PHILIPPINES

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STATEMENT

By

MR. RAPHAEL S.C. HERMOSO
Second Secretary
Permanent Mission of the Philippines
to the United Nations

at the Thematic Debate on
Conventional Weapons
of the
First Committee

64th Session, General Assembly

20 October 2009
New York
Mr. Chairman,

At the outset the Philippines aligns itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Philippines is concerned with developments in the field of conventional arms. The different types of weapons that fall under this category are used widely and kill indiscriminately. They threaten entire regions and adversely affect the economic development of States.

The Philippines views and considers the illicit transfer, manufacture, and circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) as a serious threat to international peace and security, since this type of weapon, though not as destructive as others, is easily and cheaply produced and manufactured, and transferred and transported. Illicit SALWs cause, encourage, and/or prolong conflicts, often deadly intra-State wars. Also, illicit SALWs encourage and assist criminal elements to commit crimes against persons and property with impunity.

The Philippines respectfully submits that the best way to solve the problems caused by illicit SALWs is through the implementation of the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects, which is the main framework for addressing the illegal trade in these arms.

Accordingly, the Philippines calls on the producer-States to strictly apply the legal restrictions that prevent the illicit trade of SALWs and to supply only responsible Governments and their authorized entities.

The Philippines calls for the strict implementation of the international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit SALWs, in a timely, expeditious and reliable manner.

In response to the challenges brought about by the illicit trade in SALWs, the Philippines fulfills its commitment to the UN initiatives, particularly the UN Program of Action by diligently complying with international regulations on small arms which are similar to Philippine laws on firearms.

The Philippines has made progress on the implementation of the Program of Action by maintaining appropriate partnerships with the local firearms industry, private security providers, gun clubs, and civil society. The country has several laws to prevent the illicit transfer of SALWs, such as Republic Act 8294, which codifies the laws on the illegal and unlawful possession, manufacture, dealership, acquisition or disposition of firearms, ammunition, or explosives. Based on national legislation, the term “firearms” is used in an even stricter sense than the definition in the Program of Action.
The Philippines submits that full and unrelenting cooperation with the United Nations system on this issue is of paramount importance. Hence, in addition to what I have just stated, the Philippines is undertaking appropriate measures to prevent exports of SALWs that will violate sanctions issued by the United Nations or contravene bilateral, regional or multilateral commitments on non-proliferation of SALWs. The Philippines shares information on illicit transfers with like-minded States through international instruments such as the “Agreement on Information Exchange and Establishment of Communication Procedures.”

On the export and import of SALWs, the Philippines ensures that there is control through the use of End User Certificates or Letters of Intent. The Philippines also does not re-export or re-transfer previously imported SALWs.

The Philippines is mindful of the harmful effects of cluster munitions and landmines long after conflicts have ended. These indiscriminate weapons cause humanitarian crises by killing and maiming innocent civilians, preventing the use of economically viable tracts of land, and even create persons with disabilities. The Philippines supports both the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

The Philippines supports a future Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and views the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market as a threat to international peace and security. It is hoped that a future ATT can address the threats of instability, international terrorism, and transnational organized crime brought about by illegal transfers of arms.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.