Statement by the
Representative of the Republic of Suriname
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at the
Thematic Debate of the Sixty First Session
of the
United Nations First Committee

New York
13 October 2006

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Statement by the representative of the Republic of Suriname in the First Committee of the 61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly on agenda item 90 entitled: Conventional Weapons.

Madame Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee on the important matter of Conventional Weapons under agenda item 90.

The proliferation of conventional weapons continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. In countries throughout the world, and in particular in Africa and the Caribbean region the uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons continues to be the cause of conflict and organized crime, especially narco-trafficking.

In this regard permit me to note that small arms and light weapons in particular pose a threat to the national security infrastructure, impede social and economic development and can even be the cause of destabilization of a whole region.

Suriname remains committed to the full implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, held in 2001. We view this Programme of action an important tool at the disposal of the international community to address the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The adoption of a politically binding international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable manner marks yet another effort of the international community to eradicate this deadly trade.

We had high expectations for the recently concluded Review Conference to be able to give further guidance to fully implement the 2001 Programme of Action. It is regrettable therefore that this Review Conference did not produce a meaningful outcome.

Madame Chair,

My delegation is of the considered view that international cooperation, including technical and financial assistance as well as capacity building is of critical importance in the fight against the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

We acknowledge that the primary responsibility lies with the individual member states but are equally convinced that national efforts should be complemented with international cooperation. In this context we welcome all forms of cooperation and assistance at the sub-regional, regional and international level.

There is therefore an urgent need to more than ever regulate and reduce the trade in these weapons. The impact on civilian deaths and victims toll compels us to put effective measures in place.
Madame Chair,

In this respect we are concerned by the uncontrolled sale and transfer of conventional weapons. It is of high importance to have a multilateral framework that is based on the principals of the international law, international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations to provide us with guarantees that these weapons do not end up in the wrong hands.

Madame Chair,

Each day many people are being killed by conventional weapons. The international community should step up to the plate and demonstrate the necessary political will to end this suffering by innocent civilians, especially women and children.

While we can not compare our situation with the gravity of the existence of anti-personnel landmines in other countries I am pleased to note that with international assistance Suriname was able to clear anti-personnel landmines that were laid during the the interior conflict in the 1980’s.

Implementing the Ottawa Convention is necessary in order to increase stability, peace and security in the world.
Suriname reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of the Ottawa Convention and remains to cooperate with the regional and international organizations. My country supports the efforts for univerzalisation of the Ottawa Convention in order to reach a mine free world where people can have a safe and secure life.

We express the hope that the next biennial Conference under the 2001 Programme of Action will provide a new impetus to make some meaningful progress towards the goals of ridding the world of the deadly scourge of the illicit trade and transfer of conventional weapons. The adoption of the Programme of Action has spurred a wide range of initiatives at the national, regional and international level. The international community should build on these achievements and create a much safer society for its people to work in peace and security towards the goal of achieving their much needed sustainable development.

Thank you