Statement

by

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at the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations
Conference to Review the 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

20 March 2012, New York

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Madam Chairperson,

1. Allow me first to congratulate you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this important meeting, as well as all members of the bureau. My delegation has every confidence in your leadership and wishes to assure you of our full support.

2. Thailand would like to associate itself with the Statement made earlier by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and NAM Working Paper for this meeting.

3. I would like to share with you our views on the implementation of the UNPoA.

4. For our national efforts to be effective, policy coordination is of great importance. In Thailand, the National Security Council, which serves as the national coordination agency, will enhance inter-agency policy coordination through reviving and streamlining the inter-agency sub-committee process to address illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

5. On the legislative front, the Ministry of Interior, which is competent authority for the registration of small arms and light weapons, has reviewed the Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosive Articles and Fireworks and Imitation of Firearms Act, B.E. 2490 (1947) with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of law enforcement, increasing penal sanctions on unlawful possession of illicit weapons, and increasing the financial cost of firearms ownership.

6. Some major changes that will come with this legislative change include:

   1) Registration of all firearms using ‘other individual identifying characteristics’ of firearms including rifling of firearms, gunshot residue patterns or cartridge identification and
   2) Increased fees for firearms registration.

7. Other than the legislation under review, current laws impose strict rules on arms possession and arms store licensing, as well as incentivizing illicit firearms holders to surrender their arms. These laws include: (1) Act on Exempting Criminal Liability for Persons who Submit Unlicensed or Illegal Guns, Munitions, or Explosives to the State B.E. 2546 (2003), and (2) Regulation on the Control of Man-Portable Air Defence system (MANPADS) based on APEC’s Bangkok Declaration 2003.

8. The legislative change process has not been without difficulty. The review of major Acts related to firearms has taken time, with major legal obstacles along the way. Thailand would therefore appreciate learning from the experiences of others and receive technical assistance in overcoming hurdles in the legislative process.

9. With regard to Law Enforcement/Stockpile Management, Thailand has an inter-agency national coordination network for firearms-related law enforcement. We have
also taken steps to strengthen coordination include the setting up of an electronic database to catalogue firearms in the Government's stockpile.

10. However, budgetary constraints still limit the full use of the database across agencies. The Royal Thai Navy has spearheaded efforts to catalogue all items in its possession, while other branches of the military and the Royal Thai Police are beginning to do the same.

11. Thailand has been giving greater importance to preventive action on illicit small arms and light weapons possession by increasing public awareness of their dangers and the legal penalties involved. There are plans to launch a public relations campaign to encourage people who possess illicit arms to turn them in.

12. As for the issue of export control, Thailand is reviewing its export control legislation and practices to better document and classify dual-use items. It is hoped that the process will increase the efficiency of Thailand's customs procedures to limit the flow of illicit weapons in the region.

13. With regard to our regional cooperation, Thailand attaches great importance to regional efforts in the implementation of the UNPoA, particularly under ASEAN.

14. Thailand supports cooperation across the ASEAN region, especially within the framework of the Senior Officials Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime. In addition, Thailand continues to enhance border cooperation with our neighbouring countries, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Malaysia, to tackle flows of illicit small arms and light weapons in the region.

15. However, Thailand continues to bear the brunt of the impact of the flow of illicit weapons in the region. We therefore give high importance to the use of regional implementation frameworks such as ASEANAPOL (ASEAN Police) to share intelligence that can lead to prompt apprehension and prosecution of wrongdoers. Coordination with INTERPOL has further facilitated global intelligence and information sharing.

16. Thailand will continue to support ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to strengthen further efforts in this regard. We also recognize the need to coordinate global efforts to tackle illicit weapons and hence support inter-regional cooperation for intelligence and information sharing.

17. Furthermore, Thailand wishes to encourage the role of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament to continue to enhance support in providing countries with capacity-building such as training courses and information sharing.
Madam Chairperson,

18. At the global level, Thailand is concerned about the impact of the proliferation of illicit weapons on global security and stability.

19. Thailand is of the view that transparent relationships with other stakeholders, including NGOs, can enhance the knowledge base and contribute to a common approach towards addressing the global proliferation of illicit arms.

20. Thailand continues to abide by all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and United Nations General Assembly resolutions including confidence building measures. We also participate in the annual United Nations Register of Conventional Weapons and Small Arms and Light Weapons Annex reporting, as a reflection of our transparency and sincerity in promoting global cooperation to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Madam Chairperson,

21. Turning to the issue international cooperation and assistance, Thailand is of the view that given the challenges some countries are facing in the implementation of the UNPoA, more efforts are needed to increase international cooperation and assistance across the board.

22. Thailand welcomes the Implementation Support Unit’s efforts to consolidate needs and expertise under the Programme of Action Implementation Support System Coordination Action in Small Arms (PoA ISS CASA). Thailand wishes to engage further with this mechanism at the regional and global levels, and to include arms exporting states in the discussion.

23. In this regard, Thailand would like to underscore the importance of regional forums for international cooperation and assistance in order to take into account regional differences and nuances in tackling illicit arms.

Madam Chairperson,

24. As many speakers have noted, it appears that lack of expertise and financing still present major obstacles for many countries in the full and effective implementation of the UNPoA.

25. In this regard, Thailand urges that the follow-up to the first UN Conference in 2001 address these issues alongside other relevant developments, including the Arms Trade Treaty negotiations, in order to continue making progress on the Implementation of the PoA.
Madam Chairperson,

26. As there are still many challenges in Thailand’s effective implementation of the UNPoA, we look forward to learning from other countries about their best practices and experiences in overcoming these challenges and at the same time we wish to assure that we will render our full cooperation on this matter.

Thank you.