STATEMENT

by H.E. Mr. Alexei TULBURE
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Moldova to the United Nations,
on Conventional Arms at the 13th meeting of the First Committee

(13 October 2006, New York)

Madam Chair,

Since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor, I should like to join the previous speakers in sincerely congratulating you upon your election to serve as Chairperson of the First Committee. Our congratulations are extended to the other members of the Bureau as well.

Madam Chair,

I would like to use this opportunity of the discussion on conventional arms to address the issue of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and to inform you on the actions undertaken by the Government of the Republic of Moldova regarding SALW.

While the international community is trying to eliminate the threats imposed by the WMD, biological and chemical weapons, the problem of small arms and light weapons is consistently present on the agenda of international gatherings as a very important issue. Hundreds of thousands of people are killed and injured every year by these weapons, the stability and security of many countries and entire regions are seriously hampered, the development and prospects for prosperity are minimized, and even denied by the proliferation of SALW.

The Moldovan Government is strongly committed to the implementation of the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects and undertakes all the necessary efforts in this respect.

The implementation process of the UN PoA has reflected efforts by Moldova to control SALW proliferation and misuse, both domestically and regionally, as part of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe’s Regional Implementation Plan (RIP) “Combatting the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons” and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).
Moldova’s positive involvement in the RIP, which was revised in May 2006, has included full co-operation with the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC). In addition, Moldova has played an important role within the OSCE in agreeing important initiatives to combat the proliferation of SALW, such as the OSCE Document on SALW, which sets out criteria to guide decisions by national export control authorities.

At the national level, good progress has been made in terms of revised and improved legislation to cover arms exports, transfers and civilian possession. The stock of weapons that are potentially available for illicit circulation has been continually reduced through destruction of SALW seized from the civilian population, as demonstrated by the destruction of 1,687 weapons in 2005. Also, Moldova achieved a high good stockpile security reflected in the low occurrence of thefts from national stocks. Progress has been made in developing inter-agency co-ordination on SALW issues to enhance SALW controls and promote implementation of the UN PoA. Significant steps have been made in ensuring comprehensive planning on this issue, through the completion in 2006 of a National SALW Survey. The Survey provides detailed information on the areas in which SALW control in the country could be improved and provides the basis for a future National SALW Strategy.

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

The unresolved conflict in the Eastern region of Moldova, controlled by a separatist regime, remains a serious threat to the political and economical stability of my country and the security of the whole region. The lack of control over the region and its borders strongly limits the Moldovan Government’s implementation and enforcement of its commitments to restrain SALW proliferation across the entire territory of Moldova.

This region remains an area of illegal production and trafficking of small arms. The separatist authorities are interested in perpetuating the illegal trade with weapons, as this provides a source of continuous funding for them, and, since 1993, has become one of the most important factors in the economic and military policy of the separatist authorities. The Transnistrian regime has industrial facilities for the production of light weapons, such as assault rifles, machine guns and multiple and mobile rocket launcher systems, mortars, antipersonnel mines and antipersonnel grenade launchers.

It should be stressed from this high rostrum, Madam Chair, that when it comes to transnistrian region, the provisions of the UN Programme of Action as well as of the existing multilateral instruments in the field of arms control and verification, appear to be not very high on the agenda of the Russian Federation, a country that has been entrusted fourteen years ago with a central mediation role in the transnistrian conflict resolution.

In this connection, I wish to reiterate our long-standing position that the withdrawal in good faith by the Russian Federation of its troops and armaments, including SALW, in accordance with the 1999 Istanbul Summit decisions, will decisively facilitate the settlement of the internal conflict and will enhance the security and stability both in Moldova and at the regional level.
The unresolved internal conflict prevents, Madam Chair, the development and implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, including the effective collection, control, storage and destruction of SALW in the transnistrian region of Moldova. Also, no international monitoring missions are allowed to inspect the illegal production facilities of arms, ammunition and other military goods belonging to the separatist entity.

Currently, with the assistance of the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), which was launched in November 2005 and in close cooperation with Ukraine, efforts are being made to secure the Eastern border of the country. We hope that, with the EUBAM’s help, the control at this border will be restored and the phenomenon of illicit trafficking in all its aspects will be effectively countered.

Madam Chair,

I would like also to use this opportunity to refer to the ongoing consultations on the draft resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty. Being a country that is confronted with an irreducible internal conflict, with foreign troops still stationed illegally on a part of its territory, which is not yet controlled by the central Government, where the illegal production and trafficking has been registered and where the human rights are being violated by a separatist entity supported from abroad, Moldova understands and recognize the value of the ATT principles proposed by the UK, Finland and other like-minded countries.

In particular, we are strongly behind those principles that seek to prevent the unlawful transfers of conventional arms and to stem the destabilizing accumulations of SALW which can undermine the international humanitarian order and exacerbate intrastate and regional conflict.

We believe that the development of a Framework Convention on International Arms Transfers is not only necessary but also achievable since many of the proposed principles are based on States’ existing obligations under international law in respect of the international transfer of arms and, therefore, reflect implicitly the areas of international consensus.

Moreover, national and regional legislation and regulative measures had already been taken to address the matter and the international community has in its hands the conceptual tools needed to act more resolutely in tackling that problem, as a priority issue.

Having in mind that, at the global level, not all states agree to conclude, at this stage, compulsory instruments regulating various dimensions of arms trade, including agreements on the marking and tracing, on the brokering and transfer of small arms and light weapons as well as on the end-use monitoring, we find reasonable the proposed step-by-step approach in the elaboration of a binding regime under ATT.

I thank you Madam Chair.