



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations
Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit
Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, in all its Aspects**

14 June 2010

Establishment, where appropriate, of subregional or regional mechanisms, with a view to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including trans-border Customs cooperation and networks for information-sharing among law enforcement, border and Customs control agencies

**Statement by Mr Philip Kimpton
First Secretary
Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Geneva**

(Check against delivery)

Thank you Mr Chair

As this is the first time my delegation will take the floor, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair. My delegation has every confidence that you will guide us to a successful outcome on the critically important issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. I can assure you, Mr Chair, of the full cooperation of the Australian delegation, in assisting you to that end.

We also wish to thank Mr Federico Perazza of Uruguay for his work in advance of this Meeting in preparing a paper on the topic of border controls to focus our discussion.

Mr Chair

As we are all aware, the Programme of Action is focussed on the prevention of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Yet it is difficult to prevent illicit trade without addressing the movement of small arms and light weapons across borders.

Central to our discussions of border control and illicit trade, is the need to enhance both national controls and international cooperation and assistance. While multilateral cooperation is essential, Australia views regional cooperation on these matters as critical. To that end, we welcome the recognition in the program of action of the need to foster regional and sub-regional mechanisms. Trans-border customs cooperation and networks for information-sharing among law enforcement, border and customs control agencies will go a long way toward preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons across borders.

Australia has in place some of the strongest firearms laws in the world and we work hard with our regional neighbours to ensure active participation in existing small arms initiatives. We recognise that the accumulation, spread and misuse of small arms and light weapons contributes to destabilisation and the breakdown of law and order in many regions, including our own in the Asia Pacific. To this end, Australia hosted a regional meeting in Sydney for Pacific Island Countries and Timor Leste on the UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons on June 22nd and 23rd in 2009.

The meeting was organised by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, including the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, in partnership with the Government of Australia. The Government of New Zealand provided additional support. And we were pleased to welcome you, Ambassador Macedo, to the event.

Of particular note was the substantial discussion on the UN's draft Regional Implementation Guidelines. The draft Regional Implementation Guidelines provide a roadmap for the implementation of the Program of Action and identify areas where international and regional bodies can act to provide and coordinate technical assistance.

Mr Chair

My delegation agrees that fostering practical cooperation between border control agencies and law enforcement officials is critical. And in this context, information-sharing is a fundamental element.

In order to address the issue of the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons we must address, as a matter of priority, ways to better prevent their movements across borders. National action accompanied by regional and international cooperation is key.

I would just like to briefly highlight a number of Australian Government programmes and cooperation activities with a strong focus on the Pacific region. These programmes complement and enforce an objective on enhancing border controls over illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Australian officials have helped agencies of the Papua New Guinean Government to strengthen customs, immigration, and aviation and maritime safety and security. Transnational Crime Units have been established at several locations in the Pacific in which the Australian Federal Police play a central role. The Australian Federal Police provide facilities and intelligence that enable law enforcement operations within the Pacific region, and may include smuggling and illegal movements of small arms and light weapons. The Australian Government Department of Defence provides a number of patrol boats to Pacific Island States to help combat transnational crime.

From the OSCE's politically-binding Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, to the South African Development Community's Protocol on the control of firearms, ammunition and other related materials - there are mechanisms and instruments which have been successfully developed at a regional level which underscores the importance of shared responsibility in the fight against the illicit trade of these weapons.

My delegation brings a constructive spirit to our discussions and looks forward to an outcome which reinforces the existing legislative regimes aimed at strengthening border controls at the national, regional and multilateral levels. Additionally, Australia hopes that our discussions might encourage greater capacity building on these issues through the development of laws, regulations, policies, training programs, infrastructure and practices which enhance boarder controls.

Finally, as a follow up to our discussions this week, we look forward to further meetings which might facilitate the exchange of information between enforcement authorities, as well as relevant international organizations, such as the World Custom Organisation and Interpol.

Thank you.