

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA IN THE THIRD BIENNIAL MEETING 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, 15 July, 2008**

Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects is a topic which greatly attracts attention in the international arena nowadays.

It is, undoubtedly, a global issue that affects all countries in varying degrees, although its expressions vary from one region to another and even from one country to another. It is more and more obvious that its prevention, combat and eradication cannot be the task of one State, but of the joint efforts of the international community under the auspices of the United Nations Organization.

In this context, it is widely recognized that only States have the judicial, legal and administrative capacity to combat the illegal trade in arms and are required to play a key role in the control of firearms, by constantly refining their domestic laws designed to prevent, combat and eradicate this phenomenon.

Cuba has participated actively in this process and gives great importance to the recommendations of the Programme of Action, relevant measures have been taken for the implementation of the Programme. Some of these measures even precede the commitments recently adopted by the international community.

Among the actions undertaken by Cuba in the implementation of the Programme of Action may be mentioned the following:

- A Decree-Law on Weapon and Ammunition Control, in total compliance with current national and international demands, is under the consideration and approval of the highest legislative level of our country.
- In the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and in the Ministry of the Interior, there are records and internal regulations which allow an optimum control of all small arms and light weapons preventing their illicit trade.

- Besides, both armed institutions have established suitable standards and procedures as to the security of their weapons arsenals in their premises suitable for storage, the relevant staff safety and the existence control and the precedence of the personnel.
- There are no surplus small arms and light weapons in Cuba. Those existing are the ones required for bringing the Military Doctrine of the National Defense to fruition, which is that every citizen is assigned with a means to defend his homeland whenever the circumstances require so.

Cuba wishes to highlight the importance, for the prevention, combat and eradication of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, of the actions on international assistance and cooperation that can be developed in the framework of the United Nations Programme of Action.

To increase and promote new initiatives for the development of the assistance and international cooperation in compliance with the Programme of Action, under no conditioning and guaranteeing equal access possibility for all States is necessary.

Cuba can provide assistance and cooperation for those States requesting it, to contribute to the creation of a comprehensive national measures system for fire weapons control in non-State actors' hands.