



*PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM  
OF LESOTHO TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
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**In the General Debate of the First Committee**

**On Agenda Items 82-97:  
Disarmament and International security**

**during the Sixty-first Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly**

**(On behalf of the**

**SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY**

**5 October 2006, New York**

**Please check against delivery**

**Madam Chairperson,**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), namely, Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and my own country, Lesotho.

At the outset, SADC wishes to congratulate you and other members of the bureau on your election to steer the work of the First Committee at the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the General Assembly. We are confident that with your rich experience and able leadership, you will guide us to a successful conclusion of our work. The Member States of SADC assure you of their fullest support and cooperation.

**Madam Chairperson,**

SADC aligns itself with statements delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. However, the intervention by SADC will focus only on some specific areas that are pertinent to our Community.

**Madam Chairperson,**

One of the greatest challenges that SADC has been faced with since its inception, is the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, a menace which continues to endanger the socio-economic and political stability of states in our sub-region. Our governments recognized that a scourge of such a magnitude, could only be combated through a concerted effort at multilateral level. Hence, in August 1995, the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (SARPCCO) was created to tackle cross-border criminal activity, including the trafficking of small arms and light

weapons. One of the top priorities of SARPCCO continues to be the combating of trafficking in firearms.

SADC supports all efforts at various levels aimed at combating trafficking in illicit small arms and light weapons. It was therefore befitting for SADC Member States to participate very actively, as they did, during the preparations for, and also at the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. Indeed, immediately following the Conference, in August 2001, the SADC Member States adopted the SADC Protocol on Firearms, Ammunition and Related Materials. The Protocol aims at creating regional controls over trafficking and possession of small arms and light weapons. It seeks to address problems related to illicit the manufacturing of firearms and ammunition, and their accumulation, trafficking, possession and use in the region. The implementation of this Protocol is a priority for all SADC Member States, and several initiatives including the convening of conferences have been undertaken by Member States, to jumpstart the implementation of the Protocol.

Regarding the implementation of the 2001 UN Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, SADC Member States have taken several measures at the national level, that include the following:

- establishment of focal points to coordinate the work on small arms and light weapons issues;
- development of new or the review of relevant legislation; and
- destruction of surplus and/or obsolete arms and weapons.

It may be timely to mention at this juncture that SADC had envisaged an outcome of the 2006 Review Conference that would chart the way forward vis-a-vis the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. Hence, while SADC is confident that the Review Conference was successful in recalling the issue of small arms and light weapons to the attention of the international community, the Community was disheartened by the failure of the Conference to adopt an outcome document.

**Madam Chairperson,**

It is common course that Africa is the most heavily mined continent and also that one

of the most critical factors impeding economic recovery in the continent is the infestation by landmines, of millions of acres of land that cannot be developed. The havoc and devastation caused by the landmines, particularly in some SADC countries, is well known and has been well document. SADC is therefore fully behind all efforts initiated by the United Nations, the African Union and other stakeholders, aimed at the full implementation and universalisation of the Mine Ban Treaty. All members of SADC are parties to the Mine Ban Treaty. They are committed to achieving the goal of creating a Southern Africa and ultimately the world, that is free of landmines. The implementation of the Ottawa Treaty is therefore an obligation that SADC Member States take very seriously. Indeed, some SADC Member States have completed their domestic legislation to implement the Treaty, while others are in the process of enacting or amending relevant legislation to implement the Treaty. Some SADC Member States have even taken initiatives to destroy their antipersonnel landmines stockpiles. Others are still grappling with a difficult as well as costly task of demining. However, due to a strong commitment in our sub-region to ensure human security and also to meet the 10 years deadline for the removal of employed mines, Member States even divert their meager resources to attain these noble goals. SADC therefore urges countries that are not yet parties to the Mine Ban Treaty to embrace a ban on antipersonnel landmines and also to seriously consider becoming parties to the Treaty.

**Madam Chairperson,**

SADC wishes to join previous speakers that have expressed profound regret for the impasse that has lately befallen the UN disarmament machinery. Also regretted is the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to produce a consensus substantive outcome document, as well as the absence of a section on disarmament and non-proliferation in the 2005 Summit outcome document.

SADC believes that the decisions taken at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and those agreed to at the 2000 NPT Review Conference should form the basis for future discussions on the issue of nuclear disarmament. The ongoing concerted efforts in combating terrorism should be coupled with genuine efforts towards the implementation on the NPT, particularly, its Article VI. The three pillars of the Treaty, namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, should have a balanced consideration within the framework of the entire disarmament machinery. SADC therefore commends Brazil

for the initiative of calling for the convening of the preparatory process for the next Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. In the meantime, we wish to call upon those UN Member States who have not yet signed and/or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to consider becoming parties to the Treaty to enable its early entry into force.

**Madam Chairperson,**

SADC shares the view that there is a strong connection between disarmament and development. Furthermore, that no socio-economic development could be achieved without peace, security and political stability. In our view, if UN Member States could gather the necessary political will to overcome their differences as they approach important deliberations on issues relating to disarmament, dreams of several nations for a peaceful and prosperous world would be fulfilled.

I thank you.