

Opening Remarks
by
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At a Regional Meeting on the Implementation of
The UN PoA on SALW in South East Asia
Bali, 29 - 30 March 2010

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,

On behalf of the Government of Indonesia, I am pleased to welcome you to Bali and to the Regional Meeting on the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Southeast Asia.

This meeting is timely not only because it is part of the preparations for the forthcoming Fourth Bi-annual Meeting of States to be held in June 2010, but also because illicit trafficking and smuggling of SALW has become a threat to our regional peace and stability. Indonesia is therefore grateful to the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs for helping us host this meeting.

We can never overemphasize the importance of the PoA as a global instrument for addressing the serious challenges to humanity and security posed by the illicit trade in SALW. Any delay in our efforts to implement the PoA will contribute to the unnecessary death of thousands every day.

Although it is no more than a politically binding document, the PoA has provided a global framework for the further elaboration and development of international cooperation in dealing with the illicit trade in SALW.

In Indonesia, the smuggling and trafficking of SALW poses grave threats to our territorial integrity by arming separatist movements and criminal groups, including terrorists. During a recent police raid on a terrorist group in Aceh province, the authorities confiscated several M-16s, AK-47s and pistols. Clearly the illicit circulation of these arms and weapons is a threat to our national security and stability.

While action at the global level is of great importance, the need for cooperation at the regional level cannot be overlooked. The next “line of defence” after national implementation of the PoA is the strengthening of measures against illicit SALW through vigorous cooperation among neighboring countries. Traffickers and smugglers are quick to adopt trade routes under weak national controls and will take advantage of every lapse that they can find.

A regional approach is therefore more effective in dealing with those challenges and problems than the isolated efforts of any country. Thus, sharing of best practices and lesson learnt among us countries in the region will boost our individual national efforts to deal with the problem of illicit trade of SALW.

Your participation in this meeting is therefore essential. As representatives of governments, UN agencies, international organizations and civil society in Southeast Asia, you can promote regional coordination through information exchange on national experiences and lessons learned in the implementation of the Plan of Action.

As neighbours living in one region, we all have a stake in a situation of peace that will allow our nations to develop and thrive. Hence, we must work in concert to deal with this particular challenge to the security and safety of our region.

As stated in the ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) Blueprint, in building a cohesive, peaceful and resilient Political Security Community, ASEAN subscribes to the principle of comprehensive security. The APSC Blueprint stipulates that our relevant sectoral bodies fully implement measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, in accordance with UN PoA and the International Instrument to enable States to Identify and Trace, in Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument).

The Third Bi-annual Meeting of States in 2008 also encouraged regional organizations to strengthen cooperation and create synergies in carrying out a coherent approach to the implementation of the Programme of Action at the regional level.

Since the PoA is the cornerstone to international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW, I hope the discussions in this meeting will be fruitful and will contribute to the success of the Fourth BMS and, most of all, to strengthening the implementation of the PoA in the region.

Finally, we would like to thank the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for giving us the opportunity to host this important workshop. We are also grateful to the Governments of Japan, Sweden, and Switzerland for their support, which has helped make this Workshop possible. Our sincere gratitude also goes to the representatives of the UNDP office in Jakarta for their logistical support for the meeting.

Thank you.
