PHILIPPINES

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PHILIPPINE INTERVENTION

on
Agenda Item 7

General exchange of views: International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons

by

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On the Occasion of the

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UN 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

19-23 March 2012
UNHQ New York
Thank you Madam Chair.

The Philippines calls for the strict implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) in a Timely, Expeditious and Reliable Manner (ITI).

The Philippines believes that in implementing the ITI, special consideration must be given to the tracing of illicit SALWs recovered in the context of conflict situations as existing mechanisms need enhancement. The Philippine Government likewise supports the further development of INTERPOL’s Weapons Electronic Tracing System which is an important tool for tracing SALWs.

On marking, record keeping, and tracing, the Philippine Government requires licensed manufacturers of SALWs to apply an appropriate and reliable marking on each weapon as an integral part of the production process.

The Philippine Government passed Presidential Decree 1866, as amended by Republic Act 8249, which requires that a marking system become an integral part of the production process. The Firearms and Explosives Office of the Philippine National Police (FEO-PNP) issued in 1997 a memorandum to manufacturers that require them to place distinct markings on their products. Buyers of these weapons are required to secure appropriate licenses from police authorities.

The Commission on Audit also continues to assess the internal controls and policies adopted by concerned agencies responsible for the maintenance, safekeeping, and custody of government firearms. The markings are unique and identify the country of origin.

The FEO-PNP also has a firearms ballistics information system - a state of the art gun fingerprinting system - that relies on computer analysis and contains ballistics records, which can also be matched with the firearms.

The Philippines also adopted the following existing regulations and administrative procedures to ensure full compliance with the ITI:

- All manufactured firearms, ammunition, and parts have their appropriate markings and are deposited with the FEO-PNP prior to being sold to licensed authorized dealers.
- All importation and/or procurement of raw materials and components for the manufacture of firearms, ammunition, and parts need clearance from the Chief of the Philippine National Police.
- Firearms manufacturing firms are required to submit monthly reports to the FEO-PNP as to the types, calibers, and quantities of finished products and their sales.
- All employees of firearms manufacturing firms are screened by the Philippine National Police and the firms themselves are subject to regular inspections by the PNP.
Madam Chair,

The following are the challenges we face in tracing, as well as in markings and records-keeping:

1. Our lack of Institutional Capacity and Porous Borders since the Philippines has an archipelagic geography which gives unauthorized groups different points of entry in our long coastlines and makes our country susceptible to smuggling activities. In addition, we have resource limitations in patrolling borders, such as lack of equipment, modernization and capacity building requirements, and inadequate training.

2. At the international level, the globalized operation of arms makes accountability of illicit activities difficult to trace and establish. Therefore, the implementation of the ITI is a joint and primary responsibility of major arms producing as well as receiving States.

To conclude, the 2nd Review Conference of the PoA should reaffirm and incorporate the key normative developments within the UN Program of Action and the ITI since the last Review Conference in 2006. It should also acknowledge the broader developments within the UN system.

Thank you, Madam Chair.