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**Conflict Prevention Centre
The Director**

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I would like to begin by thanking the Government of Nicaragua, the Organisation of the American States as well as the Inter-American Defense College for inviting me to present at this workshop the experience of the OSCE in the field of SALW. I am particularly glad to be here, since I believe that this exchange of experiences between regional organisations is an excellent way to foster a useful cross-fertilisation and to underpin the global efforts undertaken in this field by the UN.

In fact, the OSCE, as a regional organisation under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, has developed a very substantial experience across the entire spectrum of disarmament and arms control measures. It is in the framework of our organisation that we have developed and implemented the CFE Treaty, which has resulted in the verified reduction of well over 50.000 pieces of heavy military equipment, including tanks, artillery, armoured vehicles, combat aircraft and helicopters during the last decade. Over the last 20 years in particular, the OSCE has produced an integrated and comprehensive regime of CSBMs and related measures, and provides a forum for permanent dialogue on security issues among its participating States.

One of the most interesting and effective instruments that have been developed in this context is a very advanced document on SALW, which reflects concerns related to proliferation of these weapons. In fact, according to the estimates released by the Small Arms Survey there are more than 600 millions SALW currently in circulation worldwide. SALW are easily accessible, portable and concealed, often diverted from legal possession into illegal and used by terrorists and crime groups. You may agree that currently people are at risk from illegally

held SALW even more than from weapons of mass destruction. For a start, it is imperative to substantially reduce the number of illegally held weapons.

This Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, was agreed by the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) on 24 November 2000, after long months of negotiation. At the UN Conference on the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects, held in July 2001, it was pointed out that implementation of the norms, principles and measures contained in the OSCE Document could contribute substantially to the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA). Indeed, the OSCE Document was conceived in part as a contribution to the process already underway in the United Nations. In fact, the OSCE developed its Document on SALW more than half a year before the UN Conference of 2001, and continues to oversee its implementation.

The Document commits participating States to a number of standards, which, when fully implemented, would assist States in their efforts to be full part of a functioning regional regime. These standards can be summarized as follows:

Weapons marking. The SALW Document sets out principles for the marking of small arms and light weapons. Participating States must ensure that SALW are marked in such a way as to allow investigating authorities to be able to identify the year and country of manufacture, and the weapon's serial number. Participating States also agreed to either mark or destroy all unmarked or inadequately marked weapons. Furthermore, States agreed to keep full and accurate records of all SALW holdings.

Common export criteria and export controls. The OSCE Document elaborates a series of common export criteria for all SALW transfers, including the need among recipient states for respect for human rights, avoidance of armed conflict, and compliance with international agreements. Participating States also agreed on a detailed set of principles governing the procedures and documentation for the import, export and transit of SALW, including information on receipt, retransfer, end-user certificates and verification and inter-agency coordination. The OSCE Document also encourages states to consider establishing national systems to control brokering activities, including registration of brokers operating within their territory and licensing or authorization of brokering transactions.

Management of stockpiles, reduction of surpluses and destruction The Document contains a detailed list of standards for the safe storage of SALW stockpiles. States also agreed on a set of 'tripwires' which should notify a government that it ought to review its holdings and decide whether a surplus exists, although the determination of a national surplus remains firmly the prerogative of each government. Furthermore, States agreed that the preferred method of disposal of SALW is destruction.

Early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation A procedure was established in Section V of the OSCE Document for incorporating small arms measures into conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation activities. The Document contains a range of such measures, including assistance with the reduction and disposal of small arms; advice and assistance for the reinforcement of border controls; and assistance with small arms collection and control programmes. These measures can be used on a voluntary basis.

Information exchanges Under the OSCE Document, the participating States agreed to share information, on a one-off basis, on national marking systems; national procedures for the control of manufacturing; national legislation and current practice in export policy, procedures and documentation, and control over brokering; small arms destruction techniques; small arms stockpile security and management programmes. In addition, participating States committed themselves to exchange annually data on exports to and imports from other OSCE participating States, as well as small arms identified as surplus and/or seized and destroyed on their territory in the previous calendar year.

Why is this Document so important for the OSCE? Firstly, I would point out that the OSCE represents many major global producers and exporters of SALW. Secondly, there are still surplus stocks from the cold-war period, unresolved conflicts or countries in a post-conflict rehabilitation process in the OSCE area, and many OSCE States still need assistance to eliminate SALW surpluses. And most importantly, the countries of the region have expressed their willingness to develop and commit themselves to an advanced regulatory platform in this field.

Most of the measures in the SALW Document are to be implemented at the national level. Participating States have to co-ordinate activities of a number of their ministries, including

foreign affairs, defence, trade, and interior. In many cases States ask for an assistance to implement their respective commitments, and in order to define a scope of the aid they need the information exchange places indispensable role. Therefore, efforts aimed at explaining Document's provisions, increasing awareness among participating States' personnel of respective commitments, and at collecting requests on assistance became a first OSCE priority.

We then started conducting a series of national and regional seminars throughout the OSCE area with participation of experts from participating States. It was the first but very useful experience of exchange of views regarding the national practices and regulations relating to various aspects of SALW. For its part, the CPC conducted some activities designed to foster implementation. Examples include the November-December 2001 training workshops, the regional meeting in Almaty in May 2002, and border control training projects for the Termez-Hayraton checkpoint on the Uzbek - Afghan border in 2002 and 2003.

The whole history of the OSCE confidence and security building measures has demonstrated that the most impressive achievements in security area resulted from States' understanding of and adherence to transparency measures. The Document on SALW is not an exception in this regard. Notably, the transparency measures in the Document were tailored not only with the purpose to enhance confidence among States, but also as an instrument for providing assistance.

The information exchange regime, set out in the OSCE Document, covers national procedures for the control over the manufacture and marking systems; national legislation and current practice in export policy and control over brokering; small arms destruction techniques; national stockpiles management and security procedures; and finally, two annual exchanges on exported/imported of SALW between OSCE participating States; and on SALW identified as surplus or seized and destroyed. The one-off exchanges, which were conducted on 30 June 2001, collected a wealth of information on policy and practice related to various areas of SALW control. The Overview of this information prepared by CPC experts provided States with the tools to analyse the submissions and draw conclusions for the implementation of the OSCE Document as a whole. It helped to identify trends and patterns of implementation apparent in States' responses.

The use of standard formats in information exchanges in the OSCE-framework facilitates comparisons and analysis, both between countries and over time. As a follow-up to the recommendations made in the Overview and upon the OSCE Forum's request the CPC prepared a model answer to aid participating States in their submission of all the required information. The purpose of this was to provide guidance for those who had yet to submit their information. At the same time, the model answer formed a kind of voluntary check list against which each participating State was able to compare its own report – and, if it deemed it necessary, to provide updates on those elements that had not been fully covered in the first report. A number of participating States did indeed submit new reports or updates in view of this model answer.

In 2002, the CPC also prepared templates in advance of the June 2002 exchanges – the one-off exchange on stockpile security and management, and the annual exchanges on exports/imports and destroyed weapons. These templates were followed closely by the majority of participating States in their one-off and annual reporting in 2002 and 2003.

The standards set out in the SALW Document are very high, and thus place a heavy burden on many participating States to implement their respective commitments. With this in mind the Document also foresees the development of 'best practice' guides with regard to its above mentioned provisions. Twelve States, namely Canada, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and USA voluntarily undertook the responsibility of developing the Best Practice Guides, and this process was completed last year. The Handbook of Best Practices on SALW was launched during the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Maastricht on 1 December 2003.

The Handbook contains a set of recommendations designed to provide a model, which could serve as a guide for national policy-making, and as a means to encourage higher common standards of practice among all the 55 participating States. It is a unique collective document of the OSCE States based on national practices in this area. At the same time, it also takes account of all other existing international initiatives and experiences of other international organisations relating to small arms. The Handbook consists of eight chapters, which cover all areas of the Document on SALW as follows:

- National legislation and procedures to ensure control over manufacture of small arms.

- Standards and techniques for marking small arms, as well as various methods for tracing registered SALW.
- Recommendations for developing national export control systems of SALW, list of necessary elements for national legislation, and guidelines for export policy.
- Brokering issues, covering both “core elements”, which are essential for effective and adequate regulations, and “optional elements” that might be considered by States for possible inclusion in their national legislation.
- Stockpile management and procedures for ensuring effective security of stored small arms.
- Recommendations on indicators and methods for identifying surpluses of SALW.
- Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration standards for post-conflict rehabilitation, including essential steps to contribute promoting sustainable peace in a war-torn society.
- Consideration of various destruction methods taking into account cost, environment and other relevant factors The SALW Document identifies destruction as the preferred method for disposal of surplus SALW and of those collected during a post-conflict rehabilitation process or seized from illicit trafficking. Therefore, the respective chapter.

Although the Handbook was published only recently, the practical implementation has been underway for some time. In addition guidance from the workshops, concrete support and assistance have been provided to OSCE states. In three areas - cross-border trafficking, stockpiles security management, and destruction of SALW surpluses - practical steps have already been undertaken.

With regard to SALW destruction, the OSCE co-operates closely with UN and EU agencies in different projects aimed at providing support and assistance in collecting and destroying SALW in the Balkans and the Caucasus. The destruction process has taken place in many participating States. According to data provided in the framework of the SALW Document information exchange during 2002 **34** OSCE States destroyed **934,227** units of SALW deemed as a surplus and **179,168** those seized from illicit trafficking. All in all these constitute **1,113,395** destroyed units of SALW.

In order to further operationalise the SALW Document’s provisions dealing with early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, OSCE States developed and adopted supplementary measures. They established a framework whereby a

State can request that the OSCE design and implement a programme helping the government to meet certain needs it has identified. Both these measures and the Handbook guide on destruction can be applied not only in post-conflict situation, but also in the case of a specific request for assistance in elimination of surpluses of SALW.

A first such request came from Belarus last summer. The following step responding to this request has been an assessment visit to Belarus by the group of experts, which took place two weeks ago; on this basis, a specific project proposal is now being developed. Given the content of the initial request it is likely the project plan will mainly focus on destruction of surpluses and increasing security of stored weapons. It would form the basis either for a supplementary budget or a request for voluntary contributions.

In 2003 the OSCE undertook the initiative to conduct a programme "Combating illicit trafficking of SALW through border management assistance" for both Uzbek and Afghan officials. This was possible because recently Afghanistan has become an OSCE partner for co-operation. The aim of the event was to train and enable the law enforcement authorities in searching, detecting and tracing illegally trafficked weapons, in examining falsified travel and customs documents, and in presenting a model for internal and international co-operation. The main emphasis was on both internal co-ordination between different governmental agencies dealing with this problem and international co-operation between states sharing a common border. Besides that, topics like checking vehicles and containers, identification and seizure of weapons were covered. When both sides of the same crossing point are brought together to discuss issues of weapons trafficking, one of the aims has already been achieved, through the creation of conditions for improvement of the exchange of information across the borderline.

Of course, OSCE activities regarding SALW are not limited only by those mentioned above. The OSCE Forum continues to pay serious attention to preventing and combating terrorism. Given the threat posed by the potential gaining an access to Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) by terrorist groups OSCE States agreed to continue their efforts on ensuring effective and comprehensive export controls on this category of SALW. This agreement was reflected in respective FSC Decision 7/03 endorsed recently by the Ministerial Council in Maastricht. According to this decision, the CPC prepared last autumn the overview of the information exchanged by participating States with regard to export/import and destruction of MANPADS. This year the CPC was tasked to develop a similar overview

with respect to all other categories of SALW. It is planned to have a target-oriented discussion within the OSCE on the basis of the information provided by participating States and the above overview.

To conclude, I would like to underline that the progress made in the information exchanges has been very useful in terms of the SALW Document implementation. Thanks to a significant extent to that, the completion of one of the Document's commitment - developing the Handbook of Best Practices on SALW - became a reality. Recommendations provided for in it have a general character and therefore are relevant beyond the OSCE area as well. The Handbook is for use not only by governments in their national policy-making, but also by international organisations and NGOs throughout the world. The OSCE is committed to the widest possible distribution of the Handbook to all relevant national, regional and international authorities. It also will be available in all official OSCE languages, on CD-ROMs (of which I have a few copies here) , as well as on the OSCE public web-site.