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Permanent Mission of the
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
to the United Nations
New York



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Statement by

H.E. Ambassador Abdulaziz Nasser Al-Shamsi

**Permanent Representative of
the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations**

before

the General Assembly of the United Nations

**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**

26 June – 7 July, 2006

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Mr. President,

At the outset and on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate your Excellency on your election as president of this important conference and I wish you and the members of your bureau success.

I also wish to associate myself with the statement delivered by the Representative of Algeria, , on behalf of the Arab Group, before this conference.

Mr. President,

The tragic conflicts which took place during the last few decades have reflected the negative impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in areas of threatening security and stability of states, and fueling and prolonging armed conflicts, especially civil and ethnic conflicts, in many disturbed regions. The international reports which monitored and followed up this phenomenon have pointed out that millions of small arms and light weapons, which are manufactured, transferred and used illegally every year outside the official frameworks, have not only resulted in the killing and displacement of millions of civilians every year, including women and children, but they have also undermined the efforts aimed at containing these conflicts and building peace and national institutions. They have also resulted in prolonging poverty, disruption of projects of social and economic sustainable development, and strengthening the activities of organized crime, drug trafficking, violations of human rights, terrorism and money laundering. This is in addition to the practices aimed at undermining law enforcement, and encouraging non respect for the principles of international humanitarian law including the exposure of peacekeeping operations and humanitarian relief assistance personnel to great dangers. Therefore, the international community is required to advance its efforts for the strengthening of regional and international cooperation mechanisms, in order to ensure the complete eradication of this illicit and transnational trade.

Mr. President,

In View of the serious implications of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, several measures and regulations were adopted, since the establishment of the UAE, for the purpose of combating and regulating this kind of trade. The fire arms, ammunition and explosives law is one of the most prominent legislations enacted in the UAE for controlling import, export, stockpiling, transport, possession, and trade in these arms. This is in addition to the penalties imposed on violators of this law. On the other hand, the concerned authorities in the UAE are in the process of promulgating a similar law which takes into consideration the UN Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Convinced that this problem is not a national problem, but an international and transnational problem which states can not face individually, a special committee consists of concerned authorities in the UAE has been formed for the purpose of studying and following up the UN Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, and issuing its recommendations in this regard.

At the international level, the UAE has acceded to various regional and international conventions related to the prevention of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It has also participated in most of the specialized regional and international meetings and conferences held for the purposes of strengthening the efforts aimed at addressing this problem including the strengthening of cooperation and coordination in security matters, and exchanging information with all states and specialized organizations, especially the Interpol, with a view to reinforcing national, regional and international control over the illicit trade of this kind of weapons. The UAE has also extended international assistance for alleviating and addressing the tragic consequences of the proliferation and illegal use of these weapons.

Mr. President,

While we emphasize the importance of the commitment of states to control and pursue manufacturers and brokers involved in this illicit trade, we call for implementing comprehensive and coordinated regional and international strategies in order to reinforce the regulations established for controlling operations of these weapons including their export, import, marking, tracing, tracking and recording of movement, transactions, transfer, stockpiling, and disposal of their surplus. We also call for enhancing the effectiveness of arms embargo regimes in areas of civil and ethnic conflicts, and processes of disarming, demobilizing and reintegration of former and current combatants, through finding alternative employment opportunities for them.

We also stress the importance of giving due consideration to the difference between legitimate and illegitimate trade in small arms and light weapons during the process of implementing these strategies, where the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of states and respect for their sovereignty should be observed. We also affirm that proliferation of small arms and light weapons due to their illicit trade is not the main reason behind the outbreak of conflicts and wars in many regions of the world. However, the availability of these weapons has contributed to the fueling and prolonging of these conflicts, which mostly have resulted from cases of continued foreign occupation. We, therefore, call upon the international community to demonstrate a serious political will in order to address the real reasons of the existing conflicts and wars, and within a framework which is based on the principals of transparency, justice, and non-discrimination among states. We also affirm the importance of commitment to the Programme of Action of the UN conference of 2001 which is considered the main reference for combating the illicit trade in these weapons, and where its principals and legal references should not be infringed or marginalized. In this context, we reiterate the importance of the following:

- 1- The right of states and governments to manufacture and possess small arms and light weapons in order to fulfill the requirements of their national defense, protect their sovereignty, and provide security to their territories and peoples.
- 2- The legitimate right of peoples to self-determination including peoples under foreign occupation.

- 3- Governments must be given the prime responsibility for combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.
- 4- Affirming the importance of including all kinds of weapons in the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapon, without focusing on certain types of weapons.
- 5- Reaffirming that combating the illicit trade in these weapons should not divert attention from the priorities of the international comprehensive programme for disarming arsenals of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, in accordance with the recommendations of the Special Session of the General Assembly for Disarmament of 1978.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, we reiterate our support to all proposals calling for the strengthening of the role played by the United Nations and other specialized international organizations in developing coordinated and comprehensive policies and programs for the effective eradication of this kind of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which should include providing support and assistance to developing countries in order to enable them to develop the capabilities of their national institutions in controlling the activities of exporting, importing and transporting of small arms and light weapons.

Thank you Mr. President