

7 July 2003

**United Nations First 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**

Opening remarks for the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs

I declare open the United Nations First 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.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, at the outset to extend to all of you a very warm and sincere welcome to the United Nations First 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, and wish you success in your endeavour.

The Programme of Action represents a milestone, both in the global efforts to advance the disarmament agenda, and in promoting human security, development, respect for human rights and protection of the most vulnerable sectors in society.

Its full implementation is as challenging a task as it is important. As I assume the duties of Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, I am

encouraged by the efforts and the commitment shown by the international community to address the challenges posed by the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you also of the commitment of the United Nations, and more specifically of my Department, to assist you in your efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

[Election of the Chairperson]

At this stage, it is my privilege and duty to proceed to take up item 2 of the Provisional Agenda of the Meeting, namely, the election of the Chairperson of the United Nations First 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.

I understand that there is an agreement among delegations to elect Her Excellency, Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi of Japan, as Chairperson of the Meeting.

Unless I hear any objection, may I take it that delegates to the Meeting wish to elect Her Excellency Mrs. Kuniko Inoguchi, by acclamation, as Chairperson of the United Nations First 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?

I hear no objection, it is so decided.

I wish to express my hart-felt congratulations to Her Excellency, Mrs. Kuniko Inoguchi, on her election to this important post. I wish to assure her of the fullest support and cooperation of myself and the entire Secretariat and I wish her and all of you a successful Meeting.

I now invite Her Excellency Ambassador Inoguchi to take her seat at the podium.

Remarks of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs to deliver the
message of the Secretary-General to the Meeting

Madam Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now my privilege and honour to deliver to you the message from
Mr. Koffi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to the Meeting.

[READ MESSAGE]