

**United Nations Regional Seminar
Enhancing International and Regional Cooperation to Prevent, Combat and
Eradicate Illicit Brokering in Small Arms and Light Weapons
In East and Southeast Asia
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Bangkok**

Welcoming Remarks

by

Mr. Tawin Pleansri

**Secretary General
National Security Council of Thailand**

**Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, it is my
pleasure and honour to welcome all of you to this
regional seminar on illicit brokering in small arms**

and light weapons. Almost four years ago, in May 2006, Thailand had an opportunity to host the UN Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons in preparation for the Review Conference on the Implementation of the PoA. Therefore, it is such an honor and a privilege that UNRCPD has entrusted us with this important task of hosting the seminar in this region once again.

As we are all aware, combating the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons is a long-term challenge. It has been eight years since the PoA's adoption in 2001, but we still have a long road ahead of us. Amidst global economic difficulties, it seems even more challenging to tackle this issue. However, we can be proud that a great deal of progress has also been made. Although the PoA is a non-legally binding instrument, UN Member States have demonstrated their willingness and strong commitment to its implementation in a concrete way. Along with our tangible progress, we have focused and moved towards a more thematic

debate. At the third Biennial Meeting in 2008, for example, the issues of marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, stockpile management and illicit brokering were raised and discussed. And now it is time for us to discuss more in detail on illicit brokering at this seminar.

In this regard, Thailand is of the view that international and regional cooperation is needed. The Asian region as a whole may not suffer from this problem as much as other parts of the world, nevertheless a number of countries in this region are still facing dire consequences of conflict and irresponsible transfer of small arms and light weapons. To address this issue, concerted efforts must be made not only at the national, but also at the regional level. This is certainly a good opportunity to reflect our own region's specifics, address our own strengths and needs, as well as share experiences and best practices.

Capacity building is also a key element if we are to successfully combat illicit brokering. I am certain that the concept of “illicit brokering activities” per se is not new to us at all. However, we have so much to do to tackle the whole illicit brokering issue and to formulate common understanding if we are to work together. Thailand needs to learn about this particular facet of small arms and light weapons trade as well. This meeting will provide us a great opportunity for vigorous exchange of views and how we go from here to increase the capacity of relevant authorities.

I, hereby, would like to congratulate UNODA and UNRCPD for undertaking this important work of organizing this regional meeting. And I wish all of you a very substantive and fruitful seminar.

I also hope that all of you have the opportunity to enjoy your stay in Bangkok despite a short period of time.

Thank you for your kind attention.
