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**Deuxième réunion biennale des États pour l'examen de la mise en œuvre du Programme
d'action en vue de prévenir, combattre et éliminer le commerce illicite des armes légères
sous tous ses aspects**

Débat général

**Déclaration
de
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« Politique de paix et sécurité humaine »,
Département fédéral des affaires étrangères,
Berne**

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**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**

General debate

**Statement
by
Mr. Stephan Husy
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“Peace Policy and Human Security”,
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,
Bern**

New York, le 11 juillet 2005

Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, New York, 11-15 July 2005

Swiss statement to the general debate

Mr. Chairman,

Switzerland congratulates you on your appointment to the chair of the Second Biennial Meeting of States. Switzerland is confident that your many years of experience in the field of small arms qualify you as an excellent chairperson to lead us through the Meeting with ease and wisdom. Your intensive preparatory work for the BMS, which took you to numerous consultations in New York and Geneva as well as to regional small arms conferences around the world, have enabled the UN member States and civil society organisations to articulate their expectations with regard to the BMS. Switzerland expresses its gratitude to the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations, which accepted to carry out the preliminary work, as well as to the NGOs and States which plan to hold a wide range of events in the margins of the meeting, including presentations, briefings and discussions.

The open-ended *Working Group*, chaired by Switzerland, to *negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons* concluded its work in accordance with its mandate on 17 June this year. Switzerland regards as an important success for the international community the further development and formulation of the provisions on marking and registering SALW contained in the Programme of Action within a document with global relevance. Moreover, Switzerland is convinced that this process has given us important insights into launching future initiatives which will make the UN Programme of Action more practicable in a number of areas.

We have gathered here to analyse the progresses made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. The Programme of Action is an instrument enabling the international community to address in particular the threat posed by SALW to human security. If this Programme of Action is a comprehensive document, it nevertheless only is a starting point. The realisation of its provisions, sometimes worded in too general terms, requires that completing norms and/or mechanisms be developed. Headway has been made in this respect: several processes, including that concerning the tracing of SALW, have been initiated or are about to be launched.

Since the Programme of Action was approved, a number of States have made available considerable sums of money to affected states, in particular for activities such as DD&R, ensuring stockpile security and the destruction of surplus weapons and ammunition, and have had some remarkable successes through working in close co-operation with regional organisations and UN agencies, in particular UNDP. It is encouraging to report that in this context an increasing number of civil society organisations and research institutes have made major contributions. The work of institutes such as the *Small Arms Survey* and those organisations collaborating with it in all regions of the world have enabled States and international organisations to provide assistance that is better targeted to, and therefore more efficiently addresses their needs. For this reason, Switzerland will continue to invest in policy-relevant research.

If much has therefore been accomplished, a long road nonetheless still lays ahead of us. Some issues, such as that of ammunition, for instance, have thus far not received the necessary attention. In addition, regional efforts towards the elaboration of technical norms or the creation of assistance mechanisms remain uneven, a fact sometimes explained by a lack of resources – a more systematic cooperation among regional organisation could be encouraged in order to partly address this disequilibrium.

As we move towards the 2006 Review Conference, Switzerland would like to underline the importance of consolidating our individual and collective efforts to stem the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Ongoing implementation of the Programme of Action will require some form of support mechanism to monitor progress, to develop and disseminate lessons learned and best practices, and to provide expertise for specific initiatives or negotiations. Early attention on how best to establish such a support mechanism will help guarantee the success of our efforts in 2006 and beyond.

Attention should given, in the context of the implementation and further development of the Programme of Action, to setting strict and globally consistent export criteria for exporting small arms. Switzerland has pointed out the need for globally binding criteria for export controls on several occasions. It supports efforts to set internationally consistent standards in this area which take into consideration aspects such as

compliance with international legal standards, in particular those regarding human rights, as well as the risk of illicit proliferation of arms.

Finally, in implementing the Programme of Action, we should not forget that some issues were set aside in 2001, such as that of non-state actors, and that they remain outstanding today. The misuse of small arms by non-state armed groups in many conflict situations is a major threat to human security. The international community has shown little readiness to date to deal with this complex issue.

Paragraph II/12 of the Programme of Action requires States to introduce end-user certificates. This will ensure that small arms can only be supplied with the approval of the relevant government authorities of the State on whose territory the end-user is based. This measure can help limit access by armed groups to SALW. Further measures which could restrict access to small arms by armed groups include improved stockpile security for arms and ammunition, systematic collection of small arms and light weapons at the end of conflicts with priority being given to weapons with the greatest destructive potential, offers of alternative forms of employment for former combatants in the framework of reintegration programmes, improved border and customs monitoring in regions where weapons, and also to some extent combatants, can move across state borders from one conflict zone to another.

Switzerland has, in other areas such as anti-personnel landmines, recognized the importance of engaging in an appropriate dialogue with non-state armed groups with a view to stemming the proliferation and misuse of certain types of weapons. The lessons learned from these activities might appropriately be applied to the small arms issue.