



*Stalna Misija Bosne i Hercegovine pri UN  
NJUJORK  
Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN  
NEW YORK*

# ***STATEMENT***

*by*

*Dr. Hasan Dervisbegovic, Ambassador*

*At 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*

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*New York, 8 July, 2003*



**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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Dr. Hasan Dervišbegović, Ambassador

*Madam Chair,*  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to inform you briefly on activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina with regard to small arms and light weapons.

It is well known that Dayton Peace Agreement, which was negotiated in November 1995, ended the four-year war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Having that in mind, it is possible to understand the high sensitivity of the issues linked with small arms and light weapons in our country.

Following the Dayton Agreement, the arms control regime has been established and controlled by SFOR (International Security Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina). Also, two agreements have been signed: Agreement on Confidence and Security Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina (January 1996) and Agreement on Sub-regional Arms Control (June 1996).

Until today, SALW collection activities have been undertaken by SFOR in cooperation with local police, State Border Police, Military authorities and Civil Protection Authorities. The operation called "Harvest", which was initiated by SFOR in 1998, later also included local authorities.

"Harvest" was accompanied by a media campaign which raised awareness among population on the necessity of voluntary surrender of arms. During the period from 1998 until the end of May 2003, 17600 pieces of SALW and more than 4 million pieces of ammunition have been collected and destroyed. Although, it is very difficult to assess the success of this action because we are not aware of the number of arms which are in illegal possession, in comparison with neighbouring countries and those countries in the world which were at war, the results of the "Harvest" are rather high. From next year this action will be continued by local authorities.

Furthermore, the reform of the armed forces is progressing. The number of soldiers has been reduced by ten times and the present number of



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20,000 soldiers will be reduced to 12,000 in the near future. Accordingly the quantity of small arms and light weapons has also been reduced: from

540,000 pieces in 1999 to 210,000 pieces in 2003, with intention to decrease the number by 115,000 pieces this year. It is important to announce that military storage sites for weapons and ammunition will be reduced from 169 to only 9 sites.

These activities were recently followed by a higher involvement of state authorities: The State Coordination Board was established half a year ago, new Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been established, The Standing Committee on Military Matters has got wider competencies and permanent staff, and the State Border Police is now covering the complete border to the neighbouring states.

Current process of strengthening state institutions has been followed by new legal regulations which will regulate small arms and light weapons.

First, the Law on the Import and Export of Weapons and Military Equipment was published 4 months ago and the final version of instructions was introduced by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations a month ago.

Second, the new Law in Manufacture of Arms and Military Equipment was drafted. This law would essentially change the status and future of military industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina which was the backbone of the military industry in Ex-SFRY with 50% participation. Initial implementation of this law could be reached by end of 2003, but full implementation requires at least additional 12 months.

Third important law, the Law on Testing, Stamping and Marking Small Arms and Ammunition was passed by Parliament in May 2003.

*Madam Chair,*

Ladies And Gentlemen, we are aware that we are at the very beginning and it is necessary to engage all state and entity authorities in implementing the programme for small arms and light weapons. We also know, that this is not possible without the assistance of international and regional organisations. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a member of UN and subject to international law, has been implementing its international obligations when we are in position to do so. Our results are the best guarantee for further implementation of the UN's Programme of Action to Prevent Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade on Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.