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BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE  
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

# **BOLLETTINO**

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0355

Mercoledì 09.07.2003

## **INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE AL PRIMO INCONTRO BIENNALE DEGLI STATI SUL COMMERCIO ILLEGALE DI ARMI LEGGERE E DI PICCOLO CALIBRO**

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE AL PRIMO INCONTRO BIENNALE DEGLI STATI SUL COMMERCIO ILLEGALE DI ARMI LEGGERE E DI PICCOLO CALIBRO

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento pronunciato martedì 8 luglio 2003 al primo incontro biennale degli Stati sul commercio illegale di armi leggere e di piccolo calibro da S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite:

### **• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE**

Madame Chair,

We are on the threshold of a new and, perhaps, long process in the area of disarmament, starting from the 2001 Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and based on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted unanimously at the end of the aforementioned Conference after a long and arduous debate.

Although the Programme of Action contains a number of measures to be implemented at the national, regional and global levels, it represents but a first step in the long process aimed at eradicating the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

Taking into account that the ultimate goal uniting us in this area is the protection of the life and dignity of each and every human person, the Programme of Action represents a significant challenge for the international community, since we all know the deep effects of this illicit trade on the development of peoples, on education, on environment, on health conditions, and on life.

In tackling the problem of illicit trade of small arms and light weapons we have to face its complexity, acknowledging that this problem is multidimensional and multidisciplinary. In light of this, it is important to call for and to accomplish concrete forms of action in both supply and demand of this illicit trade.

On the supply side, the Programme of Action gives us an initial plan, by underlining that these concrete actions

should be directed at strengthening the mechanisms for prevention, reduction, accountability, and control—such as the creation of systems of marking, tracing, and record-keeping; the regulation of brokerage activity; the identification and destruction of stocks of surplus weapons.

On the demand side, the Programme of Action gives us some instruction, urging us to develop and implement educational and awareness activities aimed at promoting a culture of peace and life, through, among other things, the involvement of different protagonists in civil society.

Madame Chair,

Our meeting is directed to exchange information on the initiatives undertaken by States on the above-mentioned issues during the first two years of the implementation of the Programme of Action. In this exercise, we all have the responsibility to contribute to better define the road map of the Programme of Action in order to take further steps in the process aimed at preventing and combating the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

As our discussions continue, my Delegation would hope that attention will also be focused on two issues:

The first is to address the issue of State responsibility of arresting illicit arms transfers, for it is States which have the capability of reducing and eliminating the death and destruction that result from the availability and use of small arms and light weapons.

The second is to begin, without any undue delay, the process of discussing a comprehensive, legally binding agreement on international arms trade that will reduce and eventually eradicate the illicit traffic of small arms and light weapons.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

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