



# General Assembly

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## **Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects Second session**

### **Summary record of the 37th meeting\***

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 29 March 2001, at 3 p.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. dos Santos ..... (Mozambique)

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\* No summary records were prepared for the 34th to 36th meetings.

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*The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.*

### **Statement by the representative of the United Kingdom**

1. **Ms. Hand** (United Kingdom) said that the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects presented a unique opportunity to agree on lasting measures to reduce the uncontrolled spread and misuse of those weapons. There was an expectation of action, not just on the part of Governments and civil society, but on the part of the people whose lives were endangered daily in the countries most affected by the devastating consequences of the easy availability and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Therefore, it would be crucial for the Conference to lead to action. A period of apparent inactivity would be a failure.

2. Recognizing the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to the complex problems associated with small arms, the United Kingdom was developing a long-term strategy to address both the supply and demand for such weapons. The strategy included the allocation of significant resources to a weapons collection, management and destruction programme, which would spur immediate action, as well as long-term proposals. Support for such short-term, high-impact initiatives would be crucial to kick-start the process of reducing the uncontrolled spread and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Stronger international controls on production, marking, transfers and holdings of such weapons could ensure that the numbers freely available never again rose to such dangerously high levels.

3. The United Kingdom Foreign Secretary had proposed an International Arms Surrender Fund as a further instrument in the fight against the proliferation of small arms. Such a fund could operate under the auspices of UNDP, the World Bank or a similar international institution. It would not adopt a prescriptive approach, but would tailor its operations to fit the circumstances of different countries. Because it would have funds available on a semi-permanent basis, timely action could be taken as problems arose. Its launch could take place immediately after the Conference. It was not her Government's intention, however, to create new institutions or bureaucracies to service such a Fund; the UNDP Trust Fund was an existing mechanism for channelling support to affected

countries, especially since UNDP was already working on weapons collection within its development activities.

4. Working within the development framework would ensure that reducing weapons availability was undertaken in conjunction with efforts to address the root causes of the demand for small arms. A Fund could therefore also provide development incentives for the voluntary surrender of weapons at critical junctures in disarmament and peace-building. Such an approach would be sustainable, integrated and comprehensive. Once fully implemented, the programme could be widened to include expertise and training within the context of security sector reform and post-conflict reconstruction.

5. The United Kingdom hoped that other Governments would consider both funding and participating in the development of that initiative.

### **Draft decision on the level of participation** (A/CONF.192/PC/L.9)

6. *The draft decision on the level of participation, contained in document A/CONF.192/PC/L.9, was adopted.*

7. **The Chairman** said that it was his understanding that the high-level segment at the ministerial level would take place at the beginning of the Conference.

### **Draft rules of procedure of the Conference** (A/CONF.192/PC/L.5 and L.8)

8. **The Chairman** said that, given the decisions taken by the Committee pertaining to rule 33, adopted by the Committee at its second session, and the modalities of attendance of non-governmental organizations (rule 64) adopted by the Committee on 22 March 2001, he proposed that the draft rules of procedure of the Conference as contained in A/CONF.192/PC/L.5, amended by the insertion of draft rule 33 on decision-making (document A/CONF.192/PC/L.8) should be adopted.

9. *It was so decided.*

### **Other matters**

10. **Mr. Baidi Nejad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) expressed the hope that the Preparatory Committee would discuss in depth the important question of the

Conference structure, so that it would be clear to participants in advance.

11. **The Chairman** said that consultations on that aspect were continuing, and could continue up to the opening of the Conference, if necessary. He urged all interested delegations to submit suggestions to him for circulation to members.

12. **Mr. McConnell** (United States of America) said that, for many nations, the decision whether to participate in the Conference would depend on the outcome document. His delegation would welcome a progress report before the opening of the Conference on the efforts to achieve consensus on that document.

*The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.*