Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

Agenda item 7: Preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects at national, regional and global levels

New York, March 19-23, 2012

Madam Chair,

Allow me to extend to you my delegation’s congratulations on your assumption of this very important post and to also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. My delegation joins other speakers in thanking you for your tireless efforts in preparing the indicative non-papers that we consider as useful guidance in identifying possible themes for our deliberations.

Madam Chair,

Armenia remains committed to effective and full implementation of the SALW Program of Action the adoption of which in 2001 was an important milestone. It reflects the shared understanding of the common responsibility to stop the proliferation of SALW that has become a fueling agent in many conflicts throughout the world. In particular, we believe that the PoA can serve as an effective support mechanism for national demilitarization efforts in the region and improvement of the national and global processes of weapons registration management. We also would like to acknowledge the important contributions made by the civil society towards the implementation of the PoA, and encourage cooperation with and broader participation of the civil society in this process.

Madam Chair,

Armenia supports the efforts of the international organizations, namely the United Nations and OSCE, aimed at controlling the activities and stopping the spread of SALW, and welcome the initiatives by different member states to promote proper and timely implementation of the commitments in the SALW control sphere. The dialogue and enhanced cooperation among international organizations are also essential to avoid duplication and coordinate their activities to better address the problem.

For example, we have actively contributed to the efforts of exchange of relevant information on SALW within formats of both the UN ODA and OSCE C-S-BMs. In particular, last year, the Armenian delegation submitted the Annual information on International Transfers of SALW: Exports and imports during 2010 to the UN ODA and the following annual information to the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center.

Madam Chair,
As it is commonly recognized now, the SALW problem is not merely an arms control and disarmament issue. It is a multi-dimensional threat. The proliferation and misuse of SALW exacerbates violence, prolongs conflicts, undermines the internal security of States, increases the activities of transnational organized crime, promotes terrorism, displaces civilians and interferes with peace building. It affects all levels of society, economically and socially, causing a great degree of human suffering.

Because the SALW problem is so multifaceted, we must have a comprehensive approach to effectively address it. We share the understanding that that the problem must be tackled in parallel on all fronts, namely national, regional and global.

There are several dimensions for combating illicit traffic at the national level, through the adoption and implementation of national control, including relevant legislation, effective export control, and border and custom mechanisms. For example, we have already enacted and implemented a legislation regulating SALW brokering in Armenia and namely Law on Licensing and Law on Arms which continue to constitute the important legislative base for exercising effective SALW control. The member states should ensure that they have adopted similar laws, regulations and /or necessary administrative procedures to exercise this control over the legal possessions of SALW and over their transfer in order to prevent illicit trafficking.

Madam Chair,

Armenia also advocates the need for promoting regional cooperation in the field of SALW, which we believe is a vital element in achieving sustainable results and respecting our obligations. We have launched effective cooperation with our international partners in accordance with Armenia’s legislation in-effect regarding arms control.

In particular, we have been working closely with the OSCE in this field. According to the OSCE Document the organization’s participating states, including Armenia, share, in accordance with their national laws and through established channels such as INTERPOL, police forces and/or customs agencies, information in many areas related to the illicit trafficking in SALW. This type of exchange of information can be carried out within sub-regional frameworks as well. Such initiative may work in parallel with the conflict resolution efforts in regions like ours by preventing further arms race and serving as a significant confidence-building measure.

On international level, Armenia will continue to support the efforts aimed at regulation of the SALW related matters. In this regard we would like to stress the importance of financial and technical assistance to build the capacity of the member states to implement control. It is also important to avoid the export of the small arms where it deems that there is a clear risk that small arms will be used for the violation or suppression of human rights and fundamental freedoms including that of right of peoples to self-determination.

Madam Chair,

Like many other delegations, we have great expectations from this PrepCom. We hope that the spirit of cooperation and readiness to fight the scourge of SALW will prevail and will bring us closer to stability, cooperation, and durable peace. Such an approach becomes even more appropriate with the perspective of the 2012 Review Conference.

Thank you.