



PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

TURKEY

**BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES TO CONSIDER THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON SMALL
ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS**

NEW YORK, 12 JULY 2005

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you for your election to the Chair of this meeting. We are confident that your able leadership will facilitate our work to a great extent.

Turkey has already aligned itself with the statement made by the U.K yesterday on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore briefly focus on Turkey's efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Excessive and destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to global, regional and national peace and security as well as to social and economic development of many countries. The statistics of death tolls resulting from SALWs are increasingly frightening. There is a close interrelationship between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and terrorism, organized crime as well as drugs and human trafficking. Turkey's recent history has bitter memories of human suffering from the accumulation of small arms and light weapons in the hands of terrorist organizations.

In view of this reality, Turkey is a staunch supporter of international cooperation to combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, not only within the UN, but also in other fora. Let me give a few examples.

Within the OSCE, Turkey was one of the first countries which introduced a draft resolution for the establishment of an arms register to include categories of certain small arms. The OSCE Document on small arms and light weapons adopted in October 2000, marks an important progress in the international control of small arms and light weapons.

Turkey is also a founding member of the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) regarding export controls on conventional weapons and dual use materials and technology.

Turkey also participates in the Ad Hoc Group on Small Arms and Light Weapons in NATO/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and other NATO/PfP activities related to small arms and light weapons.

Turkey supports the activities of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) Regional Center for Combating Transborder Crime in Bucharest, which is, among other issues, aimed at preventing the smuggling of small arms, light weapons and explosives. Turkey has commissioned two experts at this Center.

Mr. Chairman,

The Programme of Action was a milestone in placing the issue of small arms and light weapons firmly on the UN agenda and its implementation constitutes a concrete contribution to global peace and stability. In accordance with the UN Programme of Action, Turkey has made significant improvements in the national marking system, national procedures for the control of

manufacture and techniques for the destruction of small arms. These steps are reflected in our 2005 National Report which was recently circulated.

Turkey welcomes the recent adoption by the Open-ended Working Group of an international instrument for the identification and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons. We would have preferred to adopt a legally binding document on this matter covering also the ammunition of small arms and light weapons. Yet we believe that this document, as adopted, will certainly enhance international cooperation. We will fully support this document.

Mr. Chairman

Let me say a few words on the way forward in the implementation of the UN Programme of Action:

1. Transparency in conventional arms transfers should be promoted for more effective international control. Turkey advocates the expansion of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to include small arms and light weapons. In this framework the mandatory information exchange on the transfer of small arms and light weapons should also be considered. Denial of export licenses could also be one of the reporting categories in such an information exchange. Turkey also supports initiatives aiming at concluding an arms trade treaty, which would complement international efforts to eradicate illicit trade on small arms and light weapons.

2. At the national level, customs officials and security forces assume an important role in implementing the Programme of Action. In order to establish an effective control mechanism, regional cooperation on small arms and light weapons issues between the customs authorities and the security forces should be promoted through institutional information exchange and training schemes. Records of small arms and light weapons transactions should be kept as long as possible and be shared through official channels, if requested by another UN member state.

3. Monitoring and controlling the activities of the producers, exporters, brokers, transporters, importers and end-users of small arms and light weapons are essential in eradicating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Some individuals and companies benefit from the loopholes in the international control regimes and diversities in national legislation. An international and regional harmonization of legislation regarding small arms and light weapons will certainly be an important step forward in preventing the abuse of legal gaps by smugglers. In this framework, Turkey believes that a study on the feasibility of developing an end-user certificate system at regional and global levels, as well as an information exchange and verification mechanism, could be useful. In this context Turkey also supports international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.

4. International and regional cooperation should be fostered in assisting countries in need of ensuring effective management and physical security of their small arms and light weapons stockpiles. Small arms and light weapons seized or in surplus must be destroyed in accordance

with the internationally accepted standards and with the technical and financial assistance of the donor countries, international organizations and NGOs.

In line with our international commitments, 5.180 small arms and light weapons have been destructed in Turkey on 3 June 2005, in the presence of foreign Ambassadors and military attaches as well as the media. Furthermore, an ammunition and mine destroying/disposing facility is being constructed in Turkey. It will be completed in 2006. The facility will include, a big and small cartridge demilitarization workshop, an underwater cutting workshop, a package uncovering workshop, a TNT melting workshop, a rotating band cutting workshop, a closing plug disassembly workshop and an armored burning furnace unit (up to 30 mm). The facility will be capable of destroying small arms ammunition (up to 40 mm), mortar high explosive ammunition (up to 120 mm), tank ammunition (up to 105 mm), Howitzer high explosive ammunition (up to 15,5/23 cm.), various fuses and capsules as well as anti-tank and anti-personnel mines.

5. Cooperation schemes and exchange of information on combating trafficking in small arms and light weapons should be included in the framework of regional and bilateral confidence and security building measures.

6. Turkey strongly urges Member States to consider innovative strategies to address the close interrelationship between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking and the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources. Member States should make available all relevant information concerning such activities.

7. Proliferation and unauthorized use of Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) is also matter of serious concern in connection with the small arms and light weapons. Turkey strongly believes that the international community should act decisively to improve stockpile security and strengthen export controls in countries that import and manufacture MANPADS.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Turkey will continue to actively contribute to all efforts within the UN and other fora to foster international cooperation and the establishment of effective norms and rules, to combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.