



**PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

235 East 45th Street, 16th floor
New York, NY 10017

tel. (212) 519-9500
fax (212) 370-1954

www.netherlandsmission.org

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STATEMENT BY

Pieter van Donkersgoed

**Head of delegation of the Netherlands to the
Fourth Biennial Meeting of States
to consider of 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:
International cooperation and assistance**

UNITED NATIONS

NEW YORK, 15 June 2010

International Co-operation and Assistance

Allow me first of all, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair of this meeting, and to thank you for your efforts in preparing this fourth Biennial Meeting of States. I also wish to thank Ms. Sarah de Zoeten of Australia in facilitating today's thematic discussion on International co-operation and assistance. Furthermore my delegation associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the EU.

My delegation would like to emphasize that in the opinion of the Netherlands striving for the full implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects is even more necessary today than it was ever before.

The presence of large quantities of small arms in societies, especially in fragile states or other 'under-governed' areas, may cause slumbering social tensions to spiral out of control and fuel all kinds of conflict. Crime and gang-related violence may take on a much more violent tone, and so may the government response to it. Marginalized groups find it easier to empower themselves for armed conflict and the black market is more likely to grow under these circumstances, further strengthening criminal elements in society. People want guns to protect themselves where the state is unable to do so, or to make a living for themselves in brutally hard circumstances.

International co-operation and assistance is key to the successful implementation of the Programme of Action and therefore to fighting the negative spiral I just described. Building on instruments such as the PoA-Implementation Support System (ISS) that UNODA is developing, and the recent efforts of UNIDIR in their "Checklist for Matching Needs and Resources", the implementation of the PoA itself will become more structured and the process will become more transparent.

The Netherlands continues to be strongly committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action, and as such is pleased to be able to continue supporting a number of smaller and bigger SALW programmes. We support the further development of National Action Plans in Africa. For this reason we work with RECSA and Saferworld in regional programmes for the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

Through the Mines Advisory Group we finance programmes in Burundi and the DRC. We commit ourselves for the long term and to a continuous dialogue with National Governments on these issues. Since the third BMS in 2008, the Netherlands has financed for over 4 million euro's on specific SALW programmes. Furthermore, we have spent well over 30 million euro's on Security Sector Development over this two year period, SSR programmes in which specific SALW components are increasingly incorporated.

The primary responsibility, however, lies with National Governments and they should take the lead in processes of legislation and capacity building, to be able to take the next step in calling a halt to the proliferation of small arms.

Mr. Chairman,

The proliferation of small arms, and the violence resulting from it, has a devastating effect on development. The Netherlands is an active supporter of initiatives such as the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, in which affected countries and donor countries join hands to deal with what is, in essence, a cross-border problem and therefore a common challenge. We will continue to do our share of work and we look forward to continued cooperation with all other actors in our joint efforts to fight this scourge.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.