



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE  
**BOLLETTINO**

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHL  
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ  
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 0340

Venerdì 30.06.2006

**INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 60MA ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SUL COMMERCIO ILLEGALE DI ARMI DI PICCOLO CALIBRO E DI ARMI LEGGERE IN TUTTI I SUOI ASPETTI**

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 60MA ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SUL COMMERCIO ILLEGALE DI ARMI DI PICCOLO CALIBRO E DI ARMI LEGGERE IN TUTTI I SUOI ASPETTI

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Onu, Nunzio Apostolico, ha pronunciato mercoledì scorso, 28 giugno, alla 60ma Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite sull'esame dei progressi circa l'attuazione del programma di azione per prevenire, combattere e sradicare il commercio illegale di armi di piccolo calibro e di armi leggere:

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

Mr President,

All of us here have a great responsibility, born of the awareness that the outcome of this meeting may well have a long term impact upon a process which, since 2001, has given a strong initial impulse to the new international small arms and light weapon regime and its legal framework. This regime is now taking shape and is the latest step along the path which should lead towards the effective promotion of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a threat to peace, development and security. It is a threat which comes not only from conflict but also from civil unrest, organised crime, trafficking in persons, terrorism, and even poverty, and it thrives in an interconnected and globalised world. The Holy See therefore supports those who call for a common approach in order to combat, not just the illicit arms trade, but activities related to it, like terrorism, organized crime, and the illicit trade in drugs and precious stones, not forgetting the ethical, social and humanitarian dimensions of these scourges.

Among the first to benefit from this common approach will be poor countries which, having heard so many promises, justly demand the concrete implementation of their right to development. In this context, my delegation wishes to recognise and lend its support to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, adopted on 7 June 2006, and by which some 42 countries commit themselves to promoting the integration of

small arms control into development frameworks.

Today, my delegation would also like to highlight some aspects of the Programme of Action which merit greater attention, starting from the premise that, since there is a close link between weapons and violence, weapons and destruction, weapons and hatred and social disintegration, arms cannot be treated as if they were commercial goods like any other.

Firstly, it is important for the 2006 Conference to agree to establish major international cooperative programmes, mechanisms and guidelines to promote key parts of the Programme of Action, which may include the establishment of adequate standards for the management and security of the stocks of these weapons; the defining of clear criteria for the export of arms; mechanisms for collecting and destroying arms as part of peace processes; the reinforcing of operative capacity for the implementation of laws directed at the illicit arms trade; better regional cooperation, including vigilant attention to transit of arms along porous borders; and more regulated national controls on SALW production and transfers through more incisive means of accountability, tracing and brokering.

Thus, it would be useful to consider seriously negotiation of a legally binding instrument to address the illicit arms trade, such as a treaty based on relevant principles of international law, including those of human rights and humanitarian law. For such an instrument to help uproot the illicit arms trade, its negotiation would have to involve developed and developing countries, exporting, importing and transit states, military industries, NGOs, and civil society alike. States in particular have a grave duty in this sphere, and would have to negotiate sincerely and apply such an accord effectively. In particular, the Holy See strongly supports the United Kingdom's proposal for the negotiation, in the United Nations, of a binding treaty on the transfer of conventional weapons, as a self-standing initiative with effective mechanisms for enforcement and monitoring. My delegation hopes this worthy idea will soon be widely welcomed by capitals.

Secondly, my delegation is pleased to note the number of interventions in these days focusing – as we see in the Plan of Action - on the need to address not only the easy availability of arms, but also the demand for arms, an evident requirement if states sincerely wish to avoid the diversion of small arms and light weapons towards the illegal market. If we think of the human cost of small arms and light weapons, and the links, sometimes subtle, sometimes evident, between them and the slow progress in sustainable development, actions aimed at reducing the demand for small arms and light weapons surely merit much greater attention. Working to address demand will require solid research on the dynamics of conflicts, crime and violence. Such well-founded information could form the basis for wise action aimed at promoting a real culture of peace among us. All stakeholders must act responsibly for the implementation of educational and awareness activities in order to confront the culture of violence, with a clear demonstration of political will. With the 2006 Review Conference, states should grasp the opportunity to acknowledge the links between disarmament, development and humanitarian concerns, and commit themselves to strategies and programmes to reduce the demand for arms and armed violence.

Finally, linked to better accords and reducing demand, is the scandalous impact of this trade on the weakest in society, especially children. The Holy See attaches great importance to the special needs of children affected by armed conflicts, their reunification with their family, their reintegration into society and their appropriate rehabilitation. In some conflicts, children in particular have been prone to suffer a twofold evil, from exposure to danger on one hand, and being press-ganged into service as child soldiers on the other. Such situations demand an unequivocal reaction on the part of the international community, which is surely obliged to show particular concern for children in those circumstances and do everything possible to assist them return to the normal business of growing up in a loving and safe environment. Provisions for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration already pay attention to the needs of child soldiers; this could be extended beyond peace accords, where it is already common, and considered for insertion in peace-keeping and peace-building projects, as well as in development programmes, using a community-based approach.

Therefore, in order to achieve these aims, the active participation of all actors is needed: governments which bear the primary responsibility for the success of this Review Conference, international organisations, and NGOs

which have already given a strong impetus to this process.

It is my delegation's hope that the outcome of the 2006 Conference will look with wisdom towards the future of the international regime of small arms and light weapons, and provide a follow up which is both adequate and effective.

Thank you, Mr President.

[00991-02.01] [Original Text: English]

---