
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have asked for the floor to explain our vote after the vote on the resolution entitled "Promotion at the regional level in the OSCE of the United Nations programme of action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" that we have just adopted.

Azerbaijan has joined the consensus because we support the main thrust, values and objectives outlined in this resolution. Azerbaijan fully shares international community’s stand that illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons represents grave threat to security and stability. Easy access to small arms coupled with their damaging capacity makes them a serious challenge that the international community faces in the new millennium.

At the regional level, Azerbaijan puts every effort to strengthen cooperation with regional states in order to jointly tackle the illicit trafficking of any kind. In particular, Azerbaijan develops such cooperation within the multilateral framework of the GUAM countries. We are convinced that increased transparency in small arms sales will significantly contribute to the security and stability of the OSCE member states.

However, it seems to be difficult that this resolution be implemented at the sub-regional level in the South Caucasus, because of the existence of a number of armed conflicts in the area, in particular, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In this regard, Azerbaijan has repeatedly drawn the attention of the international community to the illegal transfers of a huge amount of weaponry, including small arms and light weapons to Armenia. Various types of conventional weapons are continuing to be deployed and stocked in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Chairman,

Occupation of territories, terrorist activities, arms smuggling and drug and human being trafficking in the territories controlled by separatists, foreign military presence hampers the independent development of the three states of the region. Our delegation would like to emphasize that Azerbaijan regards regional political and economic cooperation with Armenia possible only after the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, based on full respect to our sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Thank you.