



UGANDA

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STATEMENT BY

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to the United Nations**

**At
The Second Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations
Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit
Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects**

New York,
July 11, 2005

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Mr. President,

I wish to congratulate you upon your tireless efforts in preparing this important meeting. I would like to assure you of my delegation's support for the successful completion of the task ahead. My delegation associates itself with the statement by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Africa Group.

Uganda recognizes that peace and socio-economic development cannot prevail in an atmosphere of rampant illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW). We therefore welcome every effort aimed at eradicating this problem. Uganda is fully cooperating in the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trade and trafficking in SALW in all its aspects. Uganda is cooperating with the UN system to ensure the effective implementation of arms embargoes mandated by the Security Council.

Uganda is a signatory to the Bamako Declaration, Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol, which establish a range of measures to be implemented at regional, sub-regional and national levels to promote comprehensive and coordinated action on (SALW). Uganda ratified the Nairobi Protocol in February 2005.

Mr. President,

Uganda established the Uganda National Focal Point (NFP) on SALW in October 2001, to coordinate the implementation of these instruments at national level. Regional Task Forces (RTF) have been established to coordinate and implement activities at the local level.

Uganda has adopted a National Action Plan (NAP), which provides a framework for comprehensive and coordinated action. The three-year Plan, adopted in June 2004, focuses activities on three core objectives:

To enhance control and management of existing stock of small arms and light weapons

To reduce the volume of small arms and light weapons already in circulation
To prevent future proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Uganda appreciates the cooperation of civil society partners, SaferAfrica and Saferworld, which have supported the national processes and capacity building for the NFP. Uganda also commends the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, for providing vital equipment to the Uganda NFP.

Mr. President,

Uganda is in the process of reviewing national legislation, and administrative procedures in order to conform with the UNPoA requirements. Guidelines for National Policy and Review of Legislation have been developed for presentation to Parliament. These guidelines have incorporated the regional Guidelines for Best Practices adopted by the signatory states to the Nairobi Declaration. The guidelines espouse best practices in stockpile management; import, export and transfer control; marking, tracing and brokering; public awareness and arms destruction; and mutual legal assistance and operational capacity, public education and disposal.

Mr. President,

The ongoing legislative review process will reinforce existing national controls that require import, export and transit permits, to include provisions to verify permits and to require end-user certificates, licensing controls and procedures, and provisions on marking and tracing.

My delegation welcomes the increased international interest to promote stronger regulation in international arms transfers. Uganda supports the International Transfer Control Initiative, to secure international agreement on common standards on SALW transfers. In addition my delegation calls for the fast promulgation of the International Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Uganda supports the efforts of the Consultative Group Process (CGP) convened by International Alert, Saferworld, and the University of Bradford that has made significant progress in elaborating and refining guidelines for national controls over two key issues, namely, (i) Transfers of SALW to non-state actors, and (ii) Guidelines on "existing responsibilities under the international law" for transfers of SALW.

Mr. President,

The government of Uganda is convinced that a peaceful approach to disarmament, which addresses factors that drive demand and supply for arms, will lead to more sustainable peace. Under this approach, a disarmament exercise was carried out in 2001- 2002 and over 10,000 illicit SALW were recovered from local communities of the Karamoja Region of North Eastern Uganda. In October 2004 the exercise was resumed, and close to 1000 illicit SALW have so far been recovered.

The Government of Uganda has programmes for supporting and rehabilitation of children affected in armed conflict. Over the years, hundreds of children escaping or rescued from captivity from the Lords Resistance Army bases in Sudan, have been placed in rehabilitation centers in Northern Uganda. The rehabilitation centers, mostly operated by NGOs in partnership with government, receive the children and provide them with Psycho-social counseling Protection Vocational training Integration with their families. CSOs help to trace and re-settle the children with their families. Where parents of the affected children cannot be traced, the children are allowed to remain under the protection of the CSOs.

Mr. President

Civil society organizations (CSO) are engaged in diverse activities to enhance human security and promote effective action on illicit SALW. CSO's are represented on the Uganda NFP and they participate in the creation and implementation of the Uganda National Plan of Action on SALW.

Mr. President

Finally Mr. President, since the previous Biennial Meeting of States in July 2003, remarkable progress has been attained at national level, and the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa towards the implementation of the UNPoA. Uganda has adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) and strengthened institutional framework necessary for inter-agency coordination. The focus has now turned to the pursuit of practical action in arms management and control, and initiatives for practical disarmament.