

to be added

**Draft statement for Mr. Sergio Duarte,
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
Workshop hosted by the Permanent Mission of Mexico
and Parliamentarians for Global Action
9 June 2009**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Members of Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, first and foremost, to extend my heartfelt gratitude to H.E. Mr. Claude Heller, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations and Ms. Shazia Rafi, Secretary-General of Parliamentarians for Global Action, for inviting me to this important event. It is a great honour to be invited to speak at a gathering of such a distinguished audience of honourable Members of Parliament from around the world.

Politics is about organising change. And as we all are aware, parliamentarians are uniquely placed to bring effective and meaningful change to their countries. They are often well-connected, bringing ideas from different stakeholders together, including advocacy groups, trade unions, industry, and academia. They introduce, draft and adopt national laws. They are responsible for ratifying international treaties. And above all, they have a very direct mandate from their people.

[Small arms]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been asked to speak on the challenges faced by the United Nations and its Member States in their efforts to combat the proliferation – and the often excessive accumulation – of small arms and light weapons. And to discuss ways to explore how best parliamentarians could contribute to overcoming this challenge.

Since the adoption in 2001, here at the UN, of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, States have made considerable progress in implementing it. Weapons collection and destruction activities have continued, with thousands of weapons and millions of rounds of ammunition destroyed. National coordination bodies have been established and existing ones strengthened. And States are increasingly focusing their attention on implementing a separate agreement on the *marking and tracing* of weapons which was adopted under the umbrella of the Programme of Action in 2005.

Despite the progress made to-date, major challenges remain.

One such challenge is that there is not much reliable or detailed information on the scale and sources of illicit flows or holdings of small arms, which makes it difficult to assess their precise impact in a quantifiable way.

Secondly, the policy challenges and the level of implementation vary from region to region and country to country, and we have to become more aware of that.

But there are also a number of common challenges that cut across regions. These include the lack of adequate national capacity in state institutions like police, prosecution offices and customs; the need to offer alternative livelihoods to young men who see the use of firearms as an easy way to obtain status and income; the need for comprehensive National Action Plans on small arms with clear benchmarks and achievable goals; the need to devote more resources to combating arms trafficking; border porosity in most affected regions; poor coordination of international cooperation and assistance; and insufficient involvement of civil society in efforts to tackle small arms.

In the light of these challenges, in July last year, during the third biennial meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action, States agreed on an outcome document in which they outlined several steps that they could take. These include:

- the need to improve stockpile management, because poorly managed stockpiles form significant sources of diversion of weapons and ammunition into illicit markets;
- the need to strengthen national control systems on the import and export of small arms, including systems for end-user certification;
- the crucial importance of better international cooperation to combat illicit arms brokering;
- And the need to free up more funds from countries in a position to help on these issues.

Most importantly, there is a need to broaden our perspective and improve our understanding of the root causes of the illicit small arms trade, including those that stem from social and economic development factors. States wanting to book results in the fight against the illicit arms trade will need to look at the nexus between security and development, where supply *and* demand aspects interlink.

Meanwhile, I hope that the PGA would encourage its Members to push and advocate for the drafting of adequate legislation and to support the adoption of national action plans which have clear benchmarks and time frames for preventing and combating the proliferation of illegal small arms, promote and monitor the implementation of these plans, and hold their governments accountable to the implementation of such plans.

[ATT]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been requested also to say a few words about the ongoing process towards a potential arms trade treaty. As you may be aware, this process began two years ago when States decided in the General Assembly to have an expert group look at the scope, feasibility and draft parameters of a possible arms trade treaty. Last year, that expert group recommended that further consideration of those issues was required and that such

efforts should be carried out, on a step-by-step basis, in an open and transparent manner, within the framework of the United Nations.

Accordingly, the General Assembly decided half a year ago to convene two one-week meetings per year on the subject until 2011.

The second session of this year will be held in a couple of weeks, in July [13-17].

The General Assembly's decision to establish this process will help to ensure that the arms trade treaty process will be receiving the close attention it deserves over the next two years. While some commentators are frustrated with the slow rate of progress, this work is indispensable in building an international consensus necessary for this treaty to be fully multilateral in scope. There are vast differences among States over such questions as whether feasibility should be determined prior or after agreement on the scope and draft parameters of such a treaty; what type of weapons or activities the scope should cover; what criteria should be used to determine its draft parameters and who would decide whether a violation has occurred or not.

Progress towards concluding an arms trade treaty will clearly require strong and sustained pressure and support from all concerned. It is my fervent hope that the PGA would play a leading role in mobilizing such support.

Thank you very much.

**Background information for the Workshop
hosted by the Permanent Mission of Mexico
and Parliamentarians for Global Action
9 June 2009**

Background on SALW

- The Programme of Action was agreed in 2001;
- Under it, Biennial Meetings of States are held, the third of which (2008) produced an outcome document with recommendations in the fields of Stockpile Management; Brokering; Marking & Tracing; and International Assistance;
- Also, States agreed that it would be useful to focus more on regional implementation – therefore UNODA is working on organizing regional implementation meetings (first one to be held in Sydney, 22-23 June 2009);
- A Review Conference was held in 2006, which failed to agree on a result;
- States have agreed in the last General Assembly to plan a 4th BMS in 2010 and a 2nd Review Conference in 2012.

Background on ATT

- The process on an ATT is considered a major international initiative in the field of conventional weapons at the UN;
- The idea originates with Costa Rican president Oscar Arias who introduced the concept of establishing international arms trade standards during the late 1990s;
- The initiative has attracted growing worldwide attention by Governments, the media and civil society groups, in particular the ‘ControlArms’ campaign and parliamentarians;
- The process within the UN framework started in 2006 when an overwhelming majority of States voted for a group of governmental experts (GGE) on the issue;
- In response to the 2006 resolution (61/89) and in preparation for the GGE, the UN also received an unprecedented number (101) of Member States’ views on the subject;
- The 2008 GGE report recommended that, in light of the complexity of the issues inherent to conventional arms transfers, further consideration of those issues was required and that such efforts should be carried out, on a step-by-step basis, in an open and transparent manner, within the framework of the United Nations.
- The General Assembly decided in 2008 to convene an Open-Ended Working Group on the subject which would meet in up to six one-week sessions until 2011. In accordance with resolution 63/240 of 2008, the group is mandated, as one of its key elements, to “consider those elements in the report of the group of governmental experts where consensus could be developed for their inclusion in an eventual legally binding treaty on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms”.