BANGLADESH

Statement made by Mr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Deputy Permanent Representative, Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the United Nations

at

the 2nd Review Conference to Review Progress Made in 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
28 August 2012
Madam President,

Let me congratulate you on your election as the President of this Review Conference. We are confident that your able leadership will steer our deliberations to a successful outcome. You can count on my delegation’s full support in this regard. We align ourselves with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). However, we would like to highlight a few points in our national capacity.

Madam President,

As we meet here, the goals before us are clear. We need to objectively assess the state of overall implementation of the PoA and the International Tracing Instrument. We are here to set the agenda for the next six year cycle. In order to set robust but pragmatic agenda for the next cycle, we must review the weaknesses reported by member states in the implementation of the PoA; we must find ways to respond to the felt needs of many countries to support implementation; we must recognize ‘best practices and lesson learnt’; and most importantly, we must recommit ourselves, developed and developing countries, to the full implementation of PoA targets.

Madam President,

It would certainly be an understatement to say that PoA has not achieved any progress since its unanimous adoption in 2001. The progress has however been overshadowed by the continued illicit transfer and abuse of SALW threatening peace, safety, security and sustainable development of people across the globe. The illegitimate use of SALW has fuelled violence, fanned existing conflicts, and severely affected lives and livelihood of civilians including, but not limited to, children and women. This menace must be stopped. This Review Conference presents a seminal opportunity. We must seize this opportunity to put an end to the miseries of our peoples by agreeing to undertake concrete measures towards the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

Madam President,

In compliance with the Programme of Action, Bangladesh has put in place tougher legislative norms and administrative procedures in order to regulate lawful possession, manufacture, export, import and transport of small arms and light weapons. Strict procedures are followed in the management of stockpiles. Confiscated illegal arms are routinely and publicly destroyed as provided for in our National Stockpile Management Programme. Bangladesh observes 9th July every year as “Small Arms Destruction Day” to raise public awareness about the human, social and economic cost
of illicit trade in SALW. We are regularly reporting to the UN Register of Conventional Arms and to the UN Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures.

Madam President,

The need for greater international assistance and cooperation for effective implementation of the PoA and the International Tracing Instrument cannot be overemphasized. It would require significant capacity-building efforts in the form of technical, legal and financial assistance. Training of relevant officials, including customs, police, intelligence and arms control officials, must be undertaken. Transfer of relevant technologies should form a significant component of international cooperation framework in this regard. Many, if not all, of the challenges associated with full implementation—border control mechanisms, technical information exchange, marking and tracing expertise—require international efforts and cooperation. The outcome document of this Review Conference must adopt clear provisions for international assistance and cooperation for developing countries, particularly LDCs, to encourage and enable them to implement targets.

Madam President,

Both ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors underlie the illegal circulation of SALW. While it is true that there are huge demands for illegal small arms and light weapons around the world, particularly in the conflict and post-conflict zones, it is equally important to tackle the supply side of the equation. During the last two decades, the number of companies and countries manufacturing and exporting small arms and light weapons has magnified manifold. We should address both the demand and supply sides of the problem in a comprehensive way, including through addressing the underlying causes. Bangladesh is committed to working to that end nationally and with regional institutional mechanisms such as SAARC, BIMSTEC and other regional forums. We also encourage greater civil society involvement in the implementation of the PoA.

Madam President,

Our endeavours for a world free from violence and instability fuelled by irresponsible transfer of small arms and light weapons must be sustained at the national, regional and global levels. We must pledge to work together, mobilise political will and invest necessary resources to secure a world safer for our generations to come.

I thank you Madam President.