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Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**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

**Statement on behalf of the OSCE by Mr. Peter Poptchev
Chairperson of the Forum for Security Co-operation**

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

The United Nations Programme of Action, while addressing the problem of illicit trade in SALW, appeals to regional and intergovernmental organisations to contribute to preventing, combating and eradicating this phenomenon in all its aspects.

The OSCE, as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, plays an important facilitating role in early warning, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in the OSCE region. The OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century, identifies means to address the new threats in a changing security environment. Special attention was drawn to the illicit trafficking and uncontrolled spread of, and access to, SALW by criminal and terrorist organisations.

Active implementation by the OSCE of the UN Programme of Action is very important for several reasons. First, the OSCE includes most of the major world producers and exporters of SALW. It is our responsibility to undertake all necessary measures to prevent diversion of small arms into illegal markets. Second, the OSCE region still has surplus stocks stemming from the Cold-War period, unresolved conflicts, or regions in the process of post-conflict rehabilitation. These realities require OSCE action to eliminate SALW surpluses. Third, OSCE participating States have committed to an advanced regulatory framework to fulfil their commitments under the UN Programme of Action (PoA) toward a safer world.

The OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, agreed by the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) in 2000, constituted an OSCE landmark. It responded to the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms, which are highly correlated to violence and crime. The Document made a substantial contribution to the respective efforts emanating from the PoA, the provisions of which were often similar and complementary. The Document committed participating States to a set of standards, which, if fully implemented, would help them to abide by the PoA at the national, regional and global levels.

In accordance with the PoA, the OSCE established an information exchange regime covering national policies, export/import data and SALW destruction, thereby building not only confidence between states, but also joint capacity to address SALW risks and challenges.

A further development was the OSCE Handbook of Best Practices on SALW of 2003. This collaborative effort considered existing international initiatives in dealing with the SALW life cycle, from manufacturing to destruction. We deem the Handbook as another main OSCE contribution to the PoA. Its many recommendations assist participating States to improve national SALW policies and are relevant to states beyond the OSCE area. At the request of the League of Arab States, in addition to the six official OSCE languages, the Handbook was published in Arabic. As the Handbook is a living document, the Forum for Security Cooperation recently approved an Annex C on National Procedures for Stockpile Management and Security of MANPADS.

The standards set out in the SALW Document are very high, and thus place a heavy burden on many OSCE participating States in implementing their commitments. Accordingly, the OSCE regards assistance to individual states as a priority. Since 2001, the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center, together with participating States, has conducted numerous training programmes and practice-oriented projects covering stockpile management and security, cross-border trafficking, and SALW destruction.

In order to make operational the SALW Document's provisions on early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, the OSCE adopted supplementary measures. It established a mechanism whereby a state can request assistance from other states to meet its own identified needs, e.g.

- aid in SALW destruction in post-conflict situations;
- aid in elimination of SALW surpluses;
- improvement of a national stockpiles management and security system.

Since 2004, three such requests have been received from Belarus, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. This new activity treads new ground in evaluating the situation, identifying the scope of aid required, and developing reliable project plans. The Belarus request encompassed 16 SALW storage sites totalling EUR 3.1 million. Having attracted sufficient donations to initiate project implementation, work should commence soon, with UNDP managing the project. The Tajikistan request addresses SALW destruction, stockpile security and management in the aftermath of its internal armed conflict, as well as the fight against organized crime. This project is another success story, and is continuing in rural regions.

The OSCE has always supported co-ordination and co-operation with other international players in this field, where possible, to avoid unnecessary duplication. Just recently, in June 2006, we established a framework for technical co-operation through a Memorandum of Understanding with UNDP. This agreement will combine the best efforts of both organisations toward our common goal.

In view of the Small Arms Survey estimates of SALW in circulation worldwide and their associated casualties, the OSCE places priority on SALW destruction. From 2001 – 2004, approximately 4.3 million weapons (3.5M surplus, .8M confiscated) were destroyed, thereby saving money which would otherwise have to be spent on stockpiles security.

The OSCE places particular emphasis on counter-terrorism activities, and thereby effective control over illicit arms transfers. During 2004, the FSC took three decisions addressing SALW export controls, including stringent elements addressing MANPADS. Another decision end-user certificates relates to approval of an export-licences and related technology transfer to improve the traceability of SALW.

The "Principles on the Control of Brokering in SALW" has proven to be a challenge, reflecting similar debates ongoing in the UN. OSCE states committed to control brokering within their territory, and to consider controlling brokering outside their territory by their own nationals through legislation. We also supported the establishment of the Governmental Group of Experts on SALW Brokering that will commence in November 2006 to consider, *inter alia*, the respective brokering decisions.

Our report would not be complete without mentioning our initiative to address security, environmental, and humanitarian risks arising from surplus stockpiles of conventional ammunition and explosives. The OSCE is unique in its *acquis*, which, unlike other international or regional mechanisms, uniquely includes the work on MANPADS and ammunition, all being integral elements in making SALW a "weapon of mass destruction." The OSCE Document on Conventional Ammunition in 2003 addressed these risks. In addition, work continues on the development of a Handbook on Best Practices in Ammunition.

Mr. Chairman, over the last five years, the OSCE has obviously made very significant contributions to the UN PoA. However, we regard our achievements from a critical perspective as well. Much remains to be done in this domain, particularly with a view to closing loopholes in existing regulations. Without prejudging the results of future deliberations, I will mention several suggestions:

- Further strengthening export controls;
- Further examination of illicit manufacture and transfer;
- Preventing illicit trade in MANPADS;
- Promotion of the OSCE "Handbook of Best Practices on SALW" beyond our region;
- Promotion of the UN International Instrument on Marking and Tracing, which foresees a role for regional organisations.

This list is by no means exhaustive, but serves only to demonstrate the OSCE's potential to contribute even further to the UN Programme of Action.

Thank you.