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PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Statement
of**

**His Excellency Mr. SIENG Lapresse
Under Secretary of State
Ministry of Interior of the Kingdom of Cambodia**

at

**the United Nations Review Conference to Review Progress Made in
the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat
and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in
All Its Aspects**

New York

26 June – 07 July, 2006

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Cambodian Delegation and I are honored to participate in this Auspicious Assembly. Under your able leadership, Mr. President, the review on progress of the implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons will be no doubt a success.

I would like to express that Cambodia associates itself with the statement by His Excellency Mr. U Kyaw Tint Swe, Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations on behalf of ASEAN Members States.

Allow me to walk you to where and how the situation of small arms and light weapons in Cambodia has taken root and has been rooted out.

Background

Some countries have a scar of either war of insurgency, secession, colonization, genocide and poverty. Cambodia has scars of all the above wars. The Cambodian people have been refugees, displaced persons and victims of armed conflicts.

Cambodia has been neither source of arm supply nor a transit of arm smuggling. However, Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen of the Kingdom of Cambodia acknowledged the possibility that arms had been smuggled through Cambodia to other locations. Unfortunately, the Cambodian people had been victims of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. Their excessive accumulation by those years of endless war was addressed at the end of 1998.

National Obligation

Convinced of the impact of ownership and misuse or improper use of arm and weapon, the Royal Government of Cambodia had put in place a concrete policy on arm and weapon management. The policy enforced relevant rules and regulations on arm and weapon collection, prohibits of illegal use of arms and weapons in public and arms and weapons ownership. To ensure its success, a National Commission has been established for the purpose of monitoring and reporting on the policy.

In addition, Cambodia has a pilot project of its own, the “Project in Search for Unexploded Object.” It has been established in 5 provinces, including 42 districts

and 502 communes. The Royal Government funds the Project. Its outcome has shown a remarkable decrease of danger in handling UXO and mines.

In compliance with the Reform of Policy of the Royal Government, the Law on Management and Control of Weapon, Explosive and Munitions was finally ratified and signed into force by the King on 1st. June 2005.

Besides putting its own house in order on arm destruction, the Royal Government of Cambodia also recognizes its external obligation to combat transnational crime, including arm smuggling.

External Cooperation and Assistance

Consequently, Cambodia has had two core cooperation partners, EU-ASAC, Japan Assistance Team for Small Arms Management in Cambodia (JSAC).

To tackle the problems, in April 2000, EU-ASAC initiated a comprehensive plan having an impact on the Cambodian weapons security situation. The initial assistance covered five projects:

1. Drafting a Law on Management and Control of Weapon, Explosive and Munitions
2. Registration and Safe Storage of Weapons,
3. Project on Raising Public Awareness on the destabilizing effects of the possession and uses of weapons and the link between weapons, security and development,
4. Voluntary collection of weapons possessed by the civilian population through a process of exchange for community-owned development projects.
5. Destruction of the weapons collected from the civilian population.

Implementing the integration policy of ASEAN, Cambodia has committed itself to the international convention on prevention and suppression of arm smuggling, especially the UN Resolution, Protocol and Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Recently at the 6th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) in Bali, Indonesia, Cambodia as ASEAN Lead Shepherd on counter arm smuggling was designated as the prospective organizer of a seminar on small arms monitoring. Presently, Cambodia's application for the organizing the seminar is with the ASEAN Secretariat for consideration.

At the conference on Reviewing Plan of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons of the UN Preparatory Committee in New York from 09 to 20 January 2006, as a lead country on prevention and suppression of arm smuggling, Cambodia pledged

to continue its close cooperation with countries in the region, other partners, NGOs and civil society in combating against all forms of arm smuggling.

Additionally, Cambodia firmly committed to enhance the following 4 priorities:

1. Monitoring the transfer of arms and its procedures,
2. Illegal service providing,
3. Management of private arm possession and
4. Management of state arms.

These were initiated by the ASEAN Regional Forum Confidence Building Measures Seminar on Small Arms and Light Weapons from 2 to 4 November 2005 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Cambodia's Plan of Action

At 20 June 2006 ceremony of arms destruction "Flame for Peace" marking the end of Cooperation between the National Committee on Management of Weapons, Explosives and Ammunition and EU-ASAC, Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen of the Kingdom of Cambodia set out the "Peace Culture Action for Cambodia to Create a Violence and Crime-Free society."

On behalf of the Royal Government, Samdech Prime Minister urged all relevant institutions, Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, National Police Forces, local authorities and citizens from all walks of life to:

1. Continue to ensure peace, stability, law and order for economic and social development and poverty reduction.
2. Continue to increase effectiveness to prevent homicide, armed robbery, kidnapping, illicit drug trafficking and trafficking in children and women.
3. Continue to cooperate with national and international communities to prevent and to combat terrorism, all forms of subversion and their entities from establishing and using Cambodia as their breeding ground to mount attacks against neighboring countries.
4. Implement firmly the Law on the Management of Weapons, Explosives and Ammunition.
5. Strengthen weapons and munitions management at all units. Cut down on the unnecessary use of small arms and light weapons. Secure arms and weapons in the safest storage possible.
6. Continue to search for and to confiscate illegal weapon surplus leftover from the wars.
7. Recognize that weapons are devices that encourage violence and crime in harming security, safety and livelihood of the people.

To date, close to 200,000 arms have been destroyed through the assistance of EU-ASAC. The termination of 6 years of EU-ASAC Assistance on curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia will be announced officially on 30 June 2006 in Cambodia. Its statement declares that “Small Arms and Light Weapons could no longer threaten the security and development of Cambodia.” It stresses that the small arms of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces have been carefully registered and kept in safe storage.

Speaking of EU-ASAC Assistance closure, Cambodia has, fortunately, had Japan Assistance Team for Small Arms Management in Cambodia (JSAC). JSAC has been in Cambodia since April 2003. It supports the Ministry of Interior in managing effective stockpiling and registration systems. JSAC supports the police by providing necessary materials and training in order to improve actual security and residents’ confidence in security forces. Cambodia expresses its profound appreciation for JSAC’s continued support which would be a crucial complement to its efforts to eradicate violence through arms in order to achieve economic and social development.

To embrace “Culture of Peace”, the Cambodian Delegation would like to extend its commitment to the principles of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development which is the initiative of a Ministerial Summit held on 7 June 2006 in Geneva, Switzerland.

In conclusion

Like many other countries, Cambodia has much more work to do to completely control small arms and munitions. The Royal Government of Cambodia reaffirms its full support to the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. However, Cambodia’s full commitment to controlling this problem has already achieved important results. The Royal Government of Cambodia urges the international community to continue its global effort to control small arms, and pledges its full cooperation in every way possible.

Thank you for your kind attention.