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United Nations 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, 26 June-7 July 2006

Letter dated 19 June 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations addressed to the President- designate of the United Nations 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

I have the honour to inform you that the United Nations workshop entitled Towards the Review Conference on 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 was held in Bangkok from 17 to 19 May 2006. As a result of the workshop two working group reports were adopted, by the Working Group for South-East Asian States and the Working Group for South Asian States (see annex).

In this regard, the Permanent Mission of Thailand, as the host country, would like to request that the two reports be circulated as a document of the United Nations 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.

(Signed) Khunying Laxanachantorn **Laohaphan**



Annex

United Nations Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons for South Asia and South-East Asia: Towards the Review Conference on 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

A. Report of the Working Group for South-East Asian States

19 May 2006

1. Workshop participants met to review progress made in implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects at both the national and regional levels. The workshop took place in preparation for the Review Conference to be held in New York in June and July 2006.
2. The following Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) States participated in the workshop: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.
3. ASEAN participants recalled the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime, adopted in Yangon on 23 June 1999, and the Work Programme to Implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime, adopted in Kuala Lumpur on 17 May 2002, which includes tackling small arms and light weapons (SALW) as part of transnational crime.
4. ASEAN participants recalled that the workshop in Bangkok followed the United Nations Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons held in Beijing from 19 to 21 April 2005 and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Seminar on SALW held in Phnom Penh on 4 and 5 November 2005.
5. ASEAN participants noted, in particular, the recommendations made at the ARF seminar in Phnom Penh, specifically:
 - SALW points of contact to send their contact details to the ARF unit of the ASEAN secretariat to facilitate networking
 - Representatives of ASEAN countries to explore with their own Governments the potential for enhanced regional cooperation on SALW issues
 - ASEAN countries to consider adding SALW to the agenda of future ASEAN meetings
 - ASEAN countries to consider coordinating national positions on SALW issues ahead of the United Nations Preparatory and Review Conferences on the Programme of Action on SALW in 2006 and other international SALW meetings.
6. ASEAN participants affirmed their continuing commitment to fully implement the Programme of Action and to cooperate with other States, within South-East Asia and beyond South-East Asia, to that end. They acknowledged the important interrelationship in national, regional and global-level implementation of the Programme of Action.

7. Each State reported on its implementation of the Programme of Action to date.
8. Those States that had not yet submitted a report on their implementation of the Programme of Action would endeavour to submit such a report by the time of the Review Conference, using the information they had provided at the workshop as a basis for it.
9. ASEAN participants outlined the various steps they had taken to implement, and align their activities with, the Programme of Action including, inter alia:
 - The establishment of national points of contact
 - The establishment of national coordination agencies or bodies
 - National laws, regulations and administrative procedures across the range of areas covered by the Programme of Action
 - Transfer controls
 - Brokering
 - Stockpile management and security
 - Weapons collection and destruction
 - Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants
 - Public-awareness programmes.
10. ASEAN participants reaffirmed their commitment to implement other politically binding measures agreed within the United Nations framework to combat illicit small arms and light weapons.
11. ASEAN participants affirmed the continued importance of cooperation with other South-East Asian States in addressing the problems posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. In this regard, they highlighted the following:
 - The effective control of land and maritime borders
 - Close cooperation among police, customs and other officials responsible for combating the illicit SALW trade, including the sharing of relevant information
 - The exchange of information on experiences, progress made and difficulties encountered in implementing the Programme of Action, including best practices.
12. In these areas and other areas relevant to the control of the illicit SALW trade, ASEAN participants reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen subregional cooperation for the purposes of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects. They noted that the twenty-sixth meeting of the ASEAN Association of Heads of Police, in Kuala Lumpur from 22 to 26 May 2006, would provide an initial opportunity to strengthen subregional mechanisms for information exchange.
13. In their statements to the workshop, ASEAN participants underlined the importance of assistance, including technical and financial assistance where needed, to their implementation of various aspects of the Programme of Action in relation to

weapons, their ammunition and explosives. In this regard, they highlighted the following:

- The organization of a capacity-building workshop in the subregion
- Training for law enforcement officers
- Increasing capacity for effective control of land and maritime borders
- Assistance for stockpile management and surplus destruction
- Assistance for DDR
- Assistance for public-awareness programmes.

14. In these areas and others, ASEAN participants acknowledged the important role the United Nations played and should continue to play in supporting the implementation of the Programme of Action.

15. ASEAN participants recognized the important contribution made by other international organizations, as well as civil society, to the implementation of the Programme of Action and requested their continued support to this end.

16. ASEAN participants thanked the organizer of the workshop, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, workshop sponsors Canada, Japan and the United Nations Development Programme, and host Government Thailand for the important contributions they had made to the success of the workshop. They affirmed that the workshop had helped them prepare for the forthcoming Review Conference.

17. Finally, ASEAN participants resolved to sustain their commitment to tackling the problem of the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects over the long term. They acknowledged the importance of the efforts made over the past five years to implement the Programme of Action, while recognizing that much more still needed to be done.

B. Report of the Working Group for South Asian States

19 May 2006

The United Nations Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) for South Asia and the South-East Asia was convened in Bangkok from 17 to 19 May 2006. The workshop was organized by the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, in cooperation with the Governments of Canada, Japan and Thailand, and the United Nations Development Programme.

Following presentations by participating States in the second plenary meeting, representatives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka met during the Working Group Session for South Asian States and discussed various aspects of 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, adopted at the 2001 United Nations Conference.

The participants in the Working Group for South Asian States:

1. Expressed their appreciation to the Regional Centre and the sponsors for providing a unique opportunity to discuss the issue of illicit trade in SALW in the subregion;
2. Reaffirmed their strong commitment to fully implement the Programme of Action;
3. Committed themselves to establish or strengthen national coordination agencies or bodies in order to fully coordinate national efforts to tackle the problems related to the illicit trade in SALW;
4. Stressed the need to intensify the exchange of information in all areas relevant to the implementation of the Programme of Action within the subregion;
5. Underscored the importance of cooperation between Governments and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in activities related to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects;
6. Reiterated the need for international cooperation and assistance, including capacity-building, technical and financial assistance to promote national and regional efforts to implement the Programme of Action;
7. Agreed to promote increased regional and subregional dialogue and cooperation, including the exchange of information on national experiences in implementing the Programme of Action and, where possible, the development of joint initiatives to promote such implementation;
8. Shared the following issues and concerns in relation to the illicit trade in SALW in the subregion:
 - The humanitarian and other negative implications arising from the illicit trade in SALW
 - The multiple linkages with, in particular, drug trafficking and terrorism
 - Effective border control
 - Improved national normative frameworks
 - The need for increased awareness and capacity-building of relevant national agencies
 - Coordinated regional initiatives to tackle the problem of illicit trade in SALW, noting existing mechanisms such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.