Statement
by
H.E. Mr. Maksur Widodo
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The Head of the Indonesian Delegation
at
the First Biennial Meeting on the
Implementation of the Programme of Action of
The 2001 UN Conference on Illicit Trade in Small
Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects

New York, 7 July 2003
Madame Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,

Allow me first of all, on behalf of the Indonesian delegation, to begin by expressing our congratulations on your election as Chairperson of the first biennial meeting following the historic UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2001.

Let me also take this opportunity to convey our congratulations to Ambassador Nobuyasu Abe on his appointment as the Under-Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs. It is of our belief that under your able leadership, the promotion of multilateral diplomacy on disarmament will continue to be the paramount work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in facilitating efforts towards the achievement of the goal of general and complete disarmament.

In this very first biennial meeting to review the implementation of the Programme of Action, we recognize that the challenges of combating illicit trade of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is not only a domestic problem but one that transcends national borders. It has become part of the growing menace of transnational organized crime.

Such illegal activities have not spared any country, including Indonesia. Criminal organizations are now easily making illicit profits across borders in different countries by utilizing advanced transportation and communication technologies as well as taking advantage of porous boundaries in some parts of the world.

As the largest archipelagic state situated at the crossroad between the Asian and Australian Continents; and between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Indonesia shares long land and maritime boundaries with its neighbouring countries. This distinct geographical nature makes Indonesia vulnerable and easily used for illicit activities including the illegal transfers of small arms and light weapons. The tasks in fighting these activities are thus formidable and multifaceted and therefore regional cooperation, particularly with our bordering neighbours, is important to stem the flow of illegal weapons. Because of this, and due to its very intricate nature, persistent and continuous regional and international responses are required, as no single country can fight this crime alone.
Thus, in overcoming the challenges posed by the growing threat of illicit arms trafficking in the region, there should be a concerted effort by countries of the region. Our concerns are shared by fellow ASEAN countries, as manifested by the establishment of the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) as a regional mechanism to deal with and combat transnational crimes including trafficking of small arms and light weapons. Under its jurisdiction, ASEAN adopted the Work Programme to Combat Transnational Crime which covers activities such as information exchange, legislation, law enforcement, institutional building and training.

In addition, ASEAN has embarked on considering the concept of the ASEAN Security Community suggested by Indonesia as new Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee during the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting retreat in Phnom Penh. ASEAN Security Community is defined as a group of countries that have achieved a condition in which each member regards its own security as fundamentally linked to those of the others. Furthermore, member countries deem their collective destiny as bound by common norms, history, political experience, and geographic location. ASEAN Security Community thus must recognize and take into account the strong interlinks among political, economic and social realities existing in the region. With this, regional countries will be able to address issues of mutual security concerns within the regional context as a means of conflict resolution, including through measures to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The result of addressing transnational crimes by ASEAN and other countries, will in turn, provide a strong basis for further international collaboration and cooperation.

The launching of such a concept is deemed very timely following the adoption of the General Assembly resolution A/57/L.79 on Prevention of Armed Conflict by consensus last week. This resolution constitutes a meaningful process signifying that we are moving from the culture of reaction towards the culture of prevention of conflict. In this regard, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the field of prevention of armed conflict should be strengthened, including to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.
Madame Chairperson,

We recognize that an important element in moving forward against illicit trade in small arms and light weapons rests with the availability of credible and adequate national legislation that effectively exercises control over the production, export, import, transit and transfer of such weapons. Although such legislations dealing with the issue of small arms, including the criminalization of illegal manufacturing, possessing and stockpiling of arms, are already in place, they are considered inadequate to address the new challenges currently faced by Indonesia in stemming the tide of illicit trade in arms.

Therefore, Indonesia believes that its existing national legislations would need to be expanded, strengthened and improved to reflect these new challenges. In this regard, we welcome the intention of countries to share their national legislation on small arms and light weapons and seek to enhance cooperation with them.

Indonesia has been active in enhancing its capacity to implement the Programme of Action, among others by organizing a national seminar in Bogor in November 2001 and, in collaboration with the UN and the Government of Japan, the Asia Pacific Regional Seminar on Small Arms and Light Weapons in Bali, in February of this year. Yet, we continue to be open to any form of technical and financial cooperation and assistance that aims to further strengthen the country's capacity to implement the Programme of Action.

Madame Chairperson,

In our efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade of arms we should not lose sight of the root causes as rightly stipulated in the Programme of Action that have driven people to such illegal activities. We find that issues of poverty, unemployment and social conflicts are among the conditions that give way to crimes including illegal trade in arms. Therefore, as part of our comprehensive effort to combat this crime, we should address those issues in a comprehensive manner through formulating sound social-economic policies.
In conclusion, Indonesia views that international cooperation initiative are necessary to prevent, combat and eradicate this destabilizing scourge. Indonesia is doing its best to fight this crime in its domestic domain, while realizing that only work at the regional and international level can fully address the situation.

Thank you.