



Organización de los Estados Americanos
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**REMARKS BY THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
TO THE FOURTH BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES
TO CONSIDER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF
ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERRADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE
IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS**

New York, NY, June 16, 2010

On behalf of José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the Organization of American States, I would like to thank the Office for Disarmament Affairs for inviting the OAS to participate in the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Erradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We welcome the opportunity to share with distinguished delegates a summary of the efforts taken by the OAS since 2008 to implement the Programme of Action.

The OAS has a long history of addressing illicit weapons trafficking in the Western Hemisphere. While the OAS General Secretariat places greatest effort on promoting implementation of its own firearms instrument--the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Related Materials (CIFTA)--it is widely recognized that the CIFTA and the Programme of Action share many similarities and that the OAS and the UN are united in their mission to eradicate illicit arms trafficking at the national, regional and international levels. With a view to strengthening cooperation and dialogue on this issue the OAS is pleased to help promote implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as other relevant regional and international instruments.

Model legislation

One of the key similarities between the Programme of Action and CIFTA is the focus on ensuring that adequate laws, regulations and other legislative measures are in place to combat illicit firearms manufacturing and trafficking.

As a legally binding instrument, CIFTA sets forth a series of provisions that, upon ratification, States Parties must include in their national firearms laws and regulations. CIFTA has been signed by all 34 OAS Member States and ratified by 30 of them. To assist states with these legislative requirements, many of which are measures similar to those outlined in the Programme of Action, States Parties have adopted various model legislations over the past 10 years on such issues as broker regulations, marking and

tracing, strengthening controls at export points, establishing criminal offenses, and most recently, confiscation and forfeiture of illegal firearms, which was just adopted at the OAS General Assembly last week. All of these are public documents that are available for reference or use by any government interested in strengthening their legal regimes. Three additional model legislations will be considered over the next two years: on record-keeping, confidentiality, and exchange of information; on security measures; and on controlled delivery.

In addition, through a project to be funded later this year by the Government of Spain, the OAS General Secretariat will offer specific legislative assistance to 9 countries of South America, namely Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, to prevent and reduce armed violence and strengthen public security by helping to ensure that their respective national legislations establish effective criminal offenses for illicit arms manufacturing and trafficking.

Marking

Like the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, CIFTA also assigns significant importance to the need for states to mark firearms at the point of manufacture and/or import.

In this vein, the OAS General Secretariat has initiated a project to strengthen the national capacity of 30 governments of the region to mark imported or confiscated firearms, as well as those at the point of manufacture. Ensuring that firearms are appropriately marked is crucial to combating illicit arms trafficking, since marked arms are easier to trace and can therefore be more effectively linked to the crimes in which they were used.

With the financial support of the Government of the United States, this project is providing at least one state-of-the-art dot peen-type marking machine, along with the training required for their effective use, to 30 potential beneficiary countries throughout the region. To date, 17 countries have indicated their interest in participating in the project, including Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay. Other member states interested in participating are kindly requested to notify the General Secretariat before June 30.

Through the framework of this project, the OAS General Secretariat is also preparing a comprehensive study to identify and analyze national firearms marking legislation in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as to identify current marking processes and practices in the region. It is expected that this study will be completed and published later this year.

Stockpile Management and Destruction

In line with Articles 18, 19, 20 and 21 of the Programme of Action regarding stockpile management and destruction measures, the OAS has also recently launched a program funded through the Merida Initiative to strengthen the capacity of Central American countries to manage their stockpiles and destroy obsolete or surplus firearms and ammunition.

Specifically this project is assisting Guatemala and Nicaragua in the destruction of obsolete arms and ammunition in order to prevent large-scale accidents in urban areas where storage facilities are located, as well as to prevent the loss or diversion of arms for illicit purposes. In the past three months the project has contributed to the destruction of over 150 tons of ammunition of different calibers from various sites throughout Guatemala, including 1400 white phosphorus projectiles and more than 6000 white phosphorus grenades, the presence of which posed a major risk due to their location in the vicinity of residential neighborhoods in the capital city. Destruction activities are currently addressing ammunition stored at the headquarters of the Guatemalan Air Force, including 500 250-kilogram bombs, as well as 2,000 tons of obsolete ammunition, ranging from 14.5 to 152 millimeters, in four different facilities throughout Nicaragua.

An 8-week long intensive training course will also be offered to technical experts from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Panama on proper destruction techniques of arms and ammunition, completion of which will enable them to conduct and/or supervise the destruction of either individual or bulk explosive ordnance and explosive devices.

Strengthening Border Controls

In keeping with the Programme of Action's goals of establishing trans-border customs cooperation and networks, the OAS General Secretariat, together with the Governments of Canada and the United States, organized a 3-day seminar in March 2009 to encourage the exchange of information among law-enforcement authorities and customs officials regarding best practices at national customs facilities and borders, with a view to better address and combat the illicit trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials across borders. With funding from the Government of Canada, the OAS General Secretariat will be organizing several other seminars during 2010-2011 to strengthen border controls throughout the Hemisphere, with a view to eliminating the trafficking of firearms, drugs and people.

Cooperation

Of course the OAS plays only a small role in what must be a combined effort of many countries and multilateral institutions to address the issue of arms trafficking in the Hemisphere. Over the years, the OAS has developed solid partnerships with other international and regional organizations, such as the Regional Center of the United Nations for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,

where we have jointly developed capacity-building initiatives for law enforcement agencies; provided legal analysis and drafting services; and assisted countries of the hemisphere with their stockpile management and destruction needs.

The OAS has also collaborated with the UN's Coordinating Action on Small Arms Mechanism (CASA) in the development of the standardized set of international norms to control small arms, as well as with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna to support regional implementation of their Firearms Protocol. On a subregional level the OAS has been working more recently with the small arms division of the Central American Integration System (SICA-CASAC) to identify areas of mutual interest, as well as with the security branch of CARICOM (IMPACS) on capacity building initiatives for law enforcement officers in the Caribbean.

The OAS also places significant emphasis on collaborating with civil society and private industry for the exchange of relevant information and experiences and has been working with FLACSO, Viva Rio, Asociación de Políticas Públicas, Fundación Arias, IANSA and Project Ploughshares, among others.

Conclusions

Mr. Chair, the OAS is particularly pleased to see the strong leadership role assumed by Mexico in combating illicit arms trafficking. The Government of Mexico is not only chairing this highly regarded meeting, but has also been elected Secretary Pro-Tempore of the Consultative Committee of CIFTA for the period 2010-2011. We are confident that under Mexico's guidance and direction, the OAS member states will continue to strengthen their efforts to combat the illicit manufacture and movement of firearms, ammunition, and explosives throughout the region and strive for greater implementation of both CIFTA and the UN Programme of Action.

For its part, the OAS General Secretariat looks forward to continued collaboration with the various agencies of the United Nations, as well as with other international and regional organizations and civil society, to support application of all relevant and applicable instruments and together work towards elimination of firearms trafficking throughout the world.

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**PEACE, SECURITY AND COOPERATION
TRANSPARENCY IN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS ACQUISITIONS**

Declaration of Lima, June 6-8, 2010

The Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS), gathered in Lima, Peru on the occasion of the fortieth regular session of the General Assembly, adopted the Declaration of Lima, thus strengthening their commitment with peace, security and cooperation as the sole mechanisms to confront traditional and new threats that affect the region. The Declaration emphasizes the obligation of the member States to strengthen inter-American cooperation for integral development; the importance of continuing to promote in the Hemisphere an environment propitious to the control of weapons; the overcoming of situations of tension and the solving of crises; and other aspects related to peace, security and cooperation.

The Member States reaffirmed their commitment to promote transparency in arms acquisitions in keeping with pertinent United Nations and OAS resolutions on the matter; and to invite those states that have not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions.

Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions

The Dominican Republic deposited its instrument of ratification for the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions in 2009, bringing the total number of ratifications to thirteen. The Convention entered into force on November 21, 2002 with twenty signatory States of the thirty-three Member States of the OAS, signaling their commitment to contribute more fully to openness and transparency by exchanging information on weapon systems covered by both the Convention, of which the OAS is depository, and the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

The United Nations recommendation to member states to report on their acquisitions to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, according to a list of seven categories of conventional weapons, has now become a legally binding commitment in the Hemisphere. The OAS General Secretariat, through its Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, distributes these reports for the purpose of promoting confidence among States in the Americas, and is actively pursuing consultations with the UN Secretariat on the functioning and application of mechanisms for the presentation of reports for implementation of the Convention, since many of these countries submit their reports to the UN as well.

For additional information on the Convention on Transparency, please contact:

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