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English only

**Preparatory Committee for the United Nations
Conference to Review Progress Made in 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**
New York, 9-20 January 2006

**Elements to contribute for a Final Document of the UN SALW
Programme of Action Review Conference 2006**

(Submitted by Angola)

Background

The discussions and debate have clearly shown that we all agree that the illicit trade in small arms needs to be stopped.

There is now a better understanding of the various aspects of illicit trade, such as for example those regarding national controls on legal production, transfer and illicit arms brokering activities, and how the marking and tracing, are so vital in combating the illegal trade of small arms and light weapons, as well as the Security Council resolutions are important in curbing the illicit trade of small arms.

Since 2003 the Angolan government has been increasingly active in efforts to reduce numbers of SALW in circulation. In March 2003, the government established a National Commission for the Disarmament of the Civilian Population under the Public Order branch of the National Command of Police.

This National Commission conceptualised and designed a national strategy for weapons collection.

In addition, a Presidential dispatch No. 8/04 of July 23, 2004 determined the establishment within 60 days of a National Commission to address implementation of the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in SALW. The participation by three civil society organisations, has helped to create a space

conducive for enhancing the co-operation between national/local government and civil society organizations.

The Angolan national strategy for collecting SALW comprises three main phases of indeterminate duration, namely:

A) Sensitisation phase (public awareness),

B) Voluntary surrender phase (which itself has three elements):

Voluntary surrender of guns that can be handed over to police, traditional leaders and church leaders.

C) Coercive method (focused searches by the enforcement authorities)

1. Capture of guns involved in criminal activities

2. Capture of guns by denunciation (i.e. where a member of the community reports to the authorities that a person/persons has/have an illegal weapon). Once it has been established that this is the case the authorities will arrest the offending individual(s).

It has been acknowledged that, owing to communications difficulties throughout Angola, public knowledge of the national strategy for weapons collection remains limited. Despite this, weapons collection initiatives are being undertaken.

Government-civil society collaboration on SALW

In recent years, an increasing number of civil society organizations in Angola have become involved in efforts to tackle SALW proliferation. Some NGOs are developing innovative and engaging public awareness campaigns which profile the dangers arising from the widespread availability of SALW in Angola and which highlight help to build support for collective solutions, such as the voluntary surrender of weapons.

Due to poor communications between provincial capital cities and the municipalities, in general, the provincial governments have assisted the dissemination of information using provincial government channels. Municipalities are informed that a public awareness campaign will begin on a particular date and that the local administration should confirm of their availability and help to mobilize the community and inform the relevant stakeholders .

Though Angola agrees that to reduce human suffering caused by the illicit trade of small arms as set down in UN Programme of Action , is an ambitious objective it must recognize that this is still far from being achieved.

Further measures to strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action

The biennial meetings of States in 2001 and 2005, created a unique opportunity to take stock of what has been so far achieved and what has not; to share lessons learned and introduce corrections, including in taking advantage of the report presented by the Group of Governmental Experts convened by the Secretary-General , to examine the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons, taking into account the views of States.

Angola is of the view that the Security Council has also a very important role to play in this regard, specially, in the field of production , control and arms embargoes; conflict prevention, peace-building and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and confidence-building measures.

In a few words, the review conference will need to assess whether the Programme of Action incorporates all the tools necessary to achieve its objectives and whether more precision is required to promote its full effective implementation in the coming years.

The control of arms brokers, is another issue of crucial significance we have to deal with, for the success of the Programme of Action.

Based in our own past experience, as well as studies by groups of experts appointed by the United Nations to examine violations of arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council, there is a great lack of proper controls thus facilitate illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

Angola therefore is of the view that there can be no responsible arms export control without control of the brokers. Nothing can justify inaction in this area. We hope the review conference will be able to address this issue that we consider of great international concern. Producing and arms-exporting countries should be encouraged to enact severe laws, regulations and administrative procedures to ensure more effective control over the transfer of small arms by manufacturers, suppliers, brokers, and shipping and transit agents.

A mechanism that could facilitate the identification of illicit arms transfers, as well as careful scrutiny of end-user certificates such as those related to diamonds, could be the way forward .

In view of the considerations above we propose that the following elements be included in the Final Document of Review Conference:

- The absence of international regulations allows violators to continue, before the silent observation of some states, their involvement in the illegal trade and transfer of light weapons to conflict areas, where serious and systematic violations of international humanitarian laws persist;
- Our own experience allows us to highlight how important issues related to the registry and follow-up of transfer processes, as well as of control mechanisms such as the Kimberly Process certificates, can be to the implementation of the United Nations Program to combat the illegal trade of weapons. We propose that be included in the topics to be discussed at the Review Conference ;
- International assistance and technical cooperation is a determining factor in building states' capacity to implement the International Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its complementary protocols, as well as Security Council resolutions aimed at preventing, combating and eradicating the illegal trade in light and small weapons ;
- Include in peacekeeping mandates the registry and follow-up of transfer processes, as well as small arms and light weapons control mechanisms and the mobilization of resources to support processes of peace consolidation, to finance DDR programs, Demining and Resettlement of Refugees and IDPs; this can also contribute to the prevention, combat and eradication of the trade in illegal weapons.
