

**UN Conference to Review Implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent,  
Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects  
26 June – 7 July, 2006**

**Opening Statement By**

**Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam  
Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN and  
President of the Conference**

**Excellency Jan Eliasson, President of the General Assembly,  
Secretary-General Kofi Annan,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Ill-gotten arms kill people, sometimes on massive scales, in many societies and in several ongoing conflicts. The convening of this Review Conference is yet another manifestation that the international community is seriously concerned about the accumulation and proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons and that this scourge is considered as a threat to stability and sustainable development in many parts of the world. It was against this backdrop that five years ago, we, the Member States of the United Nations met in New York and adopted a Programme of Action aimed at addressing this issue at national, regional and international level. The Programme of Action since then has mobilized a broad cross-section of the international community to take action to combat the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons and its illicit trade. The programme derives strength from its adoption by consensus; and that it involves wide range of stakeholders including civil society; and that it recognizes the need for flexibility by taking into account specific concerns and aspirations of different States and regions.

After five years, it is now our duty to review this Programme with a view to charting a course for further implementation of the Programme of Action.

In this effort we are encouraged by the specific reference to this process in the World Summit Outcome Document adopted last year by our leaders. Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament and his team, all have been strongly committed to this process and to this Conference, in particular.

The focus of the Conference will be to agree on measures to ensure further implementation of the Programme of Action in a forward looking manner, while preserving the careful balance that was achieved at the time of adoption of the Programme of Action.

There have been many steps taken in preparation for this Review Conference by a variety of stakeholders in New York and in several cities and in regions across the world. This process has benefited by the two Biennial Meetings of States held in 2003 and 2005 and the Meeting of the Preparatory Committee this year. The outcomes of these meetings will, no doubt, enrich our deliberations. Opportunities created in all such meetings for exchange of views and experiences among States as well as international, regional and civil society organizations will provide us with good basis to seek consensus on measures for further implementation of the Programme of Action. A wide range of issues and a variety of concerns and aspirations have been expressed at the regional and preparatory meetings as well as in informal consultations. This makes it imperative to work towards synthesizing all views in such a manner that at the end of our deliberations we could agree on an outcome acceptable to all member States. In this regard I am fully aware of my responsibility to conduct our work to reflect our collective will and determination to ensure the full implementation of the Programme of Action. For this purpose, I trust that I can count

on your flexibility and political will to take this conference towards a successful conclusion.

As member States of the United Nations, it is incumbent upon us to display to the world at large that this organization can successfully address yet another issue of importance for many in the world. And I am confident that with your commitment and support we shall not fail.

Thank you.

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