BANGLADESH

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

at

the Preparatory Committee of 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
20 March 2012
Madam Chairperson,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as the Chair of the Preparatory Committee. We have full confidence in your excellent credentials to steer the deliberations to fruition. You can count on my delegation’s full support in this regard. We are in full accord with you on the method of work that you have laid out.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). However, we would like to make a brief statement in our national capacity.

Madam Chairperson,

The unanimous adoption of the Programme of Action in 2001 was a watershed moment in the history of disarmament and non-proliferation. Progress in its implementation, more than a decade after its adoption, has, however, been painfully slow and uneven. It is critical now—in this PremCom as well as in the RevCon in August this year, which we are all looking forward to—to objectively review the weaknesses reported by member states in the implementation of the PoA and to outline strong and pragmatic measures in response to these problems. Since PoA is a non-legally binding document, lacking clear benchmarks and measurable targets, it is critical that states make every effort to push for implementation targets that are robust but achievable.
Madam Chairperson,

Bangladesh is seriously concerned at the global proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Their illegal and uncontrolled circulation has extracted high human costs. They have threatened peace, safety, security and sustainable development of people across the globe. These have generated and exacerbated conflict, and displaced civilians including, but not limited to, children and women. This menace must be stopped. The PoA is an important instrument to achieve that through actions at national, regional and global levels. This PrepCom and the forthcoming Review Conference provide seminal opportunities for us to put an end to these miseries of our peoples by agreeing to undertake concrete measures towards the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

Madam Chairperson,

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, conversion, sale, export, import and transport of small arms and light weapons. Strict procedures are followed in the management of stockpiles including storage, physical security, control of access, inventory management and accounting control. Confiscated illegal small arms and light weapons 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 extracted by illicit trade in SALW. Bangladesh manufactures
and imports, from legitimate sources, a small amount of SALW for use by
our security and defence agencies solely for the legitimate purposes of
national defence and security; also for UN peacekeeping operations.
Bangladesh has been regularly reporting to the UN Register of
Conventional Arms and to the UN Standardized Instrument for Reporting
Military Expenditures.

Madam Chairperson,

Greater international assistance and cooperation is essential for
effective implementation of the PoA. 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.

Marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons are also an
important element in our efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit
trade in these arms. Although our preference has always been for a legally
binding instrument, just like we have in other types of arms, we consider
the consensus adoption of the political declaration on marking and tracing
of small arms and light weapons a step in the right direction.
Madam Chairperson,

There are huge demands for illegal small arms and light weapons around the world, particularly in the conflict and post-conflict zones. We should address this in a comprehensive way including through addressing the underlying causes. But it is equally important to tackle the supply side of the problem. During the last two decades, the number of companies and countries manufacturing and exporting small arms and light weapons has increased significantly, and they come not only from the developed countries but significantly also from developing countries.

We welcome the many regional initiatives to curb such illicit trade. These efforts, we believe, can be critical for success of national action plans. Bangladesh is fully committed to engaging with regional institutional mechanisms such as SAARC, BIMSTEC and ASEAN forums in efforts to achieve regional implementation of PoA. We also encourage greater civil society involvement in the implementation of the PoA.

Mr. Chairperson,

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 global level. The conscience of humanity must be satisfied that in the vigorous pursuit of this noble goal, no stone has been left unturned. Your efforts, madam chair, and ours, will doubtless contribute to that end.

I thank you Madam Chairperson.