



# General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

## First Committee

**16<sup>th</sup>** meeting

Thursday, 20 October 2022, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*Chair:* Mr. Pieris .....(Sri Lanka)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### Agenda items 90 to 108 (continued)

#### Thematic discussions on specific subjects and introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items

**The Chair:** In accordance with the programme of work, the Committee will first hear briefings by video by the Chair of the eighth 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, His Excellency Mr. Enrique Manalo of the Philippines, and the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, Her Excellency Ms. Muanpui Saiawi of India. Thereafter, the Committee will continue its thematic discussion under the cluster “Conventional weapons”.

I now invite the Committee to view a pre-recorded statement by the Chair of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States, Mr. Enrique Manalo.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the Conference Room.*

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms, who is joining today’s meeting via video-teleconference.

**Ms. Saiawi:** I thank you, Mr. Chair, for inviting me to address today’s meeting of the First Committee.

I am from India, and it has been my privilege to serve as Chair of the 2022 Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA).

The 2022 Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on UNROCA was established pursuant to resolution 74/53, by which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the continuing operation and relevance of the Register and its further development, including by exploring the relationship between the participation, scope and use of the Register and its further development. The Group, which was composed of 20 experts selected based on an equitable geographical representation of the Member States, held three one-week sessions in Geneva and New York. After careful consideration of the recommendations of the 2019 GGE and a discussion of new ideas for enhancing the operation and relevance of the Register, as well as options for furthering its development, the Group concluded its work and adopted its final report by consensus on 17 June 2022. The report was published on 19 August 2022 and can be accessed online in the six official languages of the United Nations.

I would like to begin with reflections on our discussion on the Register’s relevance. As this was the tenth GGE, we had a substantial range of areas for consideration, with new ideas introduced by the 2022 GGE. It takes time to move from expert deliberations on proposals to amend the scope of the Register to the provision of consensus recommendations. The 2022 GGE not only examined some of the proposals and discussions of earlier groups but also benefited from

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working papers prepared by the experts. I think that the work of the 2022 GGE report provides a very useful basis for the deliberations of the next Group, and new recommendations for amendments to further enhance the Register's relevance will perhaps be submitted to the Committee in 2025. The Group reflected on the advancement in technologies in order to ensure that the seven categories of the Register continue to capture all relevant conventional weapons.

I note with satisfaction that the Group reached a consensus on recommending the adjustment of the scope of category 5 to include rotary wing unmanned combat aerial vehicles. The Group recommended the adoption of a description for small arms and light weapons, to be reported under the 7+1 formula. The Group provided reference reporting forms for information on procurement through national production and military holdings, as well as an updated and simplified nil reporting form. UNROCA recorded its lowest participation rate in 2021. Therefore, the 2022 GGE reflected on ways of promoting Members States' participation in the Register, taking into consideration the different regional circumstances that influence participation. Many key recommendations have been made by previous GGEs, but this year's GGE introduced proposals for conducting targeted awareness-raising on the Register, including through the organization of events and the use of social media and establishing an informal group of friends of the Register made up of interested members of the 2022 GGE.

The Group will work closely with the Secretariat and Member States and engage, as appropriate, with other relevant stakeholders to promote greater participation in the Register, in particular by developing outreach and training tools, as well as supporting the allocation of greater budgetary and human resources to the secretariat. The informal group of friends of the Register held its first meeting last month, and I was happy to learn that several members of the group are attending the First Committee meetings in person, in New York, this year. I look forward to seeing the results of our efforts soon.

I would like to conclude by expressing my sincere thanks to the members of the Committee for their attention and attendance. I would once again like to thank the 2022 GGE, as well as the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, for their support. For 30 years, the Register has served as a global instrument for

promoting transparency in international arms transfers, building trust among States and enhancing international stability and security. Amid the heightened global tensions and mistrust among nations, I would like to encourage Member States to participate in the Register, given its relevance today.

**The Chair:** The Committee will now continue its thematic discussion under the cluster "Conventional weapons". Before I open the floor, I would like to remind all delegations that the time limit for statements during the thematic segment is five minutes when speaking in their national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of several delegations.

I must repeat once again that we are running against time. I would plead and ask members to cooperate and economize on time as much as possible. I am sure that they will respond generously.

**Ms. Kristanti** (Indonesia): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

The non-fulfilment of the commitments and obligations assumed under the relevant international legally binding instruments, especially on conventional weapons, continues to pose threats to global peace and security. NAM continues to affirm the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their relevant parts, components and ammunition for their self-defence and security needs. NAM also remains deeply concerned about the wide range of security, humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences arising from the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons. NAM takes note of the successful convening of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July 2022, and the adoption of its consensual outcome document. NAM welcomes the Meeting's decision to establish a standing dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons, in particular for developing countries.

In recognizing the adverse humanitarian impacts caused by the use of cluster munitions and expressing solidarity with cluster munitions-affected countries, NAM calls for providing the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance to unexploded cluster munitions clearance operations, ensuring the social and economic rehabilitation of victims,

and ensuring the full access of affected countries to material, equipment, technology and financial resources for unexploded cluster munitions clearance. NAM continues to condemn the use of anti-personnel mines, in contravention of international humanitarian law, in conflict situations, aimed at maiming, killing and terrorizing innocent civilians. NAM calls on all States that are in a position to do so to provide the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance. NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction reiterate their commitment to the full implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.

NAM States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty call for the balanced, transparent and objective implementation of the Treaty, in strict accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the inherent right of every State to security and to individual or collective self-defence. NAM States parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its Protocols encourage other States to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols.

NAM is of the view that lethal autonomous weapons systems raise a number of ethical, legal, moral, technical issues and issues related to international peace and security, which should be thoroughly deliberated and examined in the context of compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In that regard, NAM States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons take note of the adoption by consensus of the 2019 report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and have agreed that there is an urgent need to pursue a legally binding instrument on lethal autonomous weapons systems. They also take note of the 2022 report of the Group of Governmental Experts. NAM recognizes the significant imbalance in the production and possession of and trade in conventional weapons between the industrialized and the non-aligned countries, and calls for a significant reduction in the production, possession and trade of conventional weapons by the industrialized States with a view to enhancing international and regional peace and security.

Lastly, NAM expresses concern about the increase in global military expenditures, which could otherwise be spent on development needs. NAM further stresses the importance of the reduction of military expenditures, in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, and urges all States to devote the resources made available as a result to economic and social development, in particular in the fight against poverty.

**Mr. Bandiya** (Nigeria): The Group of African States aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Group remains deeply concerned about the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, in particular on the continent of Africa, especially in the light of their wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. In that regard, the African Group attaches great importance to the central role of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) as crucial multilateral instruments dedicated to fighting the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons and tackling their multifaceted effects, which pose a threat to international peace and security. The Group remains committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action and welcomes the successful convening of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action in New York from 27 June to 1 July 2022, as well as its adoption of a consensus-based outcome document.

The Group recognizes the extensive work done to address illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including through the Bamako Declaration of 2000; the African Union Constitutive Act; the 2002 Protocol on the Establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council, the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, adopted in Sirte in 2004; the Nairobi Protocol; the Southern African Development Community Protocol of 2004; the Convention of the Economic Community of West African States on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials of 2006; the efforts made in the framework of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States and the

Arab Maghreb Union; the African Union's Agenda 2063; the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative; and other subregional initiatives. The African Group acknowledges the efforts made by the States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty since its entry into force, as well as the convening of the eighth Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty, held in Geneva from 22 to 26 August 2022. The Group urges the States parties to the Treaty to implement it in a balanced and objective manner that protects the interests of all States, not just those that are major international arms producers and exporters. The Group reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms, their parts and components for their security needs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The full implementation of the Treaty remains achievable with the cooperation of all.

Africa continues to be one of the regions that suffers most from the effects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons — most of which are produced outside the continent yet are acquired and used by unauthorized recipients and illegal armed groups within Africa. The African Group therefore considers this meeting as another opportunity for the international community to renew its efforts to stem the tide of small arms and light weapons in conflict situations in order to create an enabling environment for peace and security and socioeconomic development. It is important to acknowledge that promoting the peaceful, unfettered and inclusive participation of nations in global actions aimed at addressing the flow of illicit arms, particularly in Africa, will facilitate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. The African Group stresses the need to establish and maintain controls over the private ownership of small arms and light weapons and calls on all States to ensure that the supply of such weapons is limited only to Governments or entities duly authorized by the Governments of recipient States. They must also implement legal restrictions and prohibitions preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Universal adherence to that undertaking could greatly contribute to efforts aimed at eradicating the illicit trade in and transfer of small arms and light weapons.

The Group wishes to commend the efforts and contributions of several partners and donors, while emphasizing that international assistance to support the implementation of the Programme of Action is still not commensurate with the needs of the affected countries. The African Group underlines the need for

further engagement in addressing the challenges faced by Africa with regard to the impact of the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons. In that context, the African Group wishes to call on all States to fulfil their obligations with regard to reporting, technological transfer and ensuring the unhindered flow of international cooperation and assistance, as mandated by the United Nations. The Group also urges the States Members of the United Nations with developed economies to render more technical and financial assistance to developing countries in the realization of the overall objectives of the Programme of Action and the ITI with a view to eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Group believes that such efforts will promote national and regional initiatives and assist efforts at the global level.

The Group also reiterates that such assistance should not be conditional on being part of, or detract from, the recipient State's official development assistance. To that end, the adequate provision of training and equipment, technology transfers, the strengthening of national capacity-building and the mobilization of financial resources constitute a particularly important segment of international assistance and cooperation. In addition, the establishment of mechanisms to increase the effectiveness of international assistance and cooperation remains a critical aspect in the process of the implementation of the Programme of Action and the ITI. The Group also wishes to highlight the need for the United Nations to intensify the utilization of the local expertise and resources available in developing countries in its activities to support the implementation of the Programme of Action. In that regard, the Group wishes to reiterate its strong support for the establishment of a United Nations fellowship programme on small arms and light weapons for developing countries in order to train relevant officials nominated by their respective Governments in areas related to the implementation of the Programme of Action. We call on Member States to expedite the implementation of the United Nations fellowship programme after considering the different proposals submitted by the Secretariat in that regard.

**Mr. Fuller** (Belize): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM is pleased to participate in today's First Committee debate on conventional weapons.



CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Tackling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and associated ammunition is an urgent priority for the CARICOM region. Illegal firearms remain one of the main drivers of crime levels in our territories and are responsible for more than 70 per cent of homicides. They are the weapon of choice for criminal elements owing to their flexibility, concealability and price, and access to ammunition. Even more alarming in that context is the fact that the CARICOM region does not manufacture, export or re-export small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, nor do we import them on a large scale. Yet, our citizens continue to bear the brunt of their deadly impact. Also compounding the problem is the rapid development of new technologies such as the use of polymers, three-dimensional printing and modularity in weapon design. Those technologies present new challenges to traceability and our overall efforts to strengthen control systems and regulate the international trade in conventional weapons.

Two weeks ago, CARICOM's ministerial-level Council for National Security and Law Enforcement identified firearms trafficking as one of the greatest threats to Caribbean countries. It highlighted the devastating impact that the illicit flow of such weapons has in fuelling organized crime, gang crime and gender-based violence in our region, as well as in dismantling the gains made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In its response, CARICOM has developed a targeted approach in the framework of CARICOM's crime and security strategy and the Caribbean Firearms Road Map to address the root causes of violence in our region and to dismantle the factors that make it possible for guns to flow illegally into our territories and into the hands of criminals. With the support of the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, we have been working to enact national action plans on firearms, in partnership with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC).

We are convinced that regional and subregional organizations have an important role to play, upon request, in the implementation of small arms and light weapons programmes, including in the coordination of assistance. CARICOM's Implementation Agency for Crime and Security plays a leading role in strengthening

coordination and coherence to reduce armed violence and promote regional peace and security through the advancement of the Caribbean Firearms Road Map. It has established critical partnerships with numerous international agencies to assist in the fight against gun crime, including INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNLIREC, the Small Arms Survey and the Mines Advisory Group. More recently, a joint operation with the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security and INTERPOL, carried out from 24 to 30 September, led to the seizure of 350 weapons, 3,300 rounds of ammunition and record drug hauls across the Caribbean.

In implementing such initiatives, CARICOM received support from a range of multilateral and bilateral partners. We take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the capacity-building and other support received from international development partners. We further underscore the importance of working with the regional agency, specifically the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, to ensure synergy and coordination in the implementation of national and regional priorities. We also call on donor agencies to provide more support to the CARICOM Implementation Agency.

CARICOM member States remain firm in their belief that the effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument is critical to reducing armed violence. We reiterate our steadfast commitment to fulfilling our obligations under those and other relevant international instruments, and we wish to highlight that their success cannot be achieved without a global commitment and global action.

In that regard, CARICOM welcomes the demonstration of political will and commitment that led to the consensus adoption of an outcome document at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States. For a subject area rife with political division and distrust, that spirit of common purpose is truly welcome, and it should guide our deliberations going forward. Our challenges are global, and so too must be their solutions.

Looking ahead, CARICOM believes that international cooperation is key to achieving tangible results in conventional arms control. We remain committed to cooperating with all partners, including civil society, and advocate for the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in those efforts.

In conclusion, we urge all States to summon the political will needed to achieve even greater progress in our deliberations.

**Mr. Al-Taie** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express the support of the Group of Arab States for the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group attaches increasing importance to combating the illicit in small arms and light weapons, particularly in the light of the catastrophic consequences at the security, humanitarian and economic levels of the unprecedented increase in the illicit trade in such weapons in the Arab region and the fact that some Governments seem to be resorting to providing such weapons to terrorists and illegal armed groups to prolong armed conflicts and achieve insidious political goals, in contravention of the most basic rules of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and a number of relevant Security Council resolutions, the most recent of which is resolution 2370 (2017).

In that context, the Arab Group stresses the importance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We call for preserving the value of the Programme as a consensus-based United Nations tool, the primary purpose of which is to build trust and strengthen cooperation among all the countries of the world in order to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons provided that any actions taken in that regard do not conflict with the legitimate right of States to self-defence under the Charter of Nations and the manufacture and importation of conventional weapons in that regard.

The Arab Group stresses the need to distinguish between combating illicit arms trafficking, which is the main objective of the Programme of Action, and the imposition of politicized, discriminatory or monopolistic restrictions on the legitimate trade in conventional weapons among Governments, in accordance with their respective sovereign assessment of the nature of the security threats that they face.

The Group calls for respect for the prohibition of any supply of arms to a State without official authorization from the relevant authority of the State of import.

The Group affirms the legitimate right of States to provide for their conventional weapons needs in

accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, based on the right of legitimate self-defence, and categorically rejects any restrictions on that right.

The Arab Group maintains that the Programme of Action is a stand-alone international framework and stresses the need to ensure that the implementation of the Programme of Action does not overlap with any other international mechanisms and to avoid controversial issues that are not covered by the Programme.

The Arab Group reaffirms the importance of strengthening international cooperation and technical assistance for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including supporting State capacities with the relevant modern technologies and capacity-building, particularly in the areas of stockpile security and border control, without interfering in the sovereignty of States or imposing conditions contrary to the spirit and objectives of the Programme.

The Arab Group believes that it is important that the provision of assistance to a country not detract from official development assistance resources allocated to that country or seek to create any unnecessary links between the provision of such assistance with regard to combating illicit trafficking and the supply of conventional weapons and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly target 4 of Goal 16, which specifically deals with the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The Arab Group stresses that priority should be given to bridging the gaps that hamper United Nations and multilateral efforts to combat the illicit supply and trafficking in weapons before dealing with the munitions issue. It is necessary for technical and legal experts to conduct an appropriate study of the technical, economic, security and legal consequences of implementing certain mechanisms and norms applicable to weapons and ammunition.

The Group welcomes the adoption of the outcome document of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in All Its Aspects, and we look forward to building on the recommendations contained therein in preparation for the fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation Conference of the Programme of Action, to be held in 2024. We also look forward to the prompt implementation of the

United Nations fellowship training programme, since it seeks to increase the capacities of developing countries in that area, in accordance with the outcome document of the eighth Biennial Meeting.

In conclusion, the Arab Group looks forward to the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition. We are ready to fully participate in its work in order to address conventional munitions issues independently and comprehensively, with the aim of developing a global framework for dealing with conventional munitions at the national, regional and international levels.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

**Mr. Karczmarz** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and the Republic of Moldova, the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Georgia, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

While progress is currently challenging on some arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation issues, there are many success stories in the area of conventional arms control and disarmament. We encourage all States to recognize their responsibility in advancing that work. We also believe that the active and equal participation and leadership of women in decision-making and action is crucial in achieving peace, security and sustainable development.

Considering the humanitarian imperative of many international conventions tackling the issue of conventional weapons, we cannot ignore Russia's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. This war of aggression is not only a blatant violation of international law, but also a humanitarian catastrophe for Ukraine and its people, brought about by the Russian Federation, in flagrant disrespect of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The EU actively supports the work of the International Criminal Court and measures to ensure accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide. There can be no impunity for such crimes.

We therefore call on all States to refrain from any arms transfers to Russia. We condemn in the strongest

possible terms Russia's use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions as well as its use of other explosive weapons, such as rockets and artillery shells or improvised explosive devices (IEDs) directed against civilians in its war of aggression against Ukraine. We call on Russia to respect international humanitarian law and to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

The EU recalls that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols are an essential and integral part of international humanitarian law. The EU strongly encourages all States that have not yet done so to join the CCW and its Protocols without further delay. The EU underlines that the CCW is a unique international forum for gathering diplomatic, legal and military expertise in order to respond to new developments in weapons technologies.

The EU welcomes the work over the past years by the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and acknowledges the contribution it has made to our common understanding of this complex topic and to finding common ground. The Group of Governmental Experts should continue its efforts, based on a solid mandate, in order to enable progress, also reflecting the necessity of compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, and taking into account relevant ethical considerations. In order to ensure compliance, human beings must make decisions with regard to the use of lethal force, exert control over the weapons systems they use and remain accountable for decisions about the use of force.

The EU remains deeply concerned about the continued severe global impact of improvised explosive devices and their indiscriminate use and effects, in particular in the perpetration of terrorist acts and their use by non-State actors. In that context, we welcome the updated political declaration on IEDs, adopted last year by the High Contracting Parties to CCW Amended Protocol II.

The EU highlights the humanitarian impact and grave consequences on social and economic development caused by the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of mines other than anti-personnel mines. It would be appropriate for States Parties to further discuss how to ensure compliance with Amended Protocol

II, also with respect to such mines. The issue of such mines should therefore remain on the CCW agenda for further discussions.

The EU also stands united in its support for a universal ban on anti-personnel mines. We call on all States that have not yet done so to join the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention without further delay. We encourage all parties to accelerate progress towards achieving a world free of anti-personnel mines by 2025. We support the Oslo Action Plan.

The EU also reaffirms its strong support for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and calls on all States, especially major arms importers, exporters and transit States, to ratify or accede to the Treaty without further delay. We welcome the work done this year under Germany's ATT presidency, as well as the successful outcome of the eighth Conference of States Parties to the ATT. Given the many blatant Russian breaches of the Geneva Conventions, arms transfers to Russia are not permitted under the ATT. The EU has had an arms embargo in place against Russia ever since its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The diversion, illicit trade and unauthorized use of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition continues to be a serious impediment for peace, growth, development and security in the world. The EU has therefore been actively promoting 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. Its implementation must be supported by synergies with other international and regional instruments, such as the ATT and the Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The EU underscores the importance of a gender-sensitive approach to the control of small arms and light weapons and highlights the differing impacts of armed violence on women, men, girls and boys.

Furthermore, ineffective conventional ammunition management continues to be of growing concern to the international community. The EU therefore fully supports the Open-ended Working Group established by resolution 76/233, which seeks to establish a framework to support the safe, secure and sustainable through-life management of ammunition.

The EU stands firmly behind the humanitarian goal of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We are deeply concerned about the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions in Syria, Yemen, Libya, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and, in particular, in Ukraine.

The EU also welcomes the conclusion of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.

In the interest of time, I delivered a short statement. The full version of the statement will be available on the First Committee website.

**Mr. Parnohadiningrat** (Indonesia): Indonesia allies itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/77/PV.15).

The illicit flow and/or transfer of small arms and light weapons continue to pose challenges in a broad and cross-border manner. Illicit arms falling into the wrong hands contribute to acts of violence and terrorism around the world. The immense humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons also remains a concern.

To that end, Indonesia calls on all Member States for a renewed commitment to contain the illegal supply of conventional weapons. Major producing States should ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is restricted only to Governments or entities duly authorized by them.

Allow me to highlight four points that are pertinent to this cluster.

First, we need to work together to strengthen regulations of small arms and light weapons. Indonesia reiterates its call for a balanced, full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. In order to support its implementation, Indonesia welcomes the successful conclusion of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action. Indonesia also welcomed the decision of the eighth Biennial Meeting to establish a standing



dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons.

Secondly, there should be no unnecessary restriction placed on the transfer of small arms and light weapons. Indonesia reasserts the sovereign rights of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain more arms and light weapons and the relevant parts, components and ammunition for self-defence and security needs.

Thirdly, a strong regional cooperation to curb illicit arms transfer should also be at the forefront of our efforts. Strengthening measures on border control are necessary to reach that goal. In addition, Indonesia welcomes the efforts taken by the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre to help to address the issue of explosive remnants of war.

Fourthly, the conventional weapons that are capable of inflicting indiscriminate damage should never be used. The humanitarian harm arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas should be addressed. We welcome the ongoing multilateral efforts in that regard. In the same vein, Indonesia also condemns the use of anti-personnel mines in conflicts, in contravention of international humanitarian law. Mines have killed innocent people and United Nations peacekeepers. Indonesia therefore continues to promote the mining capability of its peacekeeping forces, including through international cooperation.

In conclusion, Indonesia believes that stronger international cooperation on curbing the illicit arms trade and ensuring greater transparency would help improve global control of conventional weapons. It is high time to work together to ensure that our resources are better used for global peace and prosperity.

**Ms. Petit (France)** (*spoke in French*): France aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Every day in Ukraine, Russia violates Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations and disregards its obligations under international humanitarian law by carrying out attacks that deliberately target the civilian population, including through the use of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. France will not tolerate impunity, and the perpetrators of those intolerable acts must be held accountable before international justice.

France remains fully committed to defending the integrity of, and respect for, our international rules, the preservation of international humanitarian law and the universalization and strengthening of disarmament and conventional arms control instruments. As a party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, France remains concerned about the impact on civilian populations of the use of such weapons and continues its efforts to promote their implementation and universalization. We also welcome the work done in the context of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, as well as the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus, which is chaired by Germany.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition indeed poses a grave threat to international peace and security. Improvised explosive devices also represent a major security challenge. That is why France, jointly with Australia, co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.50, and we hope that all States will do the same. We also reaffirm our commitment to implementing and universalizing the Arms Trade Treaty, which is a fundamental instrument for regulating the trade in conventional weapons and preventing their illicit trafficking and transfer. France provides support to non-European States, at their request, to bring their national arms transfer control systems into compliance with the Treaty. We also support the efforts of several States in combating illicit trafficking through the provision of associated equipment, training and technical expertise.

Respect for the cardinal principles of international humanitarian law in situations of armed conflict is essential for protecting civilians from the effects of the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of conventional weapons. In that regard, we call on all States to join the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, which was negotiated under the leadership of Ireland, whose work we commend.

France had the honour of presiding over the sixth Review Conference on the Convention on Prohibitions

or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) last December and will sponsor this year's draft resolution on the Convention. The CCW is an essential instrument for fostering informed dialogue among States, drawing on political, legal, military and diplomatic expertise on issues relating to international humanitarian law. We will continue to contribute actively to the work of the GGE on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems conducted within the parameters of the Convention. That work has undeniably enabled us to make progress on the substance of the discussions and to identify points of convergence. France therefore associates itself with the joint statement on autonomous lethal weapon systems to be delivered by the representative of Austria.

We must intensify our efforts in the framework of the CCW to meet the challenges posed by those systems. Based on the goals and objectives of the Convention, which is part of international humanitarian law and aims to strike a balance between military necessity and humanitarian principles, we must collectively build the operational and normative framework applicable to emerging technologies in the field of lethal autonomous weapons systems. Continuing our work within the GGE on lethal autonomous weapons systems will enable us to make further progress in identifying possible ways to ensure that the development and use of potential autonomous lethal weapon systems is carried out in full compliance with international humanitarian law. France will therefore continue to contribute actively to that work.

**Mr. Butera** (United States of America): The United States places great importance on minimizing the harms from conventional weapons. In June of this year, the United States committed to limiting the use of anti-personnel landmines and aligning its policy and practice with key provisions of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction for all activities outside of the context of the Korean peninsula. The new United States landmine policy reflects President Biden's belief in the need to reduce the use of anti-personnel landmines worldwide and his commitment to policies that enhance the protection of civilians, and it complements long-standing United States leadership in the clearance of landmines and the explosive remnants of war. The United States

leads the world in conventional-weapons destruction, having invested more than \$4.7 billion in more than 100 countries since 1993 to promote international peace and security by addressing the threat of conventional weapons, including the humanitarian hazards from landmines and unexploded ordnance.

I am also pleased to reiterate that the United States is prepared to endorse the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas at the high-level conference to be held in Dublin on 18 November. We expect that the Political Declaration and the follow-on mechanism set out therein will contribute to States' efforts to mitigate harm to civilians and civilian objects during military operations. We are grateful to Ireland for facilitating the process, as well as all the delegations that contributed to the productive negotiations on the Declaration held over the past several years. We look forward to working with interested States to strengthen the protection of civilians and reduce human suffering in armed conflict.

The planned United States endorsement of the Political Declaration and the new United States landmine policy stand in stark contrast with Russia's actions in Ukraine, where there is compelling evidence that Russian forces are using explosive munitions, including landmines, in an irresponsible manner, causing extensive harm to civilians and damage to vital civilian infrastructure. Putin's premeditated, unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine has resulted in extensive contamination with landmines and explosive remnants of war, which poses a dire threat to all Ukrainians and will complicate efforts to rebuild Ukraine when the fighting eventually ceases.

The United States aligns itself with the joint statement on lethal autonomous weapons to be delivered by the representative of Austria on behalf of a cross-regional group of States. In addition, my delegation believes that the joint proposal on principles and good practices submitted by the United States, along with Australia, Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom, to the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, continues to represent the best path forward for the GGE. That proposal captures the extensive progress that the GGE has already made and provides a basis for

further substantive progress, including by developing a detailed understanding of how the existing principles and requirements of international humanitarian law apply to the use of emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons. That critical work will help strengthen compliance with existing international humanitarian law, identify whether there is a need to develop additional standards or requirements and ensure that any such standards or requirements are consistent with and enhance existing international humanitarian law. We remain of the view that human control is not a legal requirement as such, but rather is one means to help ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. We look forward to continuing to work closely with the other GGE participants in 2023 to fulfil the Group's mandate.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which was established in the immediate aftermath of a different occurrence of an invasion of one Member State by another. The Register is as relevant and important today as when it was established. It is a global confidence-building measure that provides transparency in the internal transfer of conventional arms. More than 170 Member States have participated in the Register at least once, and it is estimated that it covers more than 90 per cent of the arms trade. A Group of Governmental Experts was convened to discuss the continuing operation of the Register, which this year recommended a number of important changes. The implementation of those recommendations will address gaps in reporting, increase participation by States and ensure that the Register receives sustainable and predictable budgetary resources. The United States urges all Member States to embrace that responsibility.

Finally, the Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 codified the United States Government's decades-long sustained commitment to the principles of the women and peace and security agenda. The integration of a gender perspective in the work of the First Committee across its disarmament machinery should continue to be strengthened.

**Mr. Hashmi** (Pakistan): Even though conventional armaments were the first category of lethal weapons, efforts to regulate them have been only partially successful to date. There are three major factors impeding progress: first, the pursuit of a partial approach, that is, attempts to separate the motivation for the production of arms from the control of their

trade and transfer; secondly, an extensive focus on managing the effects of the trade in arms without adequately addressing the causes that propel such a trade in the first place; and thirdly, the lack of faithful implementation of existing international, regional or national commitments and obligations. That state of affairs is further exacerbated by the increasing sophistication in, and growing integration of, artificial intelligence into conventional weaponry.

There are other troubling trends: global military expenditures have exceeded Cold War levels and have crossed the \$2 trillion mark for the first time. The entire United Nations budget constitutes less than 1 per cent of the world's military expenditure. About 150 times more funds are being spent on fuelling and exacerbating conflicts than on preventing them. The volume of trade in those weapons continues to grow as well. Huge quantities of arms are supplied to the like-minded or exported to those who have the financial means to purchase them. Arms sellers often encourage both sides in a conflict to buy more such weapons. The urge for profits remains irresistible, often ignoring international Arms Trade Treaty provisions or national transfer policies.

Developing countries remain the primary recipients and favoured destination of those weapons. New markets continue to be explored, created and sought after, with little regard for their destabilizing impacts on regional security and stability. The result is a series of regional arms races, mostly in volatile parts of the world, including with the participation of non-State actors that wreak havoc on civilian populations. Senior officials of the selling countries often market their weapons even as they seek to mediate peace or ease tensions. Ironically, the weapons that propel and sustain conflicts often originate from areas that enjoy peace and stability.

On the other hand, the demand for weapons emanates from either insecurity or ambition. Some States seek to build up their national armed forces on land, in the air and at sea, with pretensions to be a global Power and often with the self-proclaimed intention of dominating their own regions. Other States affected by the imbalance are then obliged to acquire weapons to ensure a minimum capacity to deter aggression. Many of those destabilizing developments are evident in South Asia, where one State's military spending vastly outnumbers that of all others. The general supply of conventional weaponry

to that State, together with its strategic capabilities, is fuelling instability, jeopardizing the delicate regional balance and hindering the resolution of long-standing disputes. It is reinforcing that State's sense of impunity and hegemonic designs and impeding the realization of durable peace and sustainable development in the region. The policy of double standards towards South Asia, based on narrow strategic, political and commercial considerations, must be eschewed.

Pakistan, for its part, remains committed to the establishment of a strategic regime in South Asia that includes an element of conventional force balance. Pakistan neither wants nor is engaged in an arms race in the region. For more than three decades, the First Committee has adopted an annual draft resolution submitted by Pakistan on the promotion of conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels, which is anchored in the core principles of the special session on disarmament, namely, the undiminished security of all States and the balanced reduction of forces and of conventional armaments. We look forward once again to the adoption of draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.35 with the broadest possible support this year.

Pakistan has developed the necessary legislative, regulatory, enforcement and institutional mechanisms to address a range of issues relating to conventional arms regulation. Pakistan attaches great importance to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument. We remain committed to their full and effective implementation. Even as we will once again vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.39, on the Arms Trade Treaty, we continue to believe that its success, effectiveness and universality remains dependent on its non-discriminatory implementation, in particular the strict adherence by States parties to its principles.

As a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its five protocols, Pakistan remains fully compliant with their provisions. We have actively contributed to strengthening its implementation, improving its financial sustainability and steering its high-level meetings. We share concerns over the possibility of the acquisition and use of improvised explosive devices by non-State actors and terrorists. The CCW remains the most appropriate forum to address that issue in a comprehensive manner.

Lastly, we are deeply concerned by attempts to impede progress towards the development of an international legal framework on lethal autonomous weapon systems. We call for the immediate commencement of negotiations to regulate their production, deployment and use.

**Mr. Wong** (Singapore): Singapore aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. I wish to add three points in our national capacity.

First, Singapore fully supports the work of the United Nations to curb the illicit arms trade and prevent the indiscriminate use of conventional arms. We must urgently address the widespread availability, misuse, diversion and illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, which threaten global peace and security. We therefore welcome the consensus outcome document of the eighth 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, which was adopted in July.

We will also continue to participate actively in the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition and look forward to its third substantive session, to be held in February 2023. Singapore maintains a robust export control regime that is aligned with the relevant Security Council resolutions, which we review regularly to maintain its currency. As a global shipping hub, Singapore adopts a rigorous approach to curbing illicit arms flows by regulating the export, trans-shipment and transit of strategic goods. We also actively contribute to multilateral counter-proliferation initiatives, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Secondly, Singapore will continue supporting global efforts to promote transparency and establish common international standards in the conventional arms trade. We have regularly submitted national reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms since 1993. We were also honoured to contribute to the work of the 2019 and 2022 Groups of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the Register, the most recent of which concluded its work in June 2022. Singapore welcomes the 2022 GGE's recommendations to ensure the continued relevance of that important transparency and confidence-building instrument.



Thirdly, Singapore supports international initiatives against the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions and conventional weapons, and recognizes the adverse humanitarian impact that such weapons can have on innocent civilians. Singapore has imposed an indefinite moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. We also support relevant United Nations resolutions and international initiatives, under the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

It is vital that States fulfil their legal and international obligations with regard to the transfer of arms. A balance must also be struck on the legitimate security concerns and the right to self-defence of any State. Singapore therefore reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire arms for legitimate defence and responsible law enforcement purposes. Singapore reiterates its commitment to working with the international community to prevent the unauthorized diversion and illicit trade of conventional weapons, and stands ready to work constructively with fellow member States towards the common goal of a safer and more secure world for all.

**Mr. Underwood** (Australia): Australia is committed to advancing the international framework regulating the trade and use of conventional weapons. It is critical that we universalize and implement the relevant international laws and norms to which we have agreed. Those weapons are the leading cause of conflict-related deaths of civilians. Their illicit trade and use exacerbates violence both within and outside of conflict settings, including violence against women and children.

Notwithstanding those serious challenges, we are encouraged by a number of tangible steps forward taken this year. We were pleased by this year's hard-won consensus outcome at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Positive elements included strengthened language on gender considerations and the decision to establish a United Nations fellowship training programme. We trust that this year's outcome will place us in good stead to achieve further progress at the upcoming fourth Review Conference on the

Programme of Action, in particular with regard to the establishment of a technical experts' group on developing recommendations in the light of developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design. Australia further welcomes the commencement of the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition and looks forward to continuing that work next year.

Australia was pleased to participate in another successful Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in August. The ATT is an important tool for combating the illicit arms trade, and we look forward to continuing to play our part in enhancing the ATT's universalization and implementation, including as Vice-President of the ninth Conference of States Parties, to be held next year. International cooperation and assistance are vital in ensuring the effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the Arms Trade Treaty. As a supporter of both the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund and the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, Australia continues to take concrete steps in that regard.

The use of explosive weapons in populated areas can have a devastating impact on civilians and civilian infrastructure. The impact of those weapons has been made harrowingly clear by Russia's indiscriminate bombardment of populated areas in Ukraine. With that in mind, in Dublin next month, Australia will join the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. We congratulate Ireland, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations for their leadership on that issue.

As a firm supporter of instruments including the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Australia is committed to efforts to counter the risks posed by anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war. In our region, that includes work with the United States, Canada and New Zealand during Operation Render Safe, the Australian Defence Force's series of activities to dispose of the explosive remnants of war dating from the Second World War in South Pacific island nations, which this year located 22 aerial bombs for removal from Tuvalu waters. We also draw the Committee's attention to draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.41, on improvised explosive devices, submitted by Australia and France,

and we encourage all States to join in co-sponsoring that important resolution.

Australia is encouraged by the return to a consensus outcome in the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons this year. We hope that the Group can find a way to reflect its substantial substantive exchanges in future sessions.

We note with growing concern a tendency by a minority of States to seek to exclude civil society from discussions on conventional arms control and on disarmament more broadly. Australia will continue to welcome the constructive role that civil society plays and the contributions it makes to discussions and calls upon all States to do the same.

**Mr. In Den Bosch** (Netherlands): The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made earlier today on behalf of the European Union.

While new autonomous weaponry has redefined modern warfare, the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions, the extensive use of anti-personnel mines and improvised explosive devices and the illicit cross-border flow of small arms and light weapons continue to cause large numbers of casualties. That is why the Netherlands strives to further strengthen and expand treaties, conventions and agreements on conventional weapons.

To that end, the Netherlands calls on all States Members of the United Nations to join the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), as it is the only legally binding international instrument to regulate the trade of conventional arms. We also urge all States, including, and especially, major arms exporters, which have a special responsibility, to make arms export reports publicly available, either by submitting annual reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms or via the ATT's annual reporting cycle.

Furthermore, we call on all States Members of the United Nations to refrain from supplying weapons to the Russian Federation, as there exists a risk that they will be used in Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms. The Netherlands underlines that its decision to supply arms to Ukraine in order to help Ukraine exercise its right to self-defence, under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, is fully in line with the ATT. Each delivery of arms to Ukraine, including Government to

Government, is subject to a case-by-case assessment, in line with the ATT.

Last July, the eighth Biennial Meeting of States of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was held. The Netherlands will continue its efforts to implement the Programme of Action and calls on other States to follow suit. To further advance the work on the issue of lethal autonomous weapons, the Netherlands set out its position at the meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons systems held in July. We advocate that those autonomous weapons that cannot be used in accordance with international humanitarian law should be explicitly prohibited. For those that are in accordance with international humanitarian law, we argue that regulation is required, based on clear definitions. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons provides the appropriate framework to continue the discussion on lethal autonomous weapons systems, now and in the future, but we stress the need for concrete results. Since the signing of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in Ottawa, great progress has been made in every aspect of the goals of the Convention. However, we must continue to strive for universalization and more work must be done to increase the pace of mine clearance to accomplish the goal of a world free of landmines.

The Netherlands is gravely concerned about the continued use of cluster munitions in various parts of the world. In particular, there have been several credible reports about indiscriminate attacks by Russian armed forces using cluster munitions on Ukrainian territory. The Netherlands condemns attacks on civilian objects and indiscriminate attacks by any actor, at any time. We are pleased that, during last year's Review Conference, we were able to adopt the Lausanne Action Plan, which provides a solid basis to achieve significant and sustainable progress towards the universalization and implementation of the Convention. With the Convention on Cluster Munitions, we have established a firm norm, which we must collectively uphold. Related to that, we very much welcome the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, led by Ireland. The Netherlands will support that initiative and we urge other countries to do the same. We consider that to be a clear and positive result of investing in the multilateral process, even in times of increased geopolitical tensions.

I want to conclude by stressing the importance of gender, as we need to more systematically include gender perspectives in disarmament diplomacy. Gender-based violence remains a tactic of war brought about by conventional weapons. While women are less likely to own and use those arms, they are disproportionately killed by them or have to face the physical, psychological and social harm they cause. That is why we need the full, equitable and meaningful participation of women, including in leadership positions, in order to conduct effective disarmament diplomacy.

**Mr. Francese (Italy):** Italy aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Italy firmly upholds all international instruments restricting or prohibiting the use of conventional weapons that are not or cannot be used in compliance with international humanitarian law. In that regard, and recalling the damage and suffering caused by unexploded ordnance, we call for the universalization and effective implementation of the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, adopted in Oslo. We deeply regret the repeated use of those heinous weapons in certain areas of conflict, especially in the context of Russia's unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine.

In parallel, we share the deep concern of the international community at the growing use of improvised explosive devices, including by non-State actors. We call for adequate risk education and victim assistance efforts to address the impact of those hazardous weapons with regard to civilians and peacekeeping personnel in conflict and post-conflict areas. As part of our long-standing commitment, a dedicated trust fund for humanitarian demining was set up by domestic law in 2001, and since then Italy has devoted more than €71 million to mine action programmes, with the amount of €8.5 million as our country's investment for 2022.

The same constructive engagement inspires Italy's efforts towards the effective implementation of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). In anticipation of the next Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, to be held in Geneva in November, we continue to emphasize the value of an

inclusive approach to prepare a productive outcome of that meeting, along with the need to adapt the structure and scope of the CCW to normative developments and military weapons technologies.

In that regard, we continue to sustain the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, and we reaffirm the need to ensure full respect for international humanitarian law throughout the entire decision-making process leading to the use of force. In our view, human beings must make decisions concerning the use of force and remain accountable for those decisions. We very much welcome the completion, earlier this year, of the negotiations on the text of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.

Furthermore, we believe in the importance of countering illicit arm transfers, and we call for the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty and the full implementation of all its provisions. Italy regards with particular concern the increase in illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons, including via the so-called deep web, and is constructively engaged in multilateral efforts aimed at curbing the destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and of conventional ammunition. In that regard, and even in the light of the priorities set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we promote an inclusive approach to harmonize security concerns, gender-sensitive considerations and sustainable development.

**Mr. Bandiya (Nigeria):** The delegation of Nigeria aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of my own country, Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and wishes to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

Today the dangers and effects of uncontrolled access to conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, are witnessed all around us. From Africa to the Middle East and across Europe to the Americas and Asia, the carnage has become phenomenal and unprecedented, particularly the immense bloodshed foisted on innocent populations by terrorists and other criminal elements. A sizeable amount of the global population, including in my country, have experienced the painful consequences

of the illicit trade, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons through the hands of criminal gangs, terrorists, armed bandits and militants. My delegation remains deeply concerned over the wide range of consequences of illicit small arms and light weapons. We therefore call on all States, in particular the major producing States, to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is restricted only to the Governments and entities duly authorized by them. We have witnessed cities and communities destroyed, including heavy losses of precious lives and property, tolls on livelihoods and forced mass migration.

Nigeria remains committed to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Nigeria supported the adoption of the landmark resolution 67/234 B, on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), on 2 April 2013. We welcome the successful convening and adoption of the consensual outcome documents of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, held from 27 June to 1 July 2022 in New York, and the eighth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held from 22 to 26 August 2022 in Geneva.

My delegation underscores the need to present a common front to robustly respond to the threat posed to international peace and security by the non-regulation of conventional weapons. In order to mitigate their proliferation, Nigeria has redoubled its efforts to strengthen its borders, while strengthening its cooperation across the West African subregion and beyond. Our commitment is further demonstrated by our signing and ratification of relevant international, regional and subregional instruments, such as the ATT and the Programme of Action, as well as by our establishing and sustaining robust partnerships with the African Union, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and other relevant organizations. In addition, the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons has been set up by the Government of Nigeria. The Centre has been involved in activities geared towards stemming the tide of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

My country has organized capacity-building programmes for security agencies and carried out an initial baseline assessment of the small arms and light weapons situation in Nigeria, including a comprehensive national survey on small arms and

light weapons and a comprehensive national weapons-marking programme, and has established a database on small arms and light weapons and a review of Nigeria's firearms law, among other things. It has also established a framework for collaboration with civil society organizations in order to sustain wider stakeholder participation. Nigeria continues to support and advance the causes of regional and subregional initiatives such as the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Agenda 2063 of the African Union, the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative and other relevant initiatives aimed at addressing the threat of illicit flows of small arms and light weapons in Africa.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate its support for the establishment of the United Nations Fellowship Programme on Small Arms and Light Weapons for developing countries, to train relevant officials nominated by their respective Governments in areas related to the implementation of the Programme of Action. We therefore call on Member States to expedite the implementation of the United Nations Fellowship Programme after considering the various proposals submitted by the Secretariat.

**Mr. Peñaranda (Philippines):** My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Cambodia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively.

The commitment of the Philippines to conventional weapons disarmament finds anchor in our Constitution's renunciation of war as an instrument of policy and our ironclad commitment to international humanitarian law. Our outlook is driven not merely by strategic or security exigencies, but by a humanitarian imperative.

We are committed to enhancing national security by addressing the scourge of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and improvised explosive devices. We pursue actions that uphold the centrality of the victims of these weapons and the need for affected States to build independent national capacities. This year we have completed our ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty and of Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which makes us one of the very few countries to be party to all humanitarian disarmament conventions. We urge all States Members of the United Nations to likewise accede to all these conventions.



Our approach is consistent with our promotion of the humanitarian norms enshrined in these conventions. We condemn the use of all improvised explosive devices, landmines, cluster munitions and incendiary weapons by any actor under any circumstances. This includes the violations committed by the New People's Army in the Philippines.

We thank all Member States for the trust and confidence they placed in us during our chairmanship of the eighth 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. The adoption of a consensus outcome document is encouraging, especially in the current troubling international environment. This outcome provides impetus for the next review conference.

The collective effort of Member States to find consensus contributes to solutions to the problems and challenges posed by small arms and light weapons and is inspiring. One of the concrete outcomes of Biennial Meeting is the decision to establish the dedicated Fellowship Programme on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We support the efforts of Colombia, Japan and South Africa aimed at achieving a consolidated option for Member States in funding and administrative arrangements.

We also welcome and strongly support the inclusion of disposal in the outcome document. Preventing weapons diversion through comprehensive destruction of surplus small arms and ammunition in the Philippines has been one of our priorities. History has shown that in the absence of proper demilitarization or disposal of weapons, potentially harmful or harmful weapon parts find their way into the hands of unauthorized recipients, particularly criminal elements and terrorists. More should be done on this front so that more States can benefit from national programmes for disposal. These actions are also integral to post-conflict peacebuilding, transitional justice issues, and in promoting development and sustained and inclusive economic growth, thereby reinforcing the significant nexus between peace and development.

We welcome the commencement of the work of the Open-ended Working group on Conventional Ammunition and welcome the draft decision submitted by Germany to have a contingency fourth substantive session. We believe that comprehensive through-life ammunition management is the most logical and

practical step forward to address problems arising from the accumulation of conventional-ammunition stockpiles in surplus.

We remain committed to universalizing, operationalizing and strengthening the CCW, the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We also continue to call for collaborative action to counter the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, particularly by armed non-State actors. We support efforts to improve the implementation of international humanitarian law in the context of explosive weapons in populated areas. Guided by the principle of inclusivity and equity, we support the gendered perspective and analysis in all this work in order to identify relevant entry points for gender-mainstreaming, as well as the meaningful participation of youth, in all our disarmament efforts.

The development of advanced technologies is rapidly transforming human life and experience. Since we still barely understand how these transformations are unfolding and where they are leading, it behoves us to update our global governance structures, particularly in the context of artificial intelligence. This technology could solve many of our old problems, while also presenting us with new humanitarian, moral and ethical dilemmas. We therefore echo the urgent call by our president, President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr., for the international community to form legal rules that will prevent the weaponization of artificial intelligence. In this regard, the Philippines, along with a group of like-minded States, has submitted a draft Protocol VI to the CCW, which contains proposed prohibitions and regulations on autonomous weapons systems. We call on all High Contracting Parties to the CCW to support the commencement of negotiations on this draft protocol.

**Mr. Davis** (Jamaica): Jamaica aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

We welcome the progress made in the area of conventional weapons and ammunition. The pervasive presence of illicit small arms and ammunition is a daily threat to the health, safety, security and development of the Jamaican people. Preventing the diversion of conventional arms and ammunition to the illicit market or to unauthorized end use or users is a priority for my country. We therefore fully support all global, regional and national measures to address the illicit trade in conventional arms and ammunition.

At the domestic level, we are pursuing a multi-pronged approach that involves stronger stockpile management, infrastructure improvement in the security and justice sectors, violence-prevention and social-intervention programmes to address gang and gun crimes, and legislative reforms including a Firearms Amendment Act submitted to Parliament just this month to reform access and management of firearms and ammunition, and specifically outlaw such other weapons as cluster munitions. A very targeted effort is being made to disrupt gangs and other criminal enterprises that are heavily involved in the importation of illicit arms. This includes strengthening border management and expanding capacity to police our territorial waters, interdicting those involved in the guns-for-drugs trade and human trafficking. In this respect, we express gratitude to our partners that have supported these efforts through technical cooperation, exchange of information, funding and the provision of equipment and vessels.

Jamaica also welcomes the support of and cooperation with such regional and global partners as the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Development Programme and the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS). Through the Saving Lives Entity Fund, we are building capacity for interdiction, destruction, forensics and countering trafficking, and, at the same time, developing interventions among youth in schools and building capacity for fighting human trafficking. We are also working with UNLIREC and CARICOM IMPACS to develop Jamaica's national plan of action to implement the Caribbean firearms road map.

Our individual efforts must be bolstered by serious action by arms-producing countries to prevent the diversion of weapons into unauthorized use. We cannot keep mopping up the damage while the pipeline keeps leaking.

Global commitments and cooperation are essential to addressing the proliferation of conventional weapons and ammunition and the effects thereof. Jamaica welcomes the commitments reaffirmed and newly made at the eighth 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, and looks forward to the cooperation that will flow from this outcome, including for capacity-building, to address recent developments in the manufacturing technology for and design of small arms and light weapons. We also support the early finalization of arrangements for the establishment of the fellowship training programme agreed at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms.

Likewise, we welcome the progress being made by the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition. We emphasize that the Group should place a great emphasis on ensuring clear commitments to international cooperation and assistance. It is vital that developing countries, such as Jamaica, be able to increase capacity in forensic science, stockpile management and the regulatory framework. Jamaica therefore looks forward to the continuing work and engagements in that forum in the coming session.

We remain firmly guided by the imperative to stem the illicit flow of firearms and ammunition into our country, prevent their use and ensure our national and citizen security in furtherance of our sustainable development objectives.

**Ms. Angkerdchok** (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/77/PV.15).

Until we achieve world peace and comprehensive security for all and enjoy the full benefits of a secure global and regional environment that upholds human security, the legitimate right to self-defence, as enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, remains relevant and necessary for all States, large and small. The development, acquisition and maintenance of appropriate conventional weapons and arms is an extension of that right, so that States are able to exercise their inherent right to self-defence.

At the same time, it is equally important that States work together to create a peaceful and secure environment so that it will not be necessary for such weapons to be used. The building of trust and confidence, the promotion of transparency in areas related to conventional weapons and arms and other constructive measures mutually agreed upon by States

are therefore important developments, which need to be cultivated and supported.

However, the data indicates that the number of people affected by such weapons each year remains high, with civilians constituting a high proportion of that number, especially when such weapons fall into the wrong hands. The use of conventional weapons is also linked to common threats to the global community, including human trafficking, illicit trade, drugs and terrorism. Compounding that, the advancement of technology and connectivity makes the proliferation of such weapons easier and faster in our increasingly borderless world. We would like to share our perspectives on this matter.

First, we attach great importance to the international rules-based order and call for the strengthening of international efforts to ensure that all relevant issues related to conventional weapons and arms are in accordance with the relevant international legal instruments and obligations.

In that connection, Thailand welcomes the adoption of the outcome of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms. We support the establishment of a fellowship training programme to strengthen technical knowledge and build capacity in the related areas. It is encouraging that the Programme of Action on Small Arms also addresses issues such as emerging technology, gender perspectives and youth participation.

In addition, Thailand welcomes the development under the framework of the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition. We also wish to reiterate our support for the objectives and purposes of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Secondly, we believe that there is a strong linkage between preserving peace and promoting sustainable development. The illicit trade in conventional weapons and the existence of explosive remnants of war are not only associated with the loss of lives and human dignity, but also hinder our economic development and our efforts towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Thailand encourages Member States to work together for the effective implementation of their obligations under the relevant international legal instruments and frameworks.

For its part, Thailand has successfully returned more than 98 per cent of safe land back to our people and remains committed to strengthening regional and international cooperation, especially under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. In that regard,

we submitted a request for an extension of the article 5 deadline, in the determination to make Thailand mine-free.

Thirdly, although technologies have brought us challenges, there is no doubt that they can equip us with innovative and effective ways to control the illicit trade in, and diversion of, weapons. However, sizeable gaps exist among countries in utilizing technologies and implementing their obligations. We need to focus on capacity-building and technical cooperation. In that regard, we encourage Member States with the capacity to do so to provide further assistance to those in need.

In conclusion, Thailand will extend its cooperation in implementing the relevant international legal instruments and frameworks of cooperation related to conventional weapons and arms in order to help to contribute to peace and stability and enhance human security.

**Mr. Mabhongo** (South Africa): South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the African Group and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Today disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control have become increasingly challenging, especially as the flow of arms into armed conflicts serves only to exacerbate the challenges that we, as the international community, face. Despite that, we have made some progress at the international level through the outcomes of United Nations conferences and other events, during which we were able to take stock of and review developments. Conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, continue to be the weapons of choice for destabilizing communities by fuelling conflict and crime, often with catastrophic effects for civilian populations, particularly women and children.

The African Union (AU) continues to pursue the implementation of its Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020. In that regard, South Africa wishes to recall that the AU Master Roadmap was extended for a period of 10 years, from 2021 to 2030, with periodic reviews every two years. Together with the rest of the African continent, and with the support of the international community, South Africa remains steadfast in its resolve to make concrete progress in the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap within the context of the African Union Agenda 2063.

Our delegation has been actively involved in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group to elaborate a set of political commitments as a new global framework that will address existing gaps in through-life ammunition management. We believe that the two sessions held during 2022 provided many useful proposals on which to build in order to achieve a cooperative global framework on ammunition safety and security. In so doing, we will work constructively with other delegations to achieve such a framework, which should also address elements such as international cooperation and assistance and the necessary implementation mechanisms for follow-up.

South Africa participated in the eighth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). One of the stated purposes of the ATT is to contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability. We believe that it is only through our full, active and collective implementation of the Treaty and support to its subsidiary bodies that we can achieve the objectives of the ATT. Those include setting the highest possible common international standards for regulating, or improving the regulation of, the international trade in conventional arms, as well as preventing and eradicating the illicit trade in conventional arms and preventing their diversion.

South Africa remains fully committed to, and actively supports, the full implementation of the humanitarian disarmament conventions to which it is a State party, such as the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

The eighth 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 was successful in underscoring our collective determination in the implementation of our undertakings. South Africa is satisfied that the Biennial Meeting outcome document focuses on capacity-building.

We are pleased that the eighth Biennial Meeting of States was able to agree to the establishment of a standing dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons. The fellowship is expected to strengthen technical knowledge and expertise in areas related to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, particularly in developing countries.

Along with Colombia and Japan, South Africa is one of the co-authors of the annual draft resolution entitled “The Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects”. Among other things, the draft resolution will give effect to this decision by the eighth Biennial Meeting of States. As one of the co-authors, we regard this draft resolution as an implementation road map for future substantive work in furthering the aims of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

We should continue to promote the implementation and universalization goals of all the conventions and consensus political agreements on conventional weapons. All of those instruments and their related action plans contain commitments, some legally binding, relating to international cooperation and assistance. However, without converting those commitments made on paper into the provision of concrete and sustained assistance to States that face many implementation challenges, especially developing countries, the full universalization of such instruments will always remain elusive.

**Mr. Guerra** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina considers it a priority to prevent the trafficking and diversion of illicit arms, which foster political destabilization, violence, delinquency, organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking and have a particular impact on the most vulnerable sectors of society.

We must reiterate the importance of the international instruments and mechanisms on this issue — the Arms Trade Treaty, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the International Tracing Instrument and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — and the need to explore synergies between them.

As a co-author of the Arms Trade Treaty, Argentina has attached great importance to it, maintaining an active role and continuous commitment and working towards its universalization. In that regard, it chaired the sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in 2020 in Geneva, and was one of the driving forces behind the creation of the Diversion Information Exchange Forum. The Forum held its first meeting this year, providing a venue for



States to exchange information on specific cases of identified or suspected diversion and to share related operational information.

*Mrs. Balázs (Hungary), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

We highlight Argentina's long-standing support for the Programme of Action. The eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action was held between 27 June and 1 July, and it resulted in a consensus outcome document.

In the document, we commend the incorporation of a gender perspective and the adoption of an approach that takes into account the differing impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on women and children. In addition, we highlight the recognition of the problematic nature of recent developments in small arms and light weapons, in particular polymeric and modular weapons and firearms produced through three-dimensional printing. A technical group will need to be set up in order to address this issue.

In addition, we note the importance of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition and the need to adopt a holistic approach to the through-life management of conventional ammunition that considers the interlinkages between measures to prevent explosions and those to address the diversion of ammunition. In that regard, we consider it crucial that the needs and situation of each country and region be taken into account in the elaboration of the final document in order to develop a framework of political commitments that are efficient and effective.

Argentina remains committed to civilian disarmament, the destruction of materials, awareness-raising, the prevention of violence with the use of weapons and the promotion of research and development aimed at criminal policies related to the control and non-proliferation of conventional weapons. Since 2007, Argentina has been implementing its national programme for the voluntary surrender of firearms, and it is worth noting that our country has already surpassed target 16.4.2 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, having achieved the destruction of almost 60,000 firearms before 2023.

In addition, for the first time, under the coordination of our national authority for controlled materials, we are carrying out our strategic plan for the control policies for weapons and other materials and, for the second consecutive time, our action plan for the prevention of violence with the use of firearms for 2022–2023, which

seeks to prevent and reduce acts of violence, accidents and crimes committed with firearms.

Finally, I would like to stress that Argentina will continue to promote confidence-building measures in various fields and, every two years, present its draft resolution entitled "Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms" as an effort to maintain an open dialogue on that issue. We appreciate the support of delegations for that draft resolution and their special consideration of co-sponsorship.

**Mr. Kmentt (Austria):** Austria fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Conventional arms account for the vast majority of casualties caused by weapons around the globe and are a driver of armed conflict. Their destructive force is seen in its terrible diversity in the illegal war waged by Russia against Ukraine, with blatant violations of international humanitarian law. We condemn Russia's use of cluster munitions and its indiscriminate use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We are also concerned that anti-personnel mines have been deployed on the territory of a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, also known as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. We condemn any use of cluster munitions by any actor and call upon all parties, at all times, to adhere to international humanitarian law. Civilians must not bear the brunt of armed conflict.

These humanitarian concerns have long driven Austria's engagement in the field of conventional weapons. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, with their strong norms, are clear success stories of humanitarian disarmament. Much has been achieved already to reduce civilian casualties, clear land, destroy stockpiles and assist affected individuals and families, but we must not lose speed in fulfilling the obligations of those humanitarian disarmament treaties. Civilian casualties are still high, meeting obligations are partly behind schedule, and universalization efforts have to continue. The current challenges to international humanitarian law by some actors underscore the urgency in that regard.

We welcome the adoption of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of

Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. The Declaration offers a strong set of measures to strengthen adherence to international humanitarian law and to better protect civilians in armed conflict. The Declaration is the culmination of a process that Austria is proud to have initiated through an international conference in 2019 and was expertly led by Ireland over the past 3 years. We commend Ireland for its leadership in that regard. Austria has endorsed the Declaration and calls on all States to do likewise. We are strongly committed to the implementation of the Declaration, together with all relevant stakeholders, States, United Nations entities, the International Committee of the Red Cross, international and regional organizations, humanitarian actors, survivors and civil society. We must work together to ensure that the measures foreseen will be implemented effectively and reduce civilian harm.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition management remain important challenges owing to their profound impact on international peace and security. We therefore welcome recent developments in those fields. Austria participated actively in the Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus, and we welcome its final report. We also welcome the work undertaken by the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition, under German leadership.

We also welcome the outcome of the eighth 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. Nevertheless, we remain concerned about the lack of progress regarding recent technological developments, such as three-dimensional printing or modular weapons. The International Tracing Instrument needs to remain fit for purpose to be able to fulfil its important role.

In December 2021, the States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons had the opportunity to review and strengthen that important disarmament instrument and its protocols. To our disappointment, that chance was missed. We still see a clear need for a review of Protocol III, on incendiary weapons, in order to strengthen its implementation and operationalization. The humanitarian harm caused by mines other than anti-personnel mines deserves discussion in the framework of Amended Protocol II of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Efforts in that

direction were blocked by a few States, and one of them proceeded to use those weapons in an illegal war of aggression.

Austria is and will continue to be strongly engaged in the discussions related to autonomous weapons systems in the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. Those types of weapons systems raise serious concerns from the humanitarian, legal, security and ethical perspectives. We need to treat them with urgency in order to prevent a crossing of the line and a loss of human control over the use of force. In that context, we also want to highlight Human Rights Council resolution 51/22, on the human rights implications of new and emerging technologies in the military domain, which was jointly initiated by Panama and Austria, and we are pleased that it was adopted unanimously.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has consistently called for further enforcement of the regime of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) by ensuring universal adherence to it and its protocols, as well as implementing its provisions in good faith. We commend the Group of Governmental Experts of the States parties to the CCW on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems for its efforts in 2022. The Group was able to adopt a report with meaningful conclusions and recommendations, thereby laying a foundation for future discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems under the Convention, which is considered to be the best venue for those purposes. In general, we attach great importance to that issue, which was made especially clear in our adoption on 26 July of a concept paper on the elaboration and application of weapons systems with the use of artificial intelligence-based technologies in the armed forces of the Russian Federation. At the same time, we believe that the norms of international law, including international humanitarian law, are sufficient and fully applicable to those weapons systems.

We remain focused on the course of discussions on the use of explosive ordnance in densely populated areas. We believe that the explosive ordnance-related problems can be resolved only through implementation in good faith of the existing norms of international humanitarian law. In recent years, the cross-cutting and multifaceted issue of improvised explosive devices has become more acute. We believe it is necessary to

discuss that issue at the expert level in the framework of the Amended Protocol II to the CCW.

In the context of the CCW, the international community should condemn and respond to the criminal actions taken by the Kyiv regime against the people of Donbas. The number of daily violations of the norms and principles of international humanitarian law by the Ukrainian armed forces, such as the placement of heavy munitions in residential areas and the use of human shields and civilian infrastructure for military purposes, prove that Ukraine has deliberately engaged in inhumane warfare, in violation of international humanitarian law.

We attach significant importance to the issue of illicit trafficking in conventional arms, and we advocate for a more effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is aimed at blocking the diversion of arms to illicit markets. Of course, in order to realize that task, the entire international community should coordinate its efforts while preserving the central role of the United Nations. At the same time, we highlight the importance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as one of the main tools for ensuring transparency and international security by tracing and identifying destabilizing accumulations of the arms in various parts of the world. However, we are wary about the attempts by some States to extend the scope of the Register, especially in view of previous cases in which that mechanism was used for purposes other than those it was designed for, including for defining the arms embargo criteria introduced by the Security Council.

The Russian Federation still considers it inappropriate to adhere to the Arms Trade Treaty in its current form and to participate in its official events, even in the capacity of observer. At the same time, we consider the Treaty's standards to be much lower than Russia's. Moreover, the practical implementation of the Treaty raises serious concerns. It is unacceptable that some parties continue to directly or indirectly supply military equipment to areas of armed conflict.

**Mr. Göbel (Germany):** Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

We remain gravely concerned about the serious threats to international peace and security through the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in many regions of

the world. In 2021, Germany funded support for small arms and light weapons-related projects amounting to €24 million, and we will continue funding of the same order of magnitude this year. We see regional road maps as effective tools. Comprehensive and well-coordinated regional processes, such as the Western Balkans Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Roadmap, the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap and the Economic Community of West African States regional plan of action can contribute to limiting the uncontrolled flow of small arms and light weapons. That is why we wholeheartedly supported their establishment and continue to support their comprehensive implementation. Germany also considers it essential that civil society, women and young people be included in those efforts.

Germany is honoured to have been elected as Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Conventional Ammunition. Our goal for the work of the OEWG remains the elaboration of a new global framework to address gaps in through-life ammunition management, including international cooperation and assistance. Together with actions at the national level and voluntary arrangements at the subregional and regional levels, that framework will become part of a comprehensive framework to support safe, secure and sustainable through-life ammunition management. We would like to take this opportunity to thank delegations for the very constructive work undertaken by the OEWG to date and would be grateful for continued support, also with regard to the possibility of holding a fourth session of the OEWG and the corresponding draft decision submitted by France and Germany.

Furthermore, Germany welcomes the fact that the eighth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was successfully held in person, in Geneva, from 22 to 26 August, under Germany's presidency. We are grateful for the interest shown in our core topics, namely, post-shipment cooperation, universalization and stock-taking. Germany welcomes the focus set by the Republic of Korea's presidency of the ninth Conference of States Parties cycle, particularly on the continuation of discussions on post-shipment cooperation. We believe that is an effective measure to build confidence between exporting and importing States.

In our view, it is indispensable to intensify international efforts on questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous

weapons. We commend the substantial discussions held by the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), as well as the intense work of the Chair from Brazil and his team, who have made tremendous efforts towards finding common ground. In our view, the two-tier approach — outlawing lethal autonomous weapon systems that operate completely outside human control on the one hand and positive regulations for weapon systems with autonomous functions on the other — has continued to gain traction. We appreciate the Group of Governmental Experts' inclusivity, and we very much hope it will be able to build on that momentum in order to achieve tangible results. To that end, it will be crucial for all the CCW High Contracting Parties to show the flexibility necessary to achieve consensus and grant the Group sufficient meeting time in 2023 at their meeting in November.

We continue to be staunch supporters of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Where their full and universal implementation is concerned, Germany takes its responsibility for assisting States parties affected in fulfilling their obligations under those Conventions very seriously. In 2021 Germany provided almost €55 million for clearing cluster munitions, mines and other explosive remnants of war, as well as for victim assistance and risk awareness activities, advocacy and stockpile destruction. Germany remains one of the largest donors in that area. To build on that engagement and to support the further implementation of the Ottawa Convention, Germany has decided to seek the presidency of the twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 2023, and we would be grateful for members' support.

The protection of civilians in armed conflict continues to be of key importance for Germany. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions in its war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as its indiscriminate use of other types of explosive weapons. We ask that Russia immediately cease its aggression and its use of such weapons. We are dismayed by the devastating humanitarian impact on civilians that the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects has had on populated areas in Syria, Libya and Yemen. The provisions of international humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians must be fully respected by all the parties to armed conflicts.

Germany therefore welcomes the finalization of the text of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas as a product of the Irish-led process for a meaningful and inclusive declaration. Germany is committed to actively engaging in the follow-up process, which can contribute decisively to the better protection of civilians, among other things by identifying and exchanging military good practices in the use of explosive weapons in compliance with international humanitarian law.

**Ms. Chan Valverde** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): While the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects makes a minor reference to considering the negative impact of the trade on women and elderly people, it was not until the third Biennial Meeting of States in 2008 that the term "gender perspective" began to be used. References to gender in First Committee resolutions followed in 2010, with a focus on women's participation. At the seventh and eighth Biennial Meetings of States, Costa Rica was at the helm of efforts to ensure that the Programme of Action took account of the different ways in which women, men, children and gender minorities are affected by small arms and light weapons.

Similarly, in the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition, we are seeking to mainstream a gender perspective from the outset by including women's meaningful participation in the management of ammunition throughout its life cycle and in safe and secure conventional ammunition management practices in order to prevent their negative effects on women, men and children, such as gender-based violence in the public and private arenas. In that regard I commend Panama and the 27 Member States that endorsed its joint declaration for highlighting the importance of those issues at the most recent meeting in Geneva. As regards cluster munitions, Costa Rica endorses the Lausanne Action Plan for the period from 2022 to 2026 and calls on States parties to promote gender and diversity mainstreaming by reporting on their progress in that area and by supporting other States parties and stakeholders in those efforts.

Costa Rica calls for the effective implementation of the Gender-based Violence Risk Assessment of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), as the first Treaty that links gender-based violence to the international arms



trade. We also support the work of Control Arms in developing a gender action plan to monitor progress on the recommendations related to the issue agreed at the fifth Conference of States Parties. We welcomed the finalization in June of the text of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. That new agreement recognizes the harm caused by the use of explosive weapons from a gender perspective and calls for further research in the area. Costa Rica hopes to endorse the Political Declaration in Dublin in November and calls on all States to do the same so as to demonstrate their commitment to strengthening the protection of civilians.

Gender considerations should also be extended to the use of new technologies in weapon systems, including lethal autonomous weapon systems. One of the problems that we have to confront with regard to those weapons, and any other intelligent system we deploy that minimizes human decision-making, is that we have no guarantee that their deployment will lead to less biased outcomes. Our own assumptions, limitations and biases are codified in the technology we deploy, and programming machines to target victims means arming and automating our own biases rather than eliminating them. Costa Rica will host a regional conference on lethal autonomous weapon systems on 23 and 24 February 2023.

Costa Rica strongly supports initiatives led by civil society and research organizations on gender and arms, from the groundbreaking publication by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research entitled *Still behind the curve: Gender balance in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament diplomacy* to Control Arms' ATT Gender Action Plan and the trailblazing work of the Small Arms Survey on gender-sensitive arms control. Those initiatives are bringing about change to ensure that our work is more inclusive.

**Mr. Noordin** (Malaysia): Malaysia associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Cambodia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/77/PV.15), and this morning by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

In an increasingly polarized world, amid ongoing conflicts, the risk of the proliferation of and illicit trade in conventional weapons remains of particular concern. While we must work relentlessly to eradicate all weapons

of mass destruction, we should not lose sight of the devastating consequences that result from conventional weapons. The use of such weapons has led to an estimated 200,000 deaths every year around the globe. Malaysia commends the Secretary-General for placing emphasis on the need for action in this area, including through his Agenda for Disarmament. Malaysia remains concerned about the illicit transfer, manufacturing and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many parts of the world. Malaysia strongly calls for the full, balance and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to prevent the illicit spread of such weapons. We welcomed the adoption by consensus of the final report of the eighth 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 and its International Tracing Instrument.

As a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to the Treaty and its goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in conventional arms. Malaysia believes that the ATT will further solidify existing national policies on conventional weapons, while at the same time recognizing the legal rights of States to use arms sparingly for security, self-defence, research or trade. At the national level, Malaysia has put in place laws to effectively manage the circulation of conventional weapons and prevent the diversion of arms to the illicit market. They include the Strategic Trade Act in 2010 and our 1967 Customs Act and 1960 Arms Act.

The development and use of improvised explosive devices, particularly by non-State actors, present particular challenges. We must do more to combat their threat. Malaysia also believes that we need to make greater and more concerted efforts to address the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas. We commend Ireland for leading the consultative process towards the conclusion in June of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, in line with the call of the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to controlling and reducing conventional weapons,

which is crucial in mitigating the humanitarian consequences of their use.

**Mr. Lai Haiyang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese Government has always actively supported the international conventional arms-control process and has advocated for it with a view to balancing our countries' legitimate security needs and humanitarian concerns. The international legal mechanisms for conventional arms control should be strengthened and improved on an ongoing basis so as to safeguard international peace and security.

China has engaged actively in various United Nations processes in the area of conventional weapons, including in relation to small arms and light weapons, conventional ammunition and transparency in armaments, and has continued to contribute positively to advancing the relevant arms-control processes. As an additional major step, China has commenced its domestic legal procedures for ratifying the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, which fully demonstrates China's resolve and sincerity in steadfastly supporting multilateralism and building a community with a shared future for mankind.

Since its accession to the Arms Trade Treaty two years ago, China has steadily advanced its implementation and advocated actively for a responsible arms trade, while calling on all countries to refrain from selling arms to non-State actors and to contribute positively to enhancing the Treaty's effectiveness and universality. China is an active supporter of the work of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, faithfully fulfilling its obligations under the Convention and its Protocols and participating constructively in discussions on improvised explosive devices and lethal autonomous weapon systems.

As of the end of 2021, through various means, the Chinese Government had provided humanitarian demining assistance amounting to more than ¥100 million to more than 40 countries and had trained more than 1,000 professional demining personnel. This year China will continue to provide Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic with mine detection equipment and humanitarian supplies to help the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations build up their demining capacity.

The international regional security landscape is currently undergoing profound and complex changes.

Geopolitical rivalries are intensifying and conflicts and turmoil among regional armed groups are on the rise. Terrorism, extremism and transnational organized crime are far from being eliminated. The global arms trade is growing in scale. The risk of the illegal transfer and diversion of conventional weapons continues to increase. Global security governance is under threat. In particular, a certain major country and military bloc, clinging to a Cold War mentality, are continuing to expand militarily and use arms transfers to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries to advance their own geopolitical strategies, while exacerbating conflict and antagonism between the countries and regions concerned and heightening the risk of the proliferation of conventional arms.

The Global Security Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping of China in April provides a Chinese perspective on global security challenges and Chinese solutions to them, including the issue of conventional arms control. We need to uphold a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, make further joint efforts to strengthen coordination and cooperation in the area of conventional arms control and contribute to international arms-control processes. China would like to propose the following points.

First, we must address both the symptoms and the root causes. It is incumbent on every country to resolve disputes through political and diplomatic means, eliminate the underlying causes of war, conflict, terrorism and organized crime and work to effectively help the countries concerned achieve economic development and social stability so as to create the conditions for addressing the issue of conventional weapons.

Secondly, we must strengthen State responsibility. Countries should assume the primary responsibility for combating the illegal transfer of conventional arms, establish and improve relevant laws and regulations according to their own national conditions and improve law enforcement. Major arms-exporting countries should lead by example, adopt responsible arms-control and export policies, refrain from transferring arms to non-State entities and from interfering in other countries' internal affairs, exercise prudence with regard to arms exports to conflict areas and prevent legal arms from flowing through illegal channels.

Thirdly, we must uphold multilateralism. Countries should actively support the role of the United Nations as the main channel in the area of conventional arms

control and encourage and facilitate more countries' participation in the conventional arms-control process.

Fourthly, we must strengthen resource integration and enhance the interaction and coordination among the various conventional arms-control mechanisms of the United Nations and improve exchanges among the Arms Trade Treaty, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and other mechanisms to achieve complementarity and synergy.

**Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire)** (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes today's debate, which focuses on an issue that poses a major challenge to security, political stability and economic development in the West African subregion. Illicit flows of conventional weapons and their excessive stockpiling and uncontrolled proliferation, made more damaging by their use for terrorist activities and transnational organized crime, continue to have serious consequences for the States and populations of West Africa and the Sahel. Regrettably, that problem is not limited to this region but can be seen in many other parts of the world. That is why we need to renew our collective political will to effectively reduce and control the illicit flows of those weapons. In that regard, my country believes that we should focus on a few priorities.

First, we should strengthen the regulation and control of the transfer of conventional weapons by promoting and implementing the transparency requirements for the international trade in weapons, in accordance with the Register of Conventional Arms and the Arms Trade Treaty. My delegation welcomes the measures taken to improve the implementation of the Treaty at the recent session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Secondly, it is fundamental to continue to consolidate the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Côte d'Ivoire has been a sponsor of the annual resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons for the past two years. We welcomed the adoption of the final outcome document at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and call for the implementation of its decisions. In that regard, it is essential to strengthen international cooperation and assistance, especially in building the capacities of States that have demonstrated

a need for it. Draft resolution A/C.1/77/L.76, on assistance to States in curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, represents an unequivocal appeal from the members of the Economic Community of West African States on the issue. This year we once again call for a traditional consensus on the draft text. Furthermore, we should encourage and replicate the international assistance models along the lines of the support provided by the United Nations, and by partners such as Germany and Japan, in the framework of the implementation of the African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa.

Another priority that we must set for ourselves should be to increase our commitment to combating the problem of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which are used as a weapon of choice by terrorist groups and are a genuine threat to the stability and development of our societies. We must strengthen customs cooperation in terms of border security and work to prevent terrorists from acquiring such devices. Action 18 of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, aimed at strengthening the coordination and coherence of measures concerning IEDs, must be better supported and pursued.

The elimination of anti-personnel landmines is also an urgent priority. In that connection, we need universal and more efficient implementation of the various international instruments aimed at combating them, such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols II and V, and the Ottawa Convention, whose objective is to achieve a mine-free world by 2025. To that end, we urge those weapons' main producer and possessor countries to accede to those instruments in order to strengthen their implementation.

Finally, my delegation considers that strengthening actions for the safety and security of conventional munitions is urgent and essential. We must work to ensure complete success for the Open-ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition in defining a set of political commitments to promote better management of such munitions.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its full commitment to the work of countering the continuing threats posed by conventional weapons and calls for mobilizing additional efforts in this security, humanitarian and development cause.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf

of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States.

**Mr. Hossain** (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We share concerns with other delegations about the growing losses of innocent lives through the unauthorized use of a variety of conventional weapons across the globe. It is critical that we universalize and implement the international laws and norms that we have agreed on and that are relevant to conventional weapons. Bangladesh remains committed to fulfilling its obligations under various international instruments, including the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and those of its Protocols that we are party to. We call on States to fulfil their international legal obligations to curb the illicit trade in and indiscriminate use of conventional weapons.

Illicit flows of small arms and light weapons constitute a key challenge to international peace, security and development. Bangladesh remains deeply concerned about the wide range of security, humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences arising from the illicit trade in such weapons. We call on all States to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited to Governments or to entities duly authorized by them. Bangladesh welcomes and supports the consensus outcomes achieved at the eighth 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. We also welcome its decision to establish a standing, dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons to strengthen technical knowledge and expertise in areas related to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, particularly in developing countries.

Bangladesh continues to be concerned about casualties among our peacekeepers that have resulted from the indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by non-State actors in certain United Nations peacekeeping missions. On 3 October, three Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed and four critically injured by an IED explosion in the Central African Republic. We deeply condemn such cowardly attacks, which are equivalent to the gravest crimes under international law. We call on the international

community to spare no effort in identifying the perpetrators of that attack so that they can be brought to justice without delay. We call for greater attention to be given to United Nations peacekeeping intelligence and to providing adequate resources and equipment to address the challenges posed by IEDs.

As a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty, we take the position that States have a sovereign right to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their components for security requirements and self-defence. We emphasize that unilateral coercive measures should not be imposed on the transfer of such arms. We are committed to the Treaty's objective of preventing the illicit trade in conventional arms.

Bangladesh supports international initiatives against the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions and conventional weapons. We are deeply concerned about the humanitarian consequences of the continued use of anti-personnel mines, including by our neighbour Myanmar, and which is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. We urge Myanmar to immediately cease its use of landmines and join the Treaty. As a State party to the Ottawa Convention, Bangladesh calls for full and determined implementation of the Oslo Action Plan with a view to achieving a mine-free world by 2025. We appreciate the substantive work done over the past years by the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems and stress the need for new, legally binding provisions for addressing the humanitarian and international security challenges posed by emerging technologies in the area of such weapon systems.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Bangladesh's commitment to working constructively with the international community in order to foster greater collaboration and open dialogue towards a safer and better future for all.

**The Acting Chair:** I shall now call on those representatives who have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind all delegations that statements in right of reply are limited to five minutes for the first intervention and three minutes for the second.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We reject the accusations voiced by Western countries regarding the use of conventional weapons during the special military operation in Ukraine. Such insinuations are aimed at only one thing: to draw



attention away from the criminal acts of the Ukrainian armed forces. The Kyiv regime commits numerous daily violations of the norms and principles of international humanitarian law.

The Ukrainian armed forces deliberately use inhuman military tactics, deploying heavy artillery and setting up firing positions and munitions stockpiles in schools, hospitals, residential homes and dangerous chemical factories. They shell nuclear power plants and places where prisoners of war are held. They also use civilians as human shields and civilian infrastructure exclusively for military purposes.

At the same time, Western States are supporting these terrorist methods, as we have heard today. All of them spoke about the Russian Federation, but for some reason not a single speaker mentioned the Ukrainian armed forces. We will therefore now do so. The Ukrainian armed forces deliberately mine the sides of roads between settlements, village paths, bridges, dams, the land surrounding residential buildings where children are living, as well as educational and medical institutions. As a result, peaceful citizens suffer, and the Kyiv regime, following its well-developed scenarios, accuse Russian units of indiscriminate attacks leading to the death of civilians. None of this was mentioned in today's meeting.

Since the end of July, the centre of Donetsk and its suburbs have been constantly and remotely mined with prohibited "*lepestok*" anti-personnel landmines, which are prohibited under the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention, to which Ukraine is a signatory, but no one has mentioned this either. Local hospitals regularly see civilians with mine injuries to their lower limbs, and the great majority of them have to have their legs amputated. These actions by Kyiv are a direct violation of international humanitarian law, in particular the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention. In August, it became known that the Ukrainian forces had used poisonous chemical substances against the Russian forces close to Zaporizhzhya. Kyiv was not at all concerned about its own Azov fighters when it bombed the prison in Olenivka where these fighters were being held because it did not want them to give evidence against the leaders in Kyiv and the West.

Violations of international humanitarian law have been reported by dozens of witnesses who, unlike

those so-called witnesses from the Ukrainian and Western investigations, do not hide their names or their addresses. They have already described the deliberate attacks by the Ukrainian armed forces on civilian objects and their firing on peaceful citizens —attacks that were then attributed to Russian forces. There is growing evidence proving that attacks, such as the Bucha massacre, were staged by Kyiv, which can no longer be ignored.

The most irresponsible and arguably insane acts are those of nuclear terrorism against the Zaporizhzhya and Kursk nuclear power plants. In addition, the Ukrainian military and political leadership's reaction to the terrorist attacks against the Crimean Bridge was tellingly cynical. At first, Kyiv gloated, openly praising "the exemplary work" of the Security Service of Ukraine. But when morning came in Washington and those who manage and sponsor the Kyiv authorities woke up, Ukraine's tactics changed dramatically, with Kyiv claiming that it had not committed these acts. The same agencies within one day said the exact opposite. It is hard to believe, but enthusiastic, joyous and sincere greetings in relation to the terrorist act against the Crimean Bridge were heard from NATO officials.

Another shocking example of crimes by the Kyiv regime includes the cruel attacks on the peaceful pro-Russian citizens near Kupiansk in the Kharkiv region after the withdrawal of Russian forces. These facts were captured on video, and they will not go unpunished.

We call on States Members of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other relevant international organizations to pressure Kyiv and take effective actions to prevent the heavy humanitarian consequences of the criminal acts committed by the Ukrainian armed forces against civilians. The Kyiv regime's violations of the principles and norms of international humanitarian law, including the provisions of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention, require an immediate reaction by the international community, and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

**The Acting Chair:** We have heard the last speaker for today's meeting. The Committee will convene tomorrow morning in Conference Room 4 at 10 a.m. to continue the thematic discussion under the cluster "Conventional weapons".

*The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.*