



## **KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**

### **PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

866 UN PLAZA, SUITE 420, NEW YORK, NY 10017

TEL: (212) 223-0676, FAX: (212) 223-0425

EMAIL: [cambodia@un.int](mailto:cambodia@un.int) Website: <http://www.un.int/cambodia>

## STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. OUCH BORITH  
AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

TO THE

FIRST BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES TO CONSIDER  
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

AT

THE 57<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, JULY 07, 2003

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**Madame Chairperson,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

1 - At the outset, I wish to join the other speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chairwoman of this 1<sup>st</sup> Biennial Meeting of states on small arms and light weapons. Under your able-guidance, we are confident that our meeting will achieve successful results. My delegation associates itself with the ASEAN Statement which will be delivered tomorrow by H.E. Ambassador of Myanmar and I would like to take this opportunity to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Madame Chairperson,

2 - In view of its tragic past and recent achievements in bringing about peace and stability, Cambodia fully realizes that the continued conflicts and troubles prevailing in many parts of the world underline the importance of the ongoing and concerted United Nations efforts to bring disarmament to the world. In this context, the Royal Government of Cambodia reaffirms its full support to the United Nations Program of Action on preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We fully concur that this Program of Action is one of the international binding instruments which has put forward objectives and measures vis-à-vis small arms and light weapons at national, regional and global levels. Its ideas have been adopted in Cambodia as a basis for researching as well as reforming national legislation concerning the management of firearms since there were some shortcomings in regulations concerning the control of weapons, as shown in the Penal Code during the UNTAC period. The Royal Government of Cambodia has now drafted a new law for weapons control which has already been submitted to the National Assembly in which further action will be taken after the general election of 27 July 2003.

3 - As a country which has endured horrific past, the proliferation of small arms would be conducive to renewed civil strife unless it is dealt with in a firm and comprehensive manner. On its part, during the past two years, the Royal Government of Cambodia has successfully implemented practical measures to strictly control the use and circulation of small arms and ammunitions, eliminate their illegal procurement and sales by destroying those illegal arms. From 1999 to 2001, a total of 36,505 units of small arms were destroyed by method of "rolling over." In 2001, the destruction method was changed from rolling over to burning which has been named "Flame of Peace". So far, we have collected 120,000 small arms illegally owned by civilians and surplus weapons from armed forces as well as many tons of ammunition, of which 110,000 weapons have already been destroyed. Along with the measure of reducing the number of weapons used on a daily basis by our armed forces, we have also registered weapons onto a computerized database, and we have also upgraded safe warehousing facilities in a number of military regions of the country. This approach will also be applied to the police force by the end of 2003.

4 - Based on our experience, the involvement of civilians in the implementation of the government plan is crucial when it comes to the suppression of trafficking and illicit use of weapons. Public ceremonies to destroy weapons provide a real political and psychological impact since they increase awareness about weapon collection, encourage the people to hand in illegal ammunitions and weapons to the competent authorities and build confidence in the peace process. Furthermore, an "Arms for Development" program is being carried out and has so far shown successful

results. In this program, development-oriented activities, such as building schools, roads, and health centers, will be provided in exchange for returned weapons. Recently, another program called "searching for hidden weapons during the war" has been implemented. This program is aimed at searching and locating hidden weapons carried out by rival parties during previous conflicts. In the early part of 2003, within two months of the program implementation in two provinces, 200 weapons were found hidden in different places.

5 - With our strong commitment to implement the UN Program of Action on small arms as reflected in our national report which is made available during this meeting, the Royal Government of Cambodia is of the view that the condition sine qua non of the success of preventing, combating and eradicating this illicit trade is the strong support and participation from public and private sectors. In this context, The Royal Government of Cambodia continues to strengthen its close cooperation with others partners including relevant NGOs to launch a nation-wide campaign to counter this phenomenon including the establishment of educational program in schools, which is part of the ongoing process of the Government's activities to develop a weapon-free-society in our country.

Madame Chairwoman,

6 - In conclusion, I would like on behalf of the people and the Government of Cambodia to express my sincere thanks to the international community especially to the European Union (EU-ASAC), the Government of Japan as well as UNDP and the Department of Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations and other donors countries for their valuable support and precious assistance in our tireless efforts to carry out this Program of Action and build a prosperous and peaceful society in our country.

Thank you.

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