Statement by
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to the United Nations

At the First Committee

Thematic Debate on Conventional Weapons

New York, October 12, 2006
Madam Chairperson,

Allow me at the outset to join other delegations in congratulating you on your election as the Chair of the First Committee of the 61st Session of the General Assembly and to extend our congratulations to the members of the Bureau. You can rest assured of my delegation’s full cooperation and support.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statements made last week by the distinguished representatives of Lesotho, Nigeria and Indonesia on behalf of SADC, the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

Mozambique attaches great importance to the issue of disarmament. We note with concern the lack of progress in the multilateral machinery dealing with disarmament issues. Lack of consensus on this matter has prevented the World Summit to mention disarmament and non-proliferation in the Outcome Document.

Madam Chairperson,

The main challenge in today’s world is to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons that constitutes a threat to peace, security and development in many countries, particularly in Africa.

We therefore wish to express our disappointment at the failure, last July, of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in all its aspects, to agree on an outcome document.

During that Meeting the delegation of Mozambique expressed its hope that the Conference would come out with a strategy that would foster the full implementation of the Program of Action, while enabling the establishment of measures to reduce the negative impact of small arms and light weapons.

Despite the recent failure, my country continues to attach great importance to the prevention, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. My delegation would therefore like to reiterate the continued relevance of the Program of Action, whose integrity should be observed.
The implementation of the Program of Action remains a key element supporting prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in promoting long-term security and stability to create an enabling environment for sustainable development in developing countries, particularly in Africa.

The success in the implementation of the Program of Action depends, both on national efforts and, to a large extent, on our political commitment to strengthen cooperation at regional and global levels.

Madam Chairperson,

At the national level, Mozambique is committed to the implementation of the 2001 Program of Action as a step forward to the consolidation of peace, security and stability inside and beyond its borders. After a difficult period of our history, as a result of the war of destabilization in the Southern African region, characterized by the proliferation and illicit use of firearms and light weapons, the sub-region is now fully engaged in regional economic integration for the benefit of its peoples.

It is in that framework that my country has engaged since 1992 in the process of collection and destruction of firearms.

In 1995, a structured special operation aimed at identifying, recovering and destroying hidden cashes of firearms was initiated, leading to the destruction of about 30 thousand of different types of firearms and more than a million of ammunition and other related material. Those operations were conducted in collaboration with the Republic of South Africa and show an example of fruitful cooperation between neighboring countries in the area of public security.

Mozambique continues to encourage initiatives from the civil society towards promoting and consolidating the culture of peace and non-violence.

Furthermore, in compliance with the Program of Action, Mozambique has established in 2005 a National Commission that is responsible for the coordination and integration of national efforts required to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.
At the regional level, in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), we are in the process of implementing the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and other Related Materials.

Madam Chairperson,

Mozambique wishes to reaffirm the importance of multilateralism as an essential path for the strengthening and promotion of disarmament, peace and security.

To deal effectively with the threat that light and small arms represents to the Humanity, the International Community needs to seriously take continued and concerted actions to prevent the proliferation of these arms.

This session offers an opportunity to make progress in the fight against the illicit trade in SALW. That is why Mozambique supports the establishment of a common international instrument for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms that would help to prevent, combat and eradicate sales or transfers of such arms, likely to promote conflict, displacement of people and terrorism. The negotiations of this important instrument should take place within the United Nations framework and be conducted through a transparent and inclusive process, in order to ensure consensus among all members of the United Nations.

Let me conclude by expressing our sincere hope that this 61st session of the General Assembly will contribute to make progress in the fight against the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, and to the ultimately well-being of our peoples.

I thank you.