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**STATEMENT  
ON BEHALF OF  
THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

**BY**

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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  
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Mr. Chairman,

Please allow me to congratulate you on your election to the chair of this important meeting and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation in the fulfillment of the responsibility entrusted to you. My statement as well as the following statement by distinguished ambassador of Belarus is on behalf of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

The United Nation Programme of Action, while addressing the problem of illicit trade in SALW, contains the appeal to regional and intergovernmental organizations to contribute to preventing, combating and eradicating this phenomenon in all its aspects. The OSCE, through its comprehensive approach to the security, addresses majority of them, including conflict prevention and resolution, terrorism and crime prevention as well as humanitarian and economic issues.

The OSCE as a regional arrangement under chapter VIII of the UN Charter continues to play an important role for early warning, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in the region. Increasing confidence and security throughout the OSCE region remains a primary goal of the organization in the view of preventing conflicts. Significant achievements in this area have resulted from a broad application of politico-military instruments dealing with arms control and disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

As it is very well known the OSCE adopted in November 2000 a Document on SALW, which was the OSCE response to the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms that pose a serious threat to peace and security and is closely related to increased level of violence and crime. The document was conceived as a substantial contribution to the respective efforts planned according to the UN Programme of Action that was negotiated at the same time. Therefore many of their provisions are similar and complement each other.

In order to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action at regional, sub-regional and national levels, the OSCE has governed itself by the following principles set out in the PoA:

- Strengthening and developing agreed norms and measures;
- Mobilizing the political will throughout the OSCE community to prevent and combat illicit transfers of SALW and to cooperate towards these ends. OSCE encourages its members to work closely among themselves and with other international organizations while addressing problems associated with illicit trafficking in these weapons;
- Promoting actions by the OSCE member states with a view to prevent the illicit export, import and transfer of SALW.

Mr. Chairman,

It is worth to note that all these activities have been oriented on achieving concrete goals. It is absolutely clear to us who and how uses SALW gained through the illicit trade. Thousands of innocent people have become casualties of different armed conflicts, terrorists, and criminal groups. Therefore the OSCE member states see their main task in creation of conditions aimed at minimizing the probability of leakage and diversion of SALW into illicit trafficking. The OSCE Document on SALW has provided a framework to fulfil these tasks by implementing respective measures and commitments prescribed in it.

Armed threats posed by terrorists and other criminal groups require particular attention. Equally, attention should be given to potential challenges stemming from the changing character of armed conflicts. OSCE activities for combating terrorism focus primarily on preventing terrorists from increasing their capabilities, including from gaining access to SALW. In this respect the OSCE Strategy to address threats to security and stability in the 21. century emphasizes that the OSCE Document on SALW remains a key instrument in the region for combating trafficking and proliferation of SALW in all its aspects. Its implementation will be further strengthened.

Most of the measures stipulated in the UN Programme of Action and in the OSCE Document on SALW are to be implemented at the national level. Nevertheless the OSCE has

undertaken additional efforts to encourage regional action aimed at introduction, strengthening and implementation of measures relevant to combating and preventing illicit trade in SALW by its participating states.

In accordance with the UN Programme of Action requirements, the OSCE has established not only point of contact and information exchange regime for SALW but also a regular overview of the information on national policies and practices, export/import and destruction of SALW provided by the member States. On one hand such overview allows building of confidence among participating states which is conducive to conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation. Let me give you just one example. According to the information exchanged 35 OSCE States destroyed 3,354,526 pieces of SALW during the period of 2001–2004, from which 2,817,174 were deemed as a surplus and 537,352 seized from illegal trafficking. On the other hand, sharing of information on different aspects of national activities related to SALW formed a basis for developing the OSCE Handbook of best practices on SALW issued in 2003. Handbook is a unique collective document of the OSCE participating states that also takes into account all other existing international initiatives and experiences relating to small arms. Recommendations provided in the handbook have a general character and therefore are relevant beyond the OSCE area as well. Handbook is in that respect a part of organization's contribution to the UN Programme of Action and was published in all six OSCE working languages as well as in Arabic.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the conclusion to reiterate OSCE's firm commitment in combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and its readiness to further actively contribute to the implementation of the UN PoA in the year leading to the first review conference.

Thank you.

## II

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and gentlemen,

With your permission I will follow the path of the representative of the Slovenian Chairmanship-in-Office and briefly inform the participants of this event about the recent developments in the OSCE in the field of small arms and light weapons (SALW).

Taking into account a serious threat posed by a potential diversion of small arms and light weapons into illegal trafficking, OSCE participating States decided to continue their efforts on ensuring effective and comprehensive export controls on SALW. In 2004 the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) worked out three decisions covering different areas of the SALW export. As a first step, the FSC agreed on strengthening export control in respect of MANPADS by adopting a decision named "Elements for Export Controls of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems" that should be incorporated into their national practices, policies and regulations.

Another decision "On Standard Elements for End-User Certificates and Verification Procedures for SALW Exports" relates to the content of end-user certificate provided prior to issuance of an export-licence for SALW (including SALW manufactured under licence) or transfer of SALW-related technology. This decision is in direct compliance with the UN programme of action provisions tasking member states to develop international measures to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in SALW. It also foresees extending the information exchange and establishing internal procedures aimed at improving the traceability of SALW.

Finally, following the respective commitment stemming from the Programme of Action OSCE participating States agreed upon "Principles on the Control of Brokering in SALW". Controls over international arms brokering appears to be quite a challenge. Discussion within the OSCE, likewise in other international organisations, including the UN, has proved this fact. There was a common acknowledgment that the lack of sufficient national legislation regulating

arms brokers activities creates loopholes to avoid countries with stricter procedures and to weave a net of contacts and shipments. Therefore, OSCE participating States committed themselves to take all the necessary measures to control brokering activities within their territories. As a concrete measure the decision foresees the adoption of appropriate national legislations or makes sure that the existing ones are in conformity with agreed principles.

As for the OSCE Document on SALW, the set out standards are very high, and thus place a heavy burden on many OSCE participating States to implement their respective commitments related to the control over cross-border trafficking, stockpiles management, security and SALW destruction.

In order to make operational the SALW document's provisions dealing with early-warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, OSCE participating States developed and adopted supplementary measures. They established a framework whereby a state can request that the OSCE develop and implement a programme helping the government to meet certain needs it has identified in the sphere of SALW. This mechanism foresees providing an aid for both SALW collection and destruction in post-conflict situation, and in the case of a specific request for assistance in elimination of SALW in surpluses. The assistance to improve a national system of SALW stockpiles management and security is another area where the above mechanism can be applied.

Since 2004 three requests have come from Belarus, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. They became a subject of respective activities of OSCE participating States aimed at evaluating real situation, identifying a scope of required aid, and at developing project plans on this basis. This kind of activity is a new one for the OSCE, and that is why a lot of efforts will be needed to gain experience in this area and to achieve tangible results. At the same time, similar activities are carried out by other international organizations like the UN and NATO. Therefore, co-operation and joint efforts of different international organizations and states will undoubtedly help avoiding unnecessary competition and duplication of efforts, and contributing to progress in this area.

In conclusion I would like to answer a question that may logically arise when listening to this statement: why this work is so important for the OSCE? First of all, we should keep in mind

that according to the estimates released by the *Small Arms Survey* there are more than 600 millions SALW currently circulated worldwide and often legitimately referred to as "new weapons of mass destruction". Secondly, there are still surplus stocks from the Cold-War period, unresolved conflicts or countries in a post-conflict rehabilitation process in the OSCE area. This needs to be addressed by OSCE participating States in order to find adequate and timely responses to these problems. Thirdly and the most importantly, there is a willingness of the countries of the region to develop and commit themselves to an advanced regulatory platform in this field. Therefore, the OSCE will continue its efforts to fulfil commitments stemming from the OSCE document and the UN Programme of Action to make the world more secure for all people.

Thank you for your attention.