

**United Nations Conference to Review Progress  
Made in 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  
30 June 2006**

**"A View From South Africa"**

Bruce Shaw  
South African Gun Owners Association

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I am Bruce Shaw representing the South African Gun Owners Association or SAGA as we like to tell it. Thank you for the privilege of speaking at this important meeting.

Five years ago SAGA addressed the 2001 Conference along the following lines :

Our continent has a sad history of turmoil and conflict. We would strongly support measures to reduce the negative effects of small arms. However, we are concerned about a lack of focus on the real issues. We are particularly concerned about the call to restrict possession of sporting arms, which would serve no purpose in reducing conflict and detract from real issues, such as the transfer of military weapons.

Wars are not fought with sporting arms, but with military weapons. Similarly the weapon of choice of the organized violent criminal is usually an ex military weapon , not a Sporting , Hunting , or Historic firearm . The adoption of a proper definition of military small arms would strengthen agreement. In Africa, hunting plays an important role. We implore delegations to consider these concerns and return the focus to the real issue -- the illicit trade in military weapons which fuels conflict and violent crime .

Mr. President a great deal has happened since 2001, but some things have not changed. It seems to be the UN has yet to confront the issue that we are really concerned with military weapons and not sporting arms. There have been numerous calls to do this by the adoption of some appropriate definition of a small arm, but there seems to be little will to do this. In 2001 we said that hunting plays an important role in South Africa. It still does. South Africa has recently adopted new laws and regulations which will impact both hunting and other bona fide private firearm ownership. It is neither the proper place nor a proper role for me to specifically critique what has recently gone into effect. But let me say that the process has not been without problems.

Mr. President. I will join the call for this Conference to say yes to legitimate possession and use of firearms by private citizens. This did not happen in 2001, it needs to happen in 2006.

Thank you.