



BANGLADESH

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Statement by Mr. M. Zulfiqur Rahman, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations at the United Nations 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, New York, 12 July 2005

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your well-deserved election as Chairman of this meeting. Your unrivalled wisdom and dynamic leadership, I am sure, will lead the proceedings of the meeting to fruition.

We are meeting here at a time, Mr. Chairman, when unlawful possession, manufacture, trade and transfer of small arms and light weapons continue to threaten peace and security in many parts of the world. In some cases, they have become both the cause and means of internal conflict. In others, they are frustrating government efforts to improve law and order situation. Problems of drug trafficking and trafficking in persons particularly of women and children have only compounded the sufferings of the victims.

We have indeed made some progress since we adopted the 2001 UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. But there is no room for complacency. We still have to go a long way to eradicate SALW-related violence and crimes through full implementation of the Programme of Action. While fighting this menace, we will need to address both the supply and demand sides of the trade.

This meeting has provided us with an opportunity to take stock of the situation and provide guidelines for future action. We are also looking forward to the 2006 Review Conference for consolidating our progress.

Mr. Chairman,

Armed conflicts and deteriorating law and order situation have devastating effects on our societies and economies. This is a problem for all. Even in otherwise peaceful societies such as Bangladesh, illicit trade in SALW is seriously hindering government efforts to improve law and order situation. The unbridled flow of SALW across our porous borders has become an obstacle to establish an environment where people can peacefully engage in socio-economic activities with an assured sense of security.

We believe that the regional organizations can play an important role in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit trade in SALW. Enhanced cooperation in monitoring of arms flow through sharing of information among the law enforcement and customs control agencies can make a difference. We appreciate the efforts of the regional arrangements already in place and call for establishing such mechanisms in other regions.

Mr. Chairman,

We are dismayed at the serious violations of humanitarian law in conflict situations where lethal and irresponsible use of SALW is rampant. We cannot over-emphasize the multiplier effects of violence caused by the proliferation of SALW in conflict areas. Even after the peace agreements are signed, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants remain a major area of concern. The balancing act of rendering justice to the victims, reconciliation among the former enemies, and DDR of the combatants has become increasingly difficult.

Children are the most vulnerable victims of armed conflicts exacerbated by SALW. The plights of these children become even more unacceptable when they are forcefully recruited as child-soldiers. We need to address the special needs of children and women in our DDR operations.

We believe that the issue of SALW, the real Weapons of Mass Destruction causing higher death toll than caused by the atomic bombs in Japan, must be viewed in the overall perspective of peace and security. If we are to stop the perpetuating cycle of violence, we must focus on prevention. We must address the root causes of violence, namely political and socio-economic injustices prevailing in many parts of the world.

Bangladesh, along with many other peace-loving countries, have been championing the promotion of a Culture of Peace, a culture that would enhance understanding and tolerance among peoples, a culture that would promote dialogue among peoples, a culture that would strengthen unity in diversity.

Bangladesh welcomes the consensus agreement of the Member States in the open-ended working group which negotiated last month the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Although our preference was for a legal instrument, consensus adoption of the political declaration, we believe, would advance our objective to eradicate illicit trade in SALW in a great way.

Bangladesh is committed to the full implementation of the PoA. Bangladesh has put in place a number of stringent statutory legislations and executive orders to regulate lawful possession, manufacture, conversion, sale, export, import and transport of SALW. We would call upon for enhanced international cooperation particularly in the field of capacity building in this regard.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Bangladesh delegation would be ready to contribute to the proceedings of this meeting. We consider that illicit trade in SALW is a major cause of sustaining and aggravating armed conflicts in many parts of the world. We must stop that, since we all know that development can only take place in a society which is free of violence. And development of our peoples is what we strive for all the time.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.