STATEMENT BY
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At the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the
Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small
Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
New York, 27 August, 2012

Madame President,

At the outset, let me join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chair of the 2012 Review Conference of 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). My delegation is strongly convinced that under your wise guidance and experienced leadership, you will be able to discharge successfully the heavy workload entrusted. I wish to assure you and the Bureau of my delegation’s full cooperation and support.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Madame President,

Since the 2006 Review Conference of the PoA, remarkable efforts have been made by countries all over the world to strengthen their implementation capacities and promote international cooperation as envisaged in the Program. However, much needs to be done as conflicts, instability and threats of transnational crimes and terrorism continue in various parts of the world. To deal with these threats, the international community must pursue good-faith and redouble efforts to promote the cause of disarmament, especially towards the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

It is our view that the effective implementation of the Programme of Action is closely linked to an enhanced level of international cooperation with and assistance to developing countries. National governments bear the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit
trade in small arms and light weapons. Therefore, it is our conviction that in the implementation of the PoA, it is essential to adhere to the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter including the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. Measures to address the problem of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons should respect the right of states to import, produce and retain sufficient means for their legitimate self-defense and security needs, as decided by the states themselves, and for the protection of their territorial integrity and political independence.

Madame President,

On its part, Viet Nam is fully and seriously committed to the implementation of the PoA and related resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in order to curb the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons.

Under Vietnamese law, the Government fully manages the manufacture, repair and transportation of weapons. Civilians are prohibited, by law, from acquisition or possession of SALW. The use and management of small arms and light weapons and their equipments are exclusively for the purpose of national defense and security. The importation of weapons (except in cases permitted by the Government) is prohibited and Viet Nam does not export weapons. The Police Department for Administrative Management of Social Order of Ministry of Public Security, as the National Contact Point, is in charge of national management of SALW and, thus, of coordinating the PoA implementation measures.

Since 2006, we have stepped up the implementation of national measures to improve management of storage and combat illicit trade of SALW. Most importantly, the implementation of the national legislation, Government Decree No. 47/CP dated 12 August 1996 on the management of weapons, explosive materials and support devices, was reviewed, which constituted an crucial basis for the promulgation on 30 June 2011 of the Ordinance of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly on this issue. The Government subsequently issued Decree 25/2012/ND-CP detailing the implementation of provisions of this Ordinance. These legislations set out, in details, provisions on the authority and responsibilities of those in charge of management of SALW, of the use, maintenance, transfer, import of SALW and penalties for violations.

Last Monday, on 20 August 2012, a national conference was held to review the national implementation of the afore-mentioned legislations over
the past 15 years. It has been acknowledged that national management of SALW has been greatly improved, public awareness enhanced and concrete results delivered. Police forces have retrieved hundreds of thousands of guns, bullets and grenades; dealt with more than 4000 cases of violations, prosecuted 1238 cases over the last 5 years with crimes related to SALW. Viet Nam’s competent authorities will continue our efforts in public information sharing, awareness raising and enforcement in the years to come in this important area, for the sake of national security and safety.

At the regional level, Viet Nam has actively participated in various mechanisms and discussions, especially those under the auspices of ASEAN, related to illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, most recently the ASEAN Workshop on Small Arms, Light Weapons and Unexploded Ordnances Control held in March 2012 in Cambodia. The Ministry of Public Security has conducted a number of cooperation activities with our counterparts in neighbouring countries on combating illicit trans-border trade in SALW.

Viet Nam also has participated in a serious manner in various meetings under the framework of the PoA, especially the two bi-annual meetings in 2008 and 2010 and the Meeting of Governmental Experts in 2011. Bearing in mind the importance of dealing adequately with the issue of transfer of SALW, we have taken part constructively in the Arms Trade Treaty process in general and in the United Nations Conference on ATT last July.

Madame President,

As we are reviewing our common progress made over the last 10 years, we would like to reiterate our commitment to continued efforts aimed at effective implementation of the Program. In this connection, we look forward to continued effective cooperation and assistance in the areas of law making and law enforcement training with all states and international organizations.

Our commitment stems from our strong belief that our shared efforts and cooperation today will make worthy contributions to the strengthening of peace and stability in the world.

Thank you./.