal ex-FAR/Interahamwe must be brought to a swift end. We see the implementation of the Programme of Action as central to this effort, which would contribute immeasurably to peace, security and development in central Africa and the rest of the world.

Mr. Chairman,

6. At the national level, Rwanda has undertaken a series of measures to implement the UN Programme of Action as well as the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of SALW in the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa. These measures include;
 - a. Strengthening the legal framework and streamlining administrative procedures to ensure more effective regulation and control of weapons including control on civilian possession of arms;

- b. Enhancing the capacity of the Police and local authorities to implement legislation on Small Arms and Light Weapons;
 - c. Establishment in March 2003 of a National Focal Point and an inter-departmental committee in to monitor and advance the implementation of the Programme of Action, involving the Ministries of Defense, Internal Affairs, Justice, Foreign Affairs, Finance and Commerce, as well as the Police, the Immigration and Customs departments and three civil society organisations;
 - d. Signature and ratification of the Nairobi Protocol as well as the agreement establishing the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA);
 - e. Effective regulation and control on arms imports and transfers, including working towards developing comprehensive and accurate records;
 - f. Development and implementation of an effective DDR programme over the last decade that is managed by a National Demobilisation Commission;
 - g. Effective regulation and control of stockpiles;
 - h. Coordination on the agenda for action with the Nairobi Secretariat and coordination with other national focal points;
 - i. Effective information sharing and dissemination;
 - j. Capacity building and public awareness programmes.
 - k. Seizure and destruction of 6,000 assorted rifles and ammunition in April 2005 at a ceremony witnessed by representatives of the Nairobi Secretariat and international community, and a document confirming the proceedings of the demolition was signed by the UNDP Resident Representative in Rwanda, the Rwandan Minister of Defense and the Director/Coordinator of the Nairobi Secretariat. The event took place at the occasion of the commemoration of the fifth anniversary of signing of the Nairobi Declaration.
 - l. Seizure of 250 tons of ammunition which will be destroyed this month;
7. Rwanda works closely with a number of local and international NGOs that have provided invaluable support for our efforts to implement the Programme of Action.
8. We will continue to work on capacity-building and to improving public awareness and research. We will continue to work with international partners to ensure the success of these programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

9. We also recognize that we are not an island. The lack of effective regulation and controls in neighbouring countries will inevitably impact on the success of our implementation of the Programme of Action.
10. Rwanda will remain committed to the full implementation of all regional and international instruments aimed at combating the proliferation and trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons as a measure to further promote peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa.

I thank you.