

**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of
Pakistan, at the Security Council's open debate on Small Arms – (January 19,
2004)**

Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your initiative on Small Arms. This issue has riveted the world over the past decade and a half in view of the enormous destruction that the small arms and light weapons have caused in various regions.

2. While causes of conflicts have been varied and complex, their results have invariably proved that: they devastate societies; create child soldiers; make women and children vulnerable; aggravate human rights violations; and add to poverty. Therefore, easy availability of small arms and light weapons continue to stoke conflicts, increase their intensity, thus causing higher number of casualties and making peace-keeping more complicated and risky.

Mr. President,

3. We are pleased to note the positive results that the Secretary General's report (S/2003/1217) has indicated on the implementation of various recommendations on small arms he had submitted to the Security Council one year ago (S/2002/1053). The Secretary General's report also highlights the significance of (a) effective governmental control over the export and transit of small arms and light weapons; (b) meaningful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes in the post-conflict situations; and (c) greater attention to end-user certificate system and illicit brokering activities.

4. It is equally encouraging that the Plan of Action on the Illicit Trade in the Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is in the process of implementation. The Biennial Meeting to review the implementation of the Programme of Action held in July last year also noted the forward movement in this regard and identified areas where more efforts would be needed to tackle the problems of illicit small arms. The establishment of an open Ended Working Group this year to negotiate an international instrument on Marking and Tracing can be described as yet another step forward in curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We support such efforts.

Mr. President,

5. There have been "mixed results" on the Secretary General's recommendations, particularly on arms embargoes and DDR programmes. Some of the factors leading to unsatisfactory results need elaboration:

First: While linkages between illicit trade in small arms and exploitation of natural and other resources have been duly recognized, there has been slow response in breaking this vicious cycle despite arms embargoes. In Africa, for instance, it is important to trace the

financial transactions involved in the illicit trade of small arms on one hand and the illegal trade of natural resources on the other. The focus so far has been on the supply side of the natural resources. There is a need to pay greater attention on the demand/consumption side of the illegally exploited resources such as diamonds.

Second: the issue of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), which received adequate attention in the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, has not gathered pace primarily because of resource constraints. These constraints have, at times, delayed DDR programmes in peace-keeping operations. The Secretary General is right to express concern that the limited availability of voluntary funds in the early stages of DDR operations “risks jeopardizing not only the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration operations itself, but also the entire peace process”.

Third: the Member States’ lack of capacity in legal and technical arena, especially on the question of marking and tracing, has put further constraints in combating the problems of small arms.

Mr. President,

6. For effective implementation of Programme of Action a host of actions by the Member States would be required at national, regional and international levels. In this regard, my delegation would like to propose:

- The developed countries should make available necessary financial resources to developing countries for capacity building of their relevant personnel and institutions. Such assistance would particularly be required in marking and tracing of small arms, including legal and technical expertise and transfer of technology. Pakistan would be happy to share its experiences with other developing countries.
- Stigmatization of the financial transactions involved in the illicit trade of small arms, including a boycott of the illegal trade of natural resources of conflict-prone regions.
- Political commitment and action to resolve the underlying causes of conflicts and disputes in various parts of the world. The causes of war are even more important than the instruments of war.
- Appropriate reflection of three elements contained in the Programme of Action: peaceful resolution of disputes, the right of self-defence, and the right of self-determination.

Mr. President,

7. Pakistan has had to grapple with the millions of small arms and light weapons which found their way into our country during the course of the 20 years of war in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the Government of Pakistan is vigorously

implementing the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. In this regard, following measures are noteworthy:

One: Production and manufacturing of small arms and light weapons is undertaken entirely by the public sector. Unlawful possession and production of these weapons have been prohibited and violators are penalized in accordance with the relevant laws.

Two: Record of all types of arms manufactures by the public sector ordinance factories or imported in Pakistan is kept. A strict licensing regime to regulate and monitor the lawful private possession of small arms has been put in place since March 2001. Private arms dealers can only sell a few specified categories of arms under a license issued by the government.

Three: All small arms and light weapons, produced, manufactured and sold in Pakistan, are uniquely marked to maintain distinction for civilian, law enforcement and armed forces use.

Four: Pakistan observes strict export control regime for small arms and light weapons. Such exports are subject to receipt of No Objection Certificate, End-user Certificate and consultation between the Defence Production Division and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ensure conformity with government policy and to comply with UN embargoes.

Mr. President,

8. Apart from measures I have just enumerated, Pakistan is following a multi-pronged strategy since June 2001 involving action against illegal import, smuggling, possession and exhibition of weapons. Our strategy has yielded following results:

- Until April 2003, around 250,000 illicit small arms and light weapons of different categories and types have been recovered/confiscated in addition to large quantities of ammunitions. After maintaining records of these weapons and ammunitions, a number of them were destroyed publicly.
- Until April 2003, 85,770 persons were prosecuted during the de-weaponization campaign; out of these 12,029 were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment; 821 were acquitted while the remaining are subjudice.
- For effective law enforcement in combating the proliferation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, reforms in the organizational structure, responsibilities, equipment and facilities of the Police Force have been introduced under the new Police Act 2001.
- Public awareness campaign has been launched by the Ministry of Interior and three national level seminars have been held since August

2001. Civil society has also been involved in raising the public awareness on issues related to illicit weapons.

9. Pakistan, as a frontline state on the global fight against terrorism, has established a number of joint counter-terrorism working groups at the regional level including with Russian Federation and China. Pakistan has also proposed similar arrangements with other countries in the region and remains hopeful of concluding bilateral arrangements. A Tripartite Commission between Pakistan, Afghanistan and the US was established last year to resolve, among other issues, the problem of illicit flow of small arms and light weapon.

10. Pakistan will continue to support comprehensive efforts at the national, regional and international level to address these other “weapons of mass destruction”.

Thank you Mr. President.