Addressing the Humanitarian and Development Impact of the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons

The General Assembly,

Recognizing that, as stated in the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA), the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their excessive accumulation have a wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic consequences and pose a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development,

Fully recognizing the significant progress that has been made in implementation of the PoA,

Recalling that the UN 20th Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the PoA recognized that further action was required to fulfill the commitments undertaken in the PoA,

Recognizing also that this year, world leaders jointly expressed grave concern at the negative effects of development, peace and security and human rights posed by the illicit trade of SALW; and that in that regard the 2006 UN review conference on the PoA represents an important and concrete opportunity to address effectively in particular those interconnected security and development challenges which are relevant to the agenda of the said conference,

Noting that the 2005 World Summit Outcome includes, inter alia:

i) a commitment to work towards a security consensus based on the recognition that many threats are interlinked, and that development, peace, security, and human rights are mutually reinforcing,

ii) a section on human security, as well as,

iii) a commitment to support implementation of the PoA,

1. Calls upon all States to take full account of the interconnections between development, peace, security and human rights, which are mutually reinforcing to the issue of SALW.

2. Suggests that, when dealing with the issue of SALW, States should explore ways to more effectively address SALW’s humanitarian and development impact, including inter alia:

a) developing, where appropriate, comprehensive armed violence prevention programmes, integrated into national poverty reduction strategies

b) encouraging that UN peace support operations address the safe storage and disposal of SALW as an integral part of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes,

c) to systematically include, in longer term peace building strategies and programmes, measures to regulate SALW including weapons collection and destruction, stockpile management and security of SALW and its ammunition, adequate national arms regulation and the prevention of illicit arms transfers into the area, including to non-state end-users;
d) Ensuring, where appropriate, that activities as mentioned under b) and c) take full account of:
   - the roles that women and women’s organisations could play in small arms DDR processes, as well as the requirement to address the needs of women and girl combattants and dependents in DDR programmes,
   - the commitment to elaborate and implement strategies to report on, prevent and punish gender-based violence,
   - the commitment to promote and protect the rights and welfare of children in armed conflicts,
   - the requirement for adequate care and assistance of victims of small arms violence, including support to ensure their social and economic reintegration;

e) recognizing that the promotion of respect for international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, could require enhanced capacity-building for armed forces, police and security forces and the judiciary,

f) developing SALW and armed violence strategies within the context of multilateral frameworks that address security and justice sector governance, public health, women’s issues, human rights and development assistance, especially those that engage International Financial Institutions, development agencies and NGOs;

3. Encourages States in the period leading up to, and at, the 2006 review conference on the PoA to make every effort to:

a) develop resource mobilisation strategies in order to support measures and action required to implement fully the PoA;

b) develop systems to enhance reporting and monitoring of the implementation of the PoA in a
g) regular and systematic fashion.