



# General Assembly

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First Committee

**14**<sup>th</sup> meeting

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Official Records

*Chairperson:* Mr. José Luis Cancela . . . . . (Uruguay)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

## Agenda items 86 to 103 (*continued*)

### **Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items**

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to inform delegations that the list of co-sponsorships of draft resolutions and decisions is available at the Secretariat table to the left of the podium.

I shall now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements or introduce draft resolutions on conventional weapons. We have a very long list of speakers on this cluster, so I would ask delegations to respect the time limit and, if necessary, circulate longer statements in written form.

**Mr. Macedo** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico welcomes the propitious climate and the signals that many States have sent on their political will to make concrete progress on disarmament matters. We hope that this atmosphere will prevail also in the area of conventional arms control. We must recognize that the irresponsible or illicit use of conventional weapons is a cause of many of the conflicts that today jeopardize international peace and security and have a devastating effect on the civilian population.

Some of the greatest concerns are illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons,

irresponsible transfers of conventional weapons, the use of cluster munitions and the existence of large mined areas. It is important that in the course of our work concrete measures be adopted that will help us make serious progress in establishing more effective control of conventional weapons.

A major axis of Mexico's domestic and foreign policy to which we have attached the greatest importance is combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Mexico is a State which has direct experience of the ill effects of the illegal use of these weapons. My country has made major efforts to combat this scourge, and we have obtained significant results. For example, over the past three years, we have seized more than 64,000 weapons and about 5 million units of ammunition. Nevertheless, we know that the illicit trade in weapons cannot be resolved through isolated actions by States. A universal problem requires a universal response. We must work together with shared responsibility.

In the light of these considerations and recognizing that illicit arms trafficking statistics are becoming increasingly alarming and that the loss of human life is an extremely high cost that we are having to pay for the inability to eradicate this traffic, Mexico determined to renew the commitment that we have always held in this field and became a candidate for the chairmanship of the fourth 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. I have had the privilege of being named to

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guide this process. This distinction is a responsibility, as well as an opportunity to contribute to the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and to take concrete steps towards the prevention and combating of illicit arms trafficking.

My delegation believes that the best way to achieve a successful Biennial Meeting is through a process of inclusive and transparent consultations in which the concerns of all relevant actors would be reflected, and at the same time promoting broad dialogue on all aspects of the Programme of Action. I am doing that by attending regional meetings in Sydney, Kigali and Vienna and by holding consultations in Geneva and this week here in New York.

The goal of the Biennial Meeting should be the adoption of concrete measures on relevant topics in order to prevent and combat the illicit arms trade. That will make it possible to follow up the good results achieved in 2008 and to strengthen the efforts that States, bodies, organizations and civil society are increasingly making to bring about a safer world, free of illegal weapons.

I wish to underscore that the efforts of civil society in that field are important and essential. My intention is to include all relevant actors in that process. We cannot imagine multilateral diplomacy without the active participation of organized civil society.

Another fundamental way to help significantly reduce illicit arms transfers to organized crime is to regulate transfers. For that reason, Mexico attaches particular importance to elaborating an arms trade treaty that, in addition to ensuring the creation of international norms, would establish limits on the market based on respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. We call for the adoption, in a spirit of flexibility, of a resolution that achieves this objective without preconditions and with the firm resolve to eradicate irresponsible transfers of conventional weapons.

We recognize that achieving consensus is part of multilateralism, but we must be very careful not to make the mistake of agreeing only minimal measures for the sake of consensus, thus jeopardizing the greater good, which is international peace and security. We have no doubt that irresponsible transfers of weapons and ammunition pose a serious threat to that good, and

therefore we must eliminate them. We therefore reiterate the call not to establish preconditions and that we seek to adopt a resolution on a future arms trade treaty that will provide the necessary flexibility for the adoption of the strictest norms possible on the matter.

Regarding the prohibition of excessively injurious weapons and their indiscriminate effects, my country attaches particular value to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, not only because it is a landmark in the development and codification of international humanitarian law and in the area of disarmament, but also on account of the important lesson that the Oslo process provided to the international community in demonstrating that, with political will, it is possible to overcome differences and to harmonize the interests of the majority, even in a climate of paralysis and lack of agreement, such as that which had prevailed on the issue.

That important instrument, which will help to alleviate and prevent the suffering of people affected by the use of such weapons, currently has 100 signatures and 23 ratifications, including that of my country. My delegation cordially invites States to deposit their instruments as soon as possible, because seven further ratifications will enable the Convention to enter into force this year.

My Government wishes to thank Laos for its offer to host the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention. We will offer our full support by actively participating in promoting the Convention and in the work of the Meeting. In that regard, Mexico fully supports the draft resolution (A/C.1/64/L.16) submitted by Laos and Ireland, which requests the Secretary-General, in his capacity as depositary of that instrument, in accordance with article 11, paragraph 2, of the Convention — that is, within a year — to undertake the preparations necessary to convene the First Meeting following its entry into force.

Mexico will remain active in promoting the early entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and will continue to make efforts so that, with the help of all, we achieve success at the next Biennial Meeting on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

**Mr. Villambrosa** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me in my first statement to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairperson of this Committee. We are pleased to know that we can rely on your

invaluable experience and we are sure that, with your personal qualities and your representation of a sister country and a region committed to disarmament, you will guide our work in an exemplary way.

The events of the past century bore witness to the gravest armed conflicts in the history of humankind and to a great number of regional or local armed conflicts that claimed a considerable and unfortunate number of human victims. On the other hand, the twentieth century also witnessed the emergence of the institutional and legal architecture that has made it possible or, at least, has sought to limit such conflicts and their consequences.

Despite all those efforts, the arms issue continues to be cause for concern with respect to least two of its aspects: their stockpiling and their illicit trade. The excessive stockpiling and the illicit trade in conventional weapons, in particular small arms, are both a consequence of tensions or conflicts and a reason for their exacerbation or perpetuation, as well as for the steep increase in crime and in flagrant violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law.

For all these reasons, international reality calls for increasingly effective multilateralism in order to focus on resolving specific problems that affect us all. To that end, it is essential, on the one hand, to comply strictly with international legal instruments and, on the other, to establish new mechanisms that will make it possible to address new challenges and to prevent the humanitarian consequences to which such challenges give rise.

On a number of occasions, Argentina has stated and reiterated its conviction that multilateralism is the only way to maintain international peace and security. In view of all that, all States must strive to collectively agree instruments and mechanisms that will ensure our achievement of those goals. Fully aware of that, my country has adopted a policy based on strengthening constructive dialogue among countries, commitment to the principles of disarmament and non-proliferation, the limitation of certain types of conventional weapons, and active and responsible participation in the international arena, seeking to build a stable, peaceful, safe and predictable world. The transparency and mutual confidence developed among the countries of our region can be highlighted among our contributions in that regard.

The arms trade is spiralling dangerously out of control, and that lack of control is the result of various factors. Among those is the lack or inadequacy of control systems or of effective regulation. The result of this lack of controls is measurable in terms of loss of human lives. Irresponsible, underregulated arms trade fuels conflicts, human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, perpetrating cycles of violence in such situations.

The proliferation and abuse of such weapons weakens countries and regions. The threat of armed violence also undermines the sustainable development of peoples and has a negative impact on the productivity of their economies and the quality of life of the general population.

For over a decade now, the need for multilaterally negotiated standards that introduce legality and predictability into the transfer of conventional weapons has been recognized the world over. My country is committed to the process of identifying shared parameters at the global level to facilitate greater understanding of the factors and circumstances that States must take into account in assessing authorizations for the transfer of conventional weapons in order to prevent them from being diverted to actors or uses prohibited under current international law.

The United Nations has the capacity and the appropriate framework in which to achieve these objectives in a universal, transparent and inclusive fashion, facilitating the consolidation of multilateralism as the most effective way of reaching a global agreement.

Resolution 61/89 — entitled “Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms”; sponsored by my country together with Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom, Costa Rica, Finland and Kenya; and adopted by an overwhelming majority — and the remarkable response of States to the Secretary-General’s consultations on this topic demonstrated the willingness of the broad majority of the international community to continue to strengthen existing instruments in this field.

Through resolution 63/240, the General Assembly set up the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty to continue the work of the Group of Governmental Experts. The Working Group held meetings throughout 2009 and facilitated the ongoing

analysis of measures taken with respect to the international trade in conventional weapons. This was achieved over the course of two meetings, held in March and July 2009, in which considerable work was carried out. The Open-ended Working Group produced a consensus report (A/AC.277/2009/1) that reflected the constructive dialogue that had taken place among countries. The report identifies common elements and positions aimed at establishing global principles applicable to the transfer of conventional weapons, which will make it possible for more responsible policies to be adopted on armaments.

The Argentine Republic is committed to the process leading towards an arms trade treaty, in the understanding that the treaty will serve to promote and strengthen the arms trade while avoiding destabilizing effects for international peace and security.

Although a considerable number of States, including my country, already have national mechanisms to control such transfers, it has been recognized that these controls can be implemented only through international cooperation. In order to be effective, such cooperation requires a shared language, which could be provided in a single international instrument, universal in scope, that would synthesize and translate into common criteria the obligations and rights of States under current international law.

Our aspiration is thus to achieve a legally binding instrument that includes stringent control standards with which to assess transfers of conventional weapons. Such an instrument would be negotiated within the framework of the United Nations and be open, transparent, inclusive and universal in order to guarantee its effectiveness. We are convinced that the conclusion of an arms trade treaty is the best way to put an end to the irresponsible trade and transfer in such weapons and to the humanitarian disasters that they lead to.

We will continue to work for an arms trade treaty, and we call on all States to continue to contribute constructively to this process. We call on all delegations to join forces and rise to the challenge we face, while concentrating on the substance of such a treaty and on the elements needed to hold a United Nations conference on this issue in 2012.

Without prejudice to other important issues, we have enumerated just some of the topics that would fall under our consideration with respect to this subject. We

do so because we believe that this is the appropriate forum for an open dialogue that will strengthen the common understanding we must come to. With this mandate, we come here today resolved to spare no effort to achieve global commitments that will continue to guarantee effective measures for the well-being and development of our societies. Sir, you may be assured of the full cooperation of my delegation in ensuring that this session of the First Committee is as fruitful as we expect it to be.

**Mr. Duncan** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom fully subscribes to the statement made today on behalf of the European Union by my Swedish colleague.

The need to make progress along the road towards a world free of nuclear weapons has quite rightly dominated much of our discussion in recent weeks. The thematic debate on conventional weapons is a time to focus on the issue of conventional weapons, their proliferation and misuse — what a previous Secretary-General termed “the real-world weapons of mass destruction”. This challenge affects thousands of people across the world every day.

Over the past year, the United Kingdom has been working hard in the field of conventional weapons, both within and outside the United Nations. In November 2008, the United Kingdom was granted a 10-year extension to clear mined territory under its control in order to fulfil our obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We are thankful to States parties to that treaty and wish to reiterate our full support and commitment to it. I am pleased to announce that we have signed a contract with a demining company and expect the four-site clearance project on the Falkland Islands to begin next month, in November 2009.

On cluster munitions, we have signed and are now in the process of drawing up the necessary legislation to incorporate the prohibitions of the Convention on Cluster Munitions into United Kingdom law. Once this legislation is enacted, we will be able to ratify the Convention. Together with others, we are looking to ensure the broadest possible participation in this treaty which makes a real contribution to addressing the humanitarian threat posed by cluster munitions. We are hopeful that the Convention will soon enter into force and look forward to working with

the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in assisting with preparations to hold the first Meeting of States Parties in 2010.

We have also remained supportive of the parallel-track negotiation taking place in 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). Unfortunately, these negotiations seem to have made little substantive progress. That is regrettable. The United Kingdom believes that a new protocol under the CCW could have supplemented the cluster munitions Convention and made some prohibition and restrictions on the use of clusters more universal. We hope that the Meeting of States Parties in November will do all it can to address this issue and find a way through.

This year, the United Kingdom was at the forefront of those trying to update and broaden the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, in particular to address the legitimate concerns of many nations that the Register did not contain a category on small arms and light weapons. Despite the efforts of many in the Group of Governmental Experts that met this year and a last minute proposal that appeared to gain broad support, one national expert felt unable to agree to the creation of a new category. In our view, that was a missed opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations Register. We hope that in the coming years more States will use the Register and that they will also press others to agree on the need to expand the current categories and raise the issue with the Secretary-General in accordance with the draft resolution we have before us at the First Committee this year (A/C.1/64/L.50).

Also on the subject of small arms and light weapons, we look forward to working with colleagues and the Mexican Chair in the run up to the Biennial Meeting of States Parties in 2010. There is still much work to do to ensure that the United Nations Programme of Action is implemented and has a real effect on the ground. We will aim to help, including through formal and informal arrangements both in New York and Geneva.

In 2006, together with six other countries drawn from across the world, the United Kingdom launched the process towards an arms trade treaty. Since then, over 100 States have submitted their views on the arms

trade treaty to the Secretary-General, there have been three meetings and a consensus report from a Group of Governmental Experts, and two of the scheduled six meetings of the Open-ended Working Group have taken place. Again, these efforts culminated in a consensus report (A/AC.277/2009/1) recommending international action to address the problems associated with the unregulated and irresponsible trade in arms. Once again, we would like to express our thanks to Ambassador Roberto Moritán of Argentina for skilfully guiding us all through this process.

This year, the United Kingdom, together with the six original co-authors, has submitted a new draft resolution on the arms trade treaty, contained in document A/C.1/64/L.38. States are aware of the changes we are proposing to the process, the time frame and the rules that will govern the diplomatic conference that is envisaged. With these changes we are setting out to establish a new framework for the arms trade treaty, giving us direction and purpose to our overall goal. I will speak again on the issue of this year's draft resolution later on in the debate.

**Mr. António** (Mozambique): Mozambique fully associates itself with the statements to be made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States.

My delegation would like to commend the Secretary-General for the informative report before us (A/64/173), which reflects the positive results attained in the efforts to restrain illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, as provided for by General Assembly resolutions 63/72 and 63/66. We note with satisfaction that, during the period under consideration, the United Nations was able to reinvigorate its coordination activities with respect to the small arms mechanism as a step that we are sure will contribute to greater coherence in dealing with small arms issues.

Indeed, this coherence has had a significant impact on the strengthening of regional ownership, stressing concrete and time-bound goals and moving towards an alignment of regional action plans. We recognize that it is essential to work at all levels through exchanges of experiences and by adopting collective mechanisms that contribute to the implementation of politically and legally binding instruments on conventional arms.

Mozambique reiterates its commitment to 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 encourage the international community to continue its efforts to strengthen effective arms control mechanisms in order to reduce the demand for small arms and armed violence and conflicts.

Mozambique remains committed to the process of establishing an arms trade treaty in order to set up common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. In this context, we will continue to participate actively in the deliberations of the Open-Ended Working Group in 2010.

Having experienced years of conflict and unrest, Mozambique continues to face the dual challenge of addressing threats to civilians posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war left over from the conflict, as well as emerging threats posed by the uncontrolled proliferation of firearms and constraints in the management of Government stockpiles of weapons. Allow me therefore to highlight some steps that the Mozambican Government has taken in order to ensure national ownership of its response to the challenges posed by small arms and light weapons.

In 2007, in order to address the new challenges posed by the political and socio-economic development of the country, Mozambique adopted the Arms and Ammunitions Act, a first step towards the harmonization of national legislation on the control of small arms and light weapons. With the adoption of this Act, our efforts have been on stressing civilian possession and use of small arms, recordkeeping, marking and tracing, import and export, transit and trade, arms embargoes and related penalties. All our interventions are coordinated by the Inter-ministerial Commission to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Government of Mozambique also holds public awareness campaigns, seminars and workshops where all the relevant legislation and measures are explained and discussed with the population at large.

Mozambique believes that the activities undertaken at the regional and subregional levels are crucial to the consolidation of efforts made at the country level. In this context, I would like to indicate that Mozambique is one of the 13 member countries of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs

Cooperation Organization, with which we have been actively associated since its inception in 1995. Indeed, Mozambique has been engaged in all kinds of activities to curb the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and to promote a culture of peace in the region, including our participation in joint operations, regional meetings and training under the supervision of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Mozambique is also a member of INTERPOL and consequently of the Sub-Regional Bureau of INTERPOL, which has a crucial role in preventing and combating international organized crime, especially by promoting regional cooperation, collaboration and information exchange in the field of preventing and combating illicit trafficking in firearms.

The issue of arms transfers is also important. In this regard, I would like to say that Mozambique is among those countries that support initiatives to promote transparency in the transfer and manufacture of small arms and light weapons.

In our endeavours to address the challenges posed by small arms and light weapons, we continue to rely on technical cooperation and assistance from regional, continental and international organizations, such as the SADC, the African Union, the United Nations and other bilateral partners.

Let me conclude this statement by expressing our hope that the growing awareness of the importance of a coordinated approach to small arms issues will advance the results of the Programme of Action on Small Arms as we approach the Fourth Biennial Meeting, scheduled for June 2010. For our part, Mozambique reiterates its commitment to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

**Mr. Gaspar Martins** (Angola): Let me express my satisfaction at seeing you, Mr. Chairman, preside over the destiny of the First Committee. Allow me to congratulate you on your election to the Chair of this First Committee. My congratulations also extend to your Bureau, and I would like to assure you of my full collaboration in supporting you for the success of the work of this Committee.

Let me also state that we fully associate ourselves with the statements to be made later by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

Angola remains deeply concerned over the issue of the illicit traffic and proliferation of small arms and light weapons due to their negative impact on the security and stability of countries. In Africa, these are indeed even more harmful and the cause of widespread loss of human lives.

As with any country emerging from conflict, combating the proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is one of the priorities of the Angolan Government's peace and national reconciliation policy. The development of our national programme of action for the reduction, prevention and management of the problem of small arms and light weapons is based on an international commitment to addressing this scourge.

By unanimously adopting in 2001 the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Member State committed themselves to collecting and destroying illegal weapons, and that was an important decision for the control of conventional arms. However, there is a pressing need for a greater commitment from the international community, culminating in the negotiation, conclusion and entry into force of a future arms trade treaty.

At the national level, my Government has taken a set of measures to address this problem. In April 2008, the Government adopted a programme of action for the disarmament of the civilian population, which defined the strategy for collecting illicit weapons, focusing on the following targets: the disarmament of civilians in possession of weapons of war; the disarmament of delinquents; the replacement of the weapons of war used by private security companies; and the removal of weapons of war from hidden stockpiles. For its implementation, the programme was divided into four phases: organization and awareness, voluntary surrender of weapons, compulsory collection of weapons, and control and balance.

The organizational phase included reviewing the legislation related to the trade in firearms and in hunting and recreation weapons, the laws on private security companies, and the regulations on the use of weapons of war by the armed forces and the national police.

The awareness phase included the organization of seminars and mass information campaigns in the media

for the collection of weapons. The population surrendered 1,939 weapons of various calibres.

During the phase of voluntary surrender of weapons, the population surrendered 32,986 weapons of various calibres, including 4,675 weapons held illegally by the military and the police.

During the phase of compulsory collection of weapons, 8,666 weapons of various calibres were collected. As a consequence of coercive action, criminal lawsuits were started, in which 58 persons were tried for the illegal possession of firearms, and offenders were given prison sentences ranging from six to seven months.

After a year of implementing the programme of action for the disarmament of civilians, the results are as follows: 55,064 weapons were surrendered and collected; 200,266 pieces of ammunition were surrendered and collected; 35,665 gun chargers were surrendered and collected; 15,781 explosives were surrendered and collected; and 49 gun stockpiles were found. Among the weapons collected, it was found that 34,015 are in good technical condition and 21,049 in poor condition. Those in good condition have been and will be forwarded to the armed forces and national police, depending on their calibre, while the obsolete are being destroyed.

The results, though a good indication of the ongoing work being carried out, show that we still have a long way to go. Unfortunately, Angola does not have an accurate estimate of the number of weapons in the illegal possession of civilians. However, the Government of Angola has spared no effort in the struggle to disarm its population, prioritizing and reinforcing the responsibility of its relevant law and order institutions in accordance with the urgency of this important task.

Before concluding, I would like to inform the Committee that, in that endeavour, my country counts on the valuable contribution of national and international non-governmental organizations, such as Angola 2000, the HALO Trust, the Centre for Strategic Studies of Angola and various religious institutions.

In this ongoing process, we also highlight the following achievements: the organization of seminars with the help of the United Nations in order to train instructors in the disarmament of the civilian population; the exchange of experience in this area

with neighbouring countries that live the same reality; the signing of a protocol with the Centre for Strategic Studies of Angola to carry out an inquiry into the impact of disarmament on the country; and the signing of a protocol of cooperation with the HALO Trust for the destruction of obsolete weapons.

Furthermore, Angola is aware of the long road that lies ahead and would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its appeal to the international community, in particular traditional partners in that fight, to continue to provide all the support necessary to attain our disarmament goals. Thanks to the actions carried out by the Angolan Government in the first phase, we have registered a reduction in the proliferation of firearms and the consequent reduction of crimes committed with those arms, which has been a significant contribution to the greater sense of security of our citizens.

**Mr. Labbé** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): In this thematic debate, my delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Common Market of the South and associated States.

At the sixty-third session of the First Committee, we expressed our satisfaction both with the successful outcome of the Oslo process, which concluded with the text of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and with the progress in made in the consideration of the issue of conventional weapons under international humanitarian law.

Having already begun to implement the Oslo Convention — a rubric that pays tribute to the leadership shown by Norway in that area — a few weeks ago Santiago de Chile hosted the fourth regional meeting on cluster munitions for Latin America and the Caribbean. That event, again sponsored by Norway, enjoyed the valuable support of the United Nations Development Programme and the presence of the special envoy of the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Sergio Duarte, who is here today.

Although our region is not severely affected by the scourge of cluster munitions and the explosive remnants of war, we have made a humanitarian commitment in keeping with the process of building democracy that, over the past two decades, has established a climate of security, marked by confidence and cooperation, in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thus, the fourth regional meeting made it possible, apart from procedural issues, to delve deeper into the principles and paradigms of international humanitarian law and human security, which must be aligned with the legitimate strategic security and defence interests that each country defines in a sovereign way. In that regard, the meeting reaffirmed the humanitarian spirit of international cooperation that inspired the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions.

At the regional meeting, Chile's Ministry of Defence announced both the elimination of cluster munitions from all our military inventories and the submission to Congress of a draft law on assistance to victims of mines and explosive remnants of war. For its part, the Oslo Convention has already been unanimously approved by the Committee of Foreign Relations of the Chamber of Deputies.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce to the First Committee that our country, again at the initiative of a proposal of Norway, will host the preparatory meeting of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Oslo Convention in April 2010. That will take place in Laos, the country most affected by cluster munitions, in November 2010.

Chile's policy on conventional weapons is very clear. It must be, because this is the area in which countries like ours, which have never possessed or considered possessing weapons of mass destruction, can make an effective contribution to international security. Chile approaches issues of security and defence under the guiding light of cooperation at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. For that reason, we have been particularly active in establishing the South American Defence Council, a subsidiary organ of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), created in Santiago in February this year after an intensive process of negotiations in our capital. The South American Defence Council is a new forum for dialogue and cooperation, aimed at implementing the declaration of South America as a zone of peace and cooperation, adopted by our heads of States and Governments in Guayaquil in 2002.

Transparency has played a very important role in establishing a climate of confidence in our region. The Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions, in particular, is an especially important step because it gives legal authority to the compulsory reports that, in the



framework of the United Nations and through the Register of Conventional Arms, are politically binding.

Chile will continue to spare no effort to perfect the security mechanisms in our region. The plan of action endorsed by the Ministries of Defence of UNASUR is an ambitious road map that we believe necessary to fully implement.

The delegation of Chile wishes to underscore once again the need to move towards an early realization of the arms trade treaty. Under the always wise and able leadership of Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, the Open-ended Working Group established by the General Assembly in resolution 63/240 produced its report (A/AC.277/2009/1) after the two sessions held this year. We congratulate Ambassador García Moritán on having achieved that result in an atmosphere of consensus.

In our view, the fundamental issue remains the lack of universal legal norms governing the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons in order to prevent such transfers from contributing to conflict, to the displacement of persons and to fuelling transnational organized crime and terrorism. Naturally, States have the right to acquire legitimate means of defence in order to protect their security interests, in turn upheld under the Charter of the United Nations.

However, as our colleagues from civil society never fail to point out, the arms trade affects the effective enjoyment and exercise of human rights in specific situations all too familiar to us and that are also the focus of various organs of the multilateral system. The illicit arms trade increases the disruptive capacity of transnational organized crime and provides drug trafficking and terrorism with offensive means. The need for and the content of the arms trade treaty must be considered, in our opinion, on the basis of the human security paradigm, bearing in mind that the legal principle to be protected is, first and foremost, the rights of human beings of flesh and bone. As the 2005 Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) established, the pillars of the United Nations – security, human rights and development – are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Negotiating the arms trade treaty should help to put such synergies into play by raising the legal and moral standards that should govern the international community.

In Geneva, negotiations also continue on cluster munitions, in the framework of the Convention on

Certain Conventional Weapons. Our friend the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts, Ambassador Gustavo Ainchil, director of the Department of International Security in the Argentine Foreign Ministry, has said that he is not a miracle worker – but that there is no need for miracles, since a protocol on cluster munitions would make a great deal of sense and would add value as a complement to the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions, not as an alternative to it. It is unfortunate to note that the Geneva negotiations have focused not on humanitarian needs, but on military considerations.

Another area in which we should move forward is that of multilateral regulation of small arms and light weapons. Chile is ready to work to enable the Programme of Action on Small Arms to develop into a legally binding instrument that seriously addresses the fundamental issue: the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Unfortunately, a narrow view of the consensus rule continues to frustrate the aspirations of an overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations. Here again, we advocate a human security focus, centred on the security and well-being of individuals. Our thanks go to Ambassador Pablo Macedo for having taken on the task of chairing the 2010 Biennial Meeting of States. This will unquestionably be a heroic task, and we assure him of our full support.

I end by paying a sincere and respectful tribute to civil society, which selflessly assists us in our work. This reminds us that the entire organic and institutional legal edifice of which this Committee is a part is not an end in itself; rather, it is a tool at the service of humankind's highest values. When we professional diplomats and negotiators risk succumbing to the temptation to be satisfied with minimal standards and even cynicism, it is good to be under the friendly inquiring gaze of men and women who are motivated by principles: the members of the many non-governmental organizations who are with us during this session.

**Mr. Mahley** (United States of America): It is an important time for consideration of conventional armaments. Small arms and light weapons have been attracting a great deal of attention, both in the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and in the Group of Governmental Experts on the Register of Conventional Arms, which almost agreed to add small arms and light weapons as a new

category. United Nations groups of governmental experts are being convened on military expenditures and ammunition. Consistent with the greater attention to the weapons that are being used on a daily basis around the world, the international community has been discussing for two years now a legally binding instrument to better regulate transfers of arms and prevent these arms from reaching irresponsible parties. Everyone in this room should understand that the United States believes that poorly regulated transfers of arms pose very serious risks and deserve our urgent attention.

Although transfers of arms, whether they be small arms or multi-million-dollar combat aircraft, are matters of national decision and, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, a right of all responsible Governments for self-defence, they can also be primary sources of escalating terrorist action, potentially deadly genocidal actions by despotic warlords and totalitarian oppressors, proliferation nightmares and destabilizing imbalances destroying the search for security and safe existence by millions of people.

The United States takes justifiable pride in our own national approach, both through law and through regulation, to control the transfer of arms and to ensure that, once transferred, those arms are retained and used for the legitimate purposes for which they were acquired. Every month, literally thousands of applications for the export of weapons are reviewed in detail by the United States Government, measured against stringent standards, filtered by available intelligence information and assessments and approved only when there is realistic and reasonable evidence that the intended recipient has both a legitimate requirement for the capability conveyed by the prospective transfer and sufficient safeguards in place to preclude either deliberate retransfer or leakage to other less savoury end-uses due to lack of accountability.

This process requires enormous effort, both by the Government and by potential exporters. It is expensive, and it results in denying exports in questionable circumstances. That can work to the commercial disadvantage of United States firms. But it is the price we believe must be paid to try to stem the flow of capabilities to the terrorist groups, rogue States and others who would undermine the rule of law in international affairs. It is also why the United States

believes very strongly that it is the responsibility of the entire international community in deliberations about conventional armaments to settle for no less than the highest possible standards in international agreements and reporting activities. It is, therefore, in our view, the target for arms trade treaty negotiations.

The United Nations this year is taking up the issues of conventional armaments seriously, and the United States applauds that effort. The draft resolution pending on proceeding to a conference on the arms trade (A/C.1/64/L.38) is this year an improved approach that the United States is prepared to support vigorously.

The draft resolution on an arms trade treaty currently calls for five weeks of work before an arms trade treaty conference in 2012. For serious consideration of a complex and important topic like this, that is very little time. In fact, were it not for the able leadership of Roberto García Moritán in the Open-ended Working Group, I would tend to say that it is an impossible task. The United States understands the desire of many to seize this topic quickly and begin concrete work aiming to diminish the death, instability and disruption that dubious arms transfers can exacerbate. But that calls for all the participants in these discussions to also recognize the enormous responsibility of using the scarce available time to utmost effectiveness. We simply cannot allow the work time to be used up by repetitive, vacuous and substance-free general statements, no matter how appealing they may sound. We must, instead, use each day to put forward for serious consideration and review substantive proposals, not of what should be excluded from a legally binding document, but of what should be included to establish the high standards and effective implementation that will be required for a successful product. We encourage Roberto García Moritán to take that approach in the upcoming sessions.

As for the United States, we pledge to offer at the next meeting a menu of the kinds of substantive requirements we believe will be necessary to include in any successful outcome of deliberations on an arms trade treaty, demonstrate their utility and then to defend and support those provisions. An effective arms trade treaty is a difficult and complex undertaking, one which will require considerable domestic effort as well as international cooperation and transparency.

The United States believes the subject of an arms trade treaty is sufficiently important to national security and international stability that the deliberations need to produce decisions on the basis of consensus, in order to command the widest possible participation. A document that failed to gain support from important international actors capable of acting outside its reach and undercut the objectives and purposes of the framers would be, in our view, worse than having no document at all.

Consensus is a crucial concept for the United States, as it ensures the high standards necessary for an effective outcome to our future deliberations. It is not, nor should others hope it to be, an excuse for avoiding hard choices or real, deliberative controls. There will no doubt be serious, lengthy deliberation over most of the elements of any outcome. In fact, it has been our sometimes painful experience over more than four decades of such deliberations that there is an inevitable rush by many of participants to seek simplified or shallow provisions because they sound good or are easily agreed to.

The United States simply considers the subject of transfers of conventional arms, with their pervasiveness, dual-use capabilities and potential for harm, too important to national and international security to be treated with less than the level of detail and engagement that they deserve. This will not make deliberations easier, but it will give them the greatest chance of being meaningful and of commanding both the attention and participation of the States necessary to their eventual success.

Let there be no doubt. On the basis of the current draft resolution, the United States is prepared to engage substantively, vigorously and extensively in pursuit of a product that establishes high standards of expected conduct in international activity and in national enforcement. What we are not prepared to do is to rush to judgment by approving a weak or loophole-infested product in order to get quick agreement from those States that would like to continue to support, however directly or indirectly, terrorists, pirates and genocidal warlords for a quick profit or for short-term advantage.

**Mr. Öskiper (Turkey):** Like the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the proliferation of conventional weapons is also a cause of concern for Turkey. In particular, the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons

pose a significant threat to peace and security, as well as to the social and economic development of many countries.

There is also a very well-documented relationship between the illicit trade in arms and terrorism. As a country that continues to suffer from terrorism, Turkey attaches great importance to the prevention and eradication of the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons and the elimination of their negative security and safety implications. Turkey therefore supports the establishment of effective norms and rules aimed at eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

Turkey favours a comprehensive approach to developing the necessary tools and implementing certain practices to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In particular, we believe that the measures to be taken should include the whole series of steps from the manufacture of small arms and light weapons to their seizure and destruction. Transparency and information-sharing would certainly help promote consistency in the implementation of agreed multilateral standards for these arms and weapons.

Despite the existence of many international instruments that address transfer controls, a large number of weapons are still, unfortunately, being transferred illicitly, which points to the need to focus more on the effective implementation of these instruments. It also leads us to believe that preventing the illicit trade in all its aspects should involve the implementation of effective regulations over the legal transfers of arms, weapons and ammunition. A well-functioning transfer control system should be based in law and supported by comprehensive enforcement mechanisms.

Turkey remains committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening 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 attach particular importance to the implementation of the recommendations and the establishment of a follow-up mechanism to the Programme of Action. We believe that international cooperation and assistance are fundamental to the successful implementation of the Programme and other relevant documents and measures.

Turkey will continue to contribute to the efforts within the United Nations and other forums to foster international and regional cooperation and, when necessary, the adoption and implementation of additional norms and rules in this field. We therefore continue to support the conclusion of an arms trade treaty, which should halt the unregulated and uncontrolled trade of conventional arms worldwide and establish common standards for their global trade. We also support the complementary efforts of certain regional organizations and initiatives in this area.

We share the vision of a world free of anti-personnel landmines. Turkey is a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and fully supports efforts towards its effective implementation and universalization. We continue to pursue the destruction process of the stockpiled anti-personnel landmines in the Turkish Munitions Disposal Facility with utmost care and diligence. Turkey has already destroyed the fuses of all its stockpiled mines, thereby rendering these mines unusable. Let me take this opportunity to once again appeal to States that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention.

In this regard, we would also like to emphasize that, since the rights and obligations enshrined in the Ottawa Convention apply only to its States parties, the consent of the relevant State parties is necessary if and when engagement with armed non-State actors is contemplated within the context of the Convention. Such activities should in no way serve the purposes of terrorist organizations.

Turkey has also been involved in the Oslo process on cluster munitions and actively participates in the ongoing work in the meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on Cluster Munitions within the context of 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. We share the humanitarian concern behind international efforts to limit the use of cluster munitions. We expect the Group of Governmental Experts to intensify its efforts to prepare a document that should take the concerns of all parties into account. In this regard, we are cognizant of the possibility that such a document may not entirely overlap with the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Last but not least, I would like to reiterate our support for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures, which is an important transparency and confidence-building measure. Turkey regularly provides data to this useful mechanism, which complements our work in this field. We call on those States Members of the United Nations that have not made use of this instrument to do so without further delay.

**Mr. Ruddyard (Indonesia):** I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

At the outset, the Movement reiterates its founding principles and reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms for their self-defence and security needs. The Group expresses its concern about unilateral coercive measures and stresses that no undue restriction should be placed on the transfer of such arms.

We recognize the significant imbalance in the production, possession and trade in conventional weapons between the industrialized and the NAM States and call for a significant reduction in the production, possession and trade of conventional weapons by industrialized States with a view to enhancing international and regional peace and security.

NAM remains deeply concerned about the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world. We recognize the need to establish and maintain controls over private ownership of small arms. We call on all States, in particular major producing States, to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited only to Governments or to entities duly authorized by Governments, and to implement legal restrictions and prohibitions preventing the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. Our Group encourages all initiatives by States to mobilize resources and expertise, as well as to provide assistance to strengthen the full 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.

NAM emphasizes the importance of prompt and full implementation of the Programme of Action. In this regard, we stress that international assistance and cooperation are essential aspects in the full implementation of the Programme of Action. The Movement expresses disappointment at the inability of the United Nations Conference to Review the Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, held in New York, from 26 June to 7 July 2006, to agree on a final Document.

We note the third Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, held in New York from 14 to 18 July 2008, which considered the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action. NAM reaffirms the total validity of the Programme of Action and encourages Member States to coordinate efforts in the United Nations with a view to reaching agreement on a follow-up to the Programme of Action in order to ensure its full implementation. We call for the full implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, which was adopted by the General Assembly.

NAM continues to deplore the use, in contravention of international humanitarian law, of anti-personnel mines in conflict situations aimed at maiming, killing and terrorizing innocent civilians. This denies them access to farmland, causing famine, and forces them to flee their homes eventually, leading to depopulation and preventing the return of civilians to their place of original residence. We call upon all States in a position to do so to provide the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance to landmine clearance operations and the social and economic rehabilitation of victims, as well as to ensure full access of affected countries to material equipment, technology and financial resources for mine clearance.

NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction invite those States that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Convention. NAM States parties to the anti-personnel landmine Convention look forward to the upcoming Second Review Conference, to be held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 30 November to 4 December 2009.

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 States to become parties to the Convention and its Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War.

We recognize the adverse humanitarian impact of the use of cluster munitions and stress the Movement's principled position on the central role of the United Nations in the area of disarmament and arms control. We take note of the continued consideration of the issue of cluster munitions in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We further note that the Convention on Cluster Munitions was opened for signature on 3 December 2008.

Finally, with regard to the subject of a future arms trade treaty, NAM recognizes the need to address the problems relating to the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market. Considering that such risks can fuel instability, international terrorism and transnational organized crime, NAM supports international action being taken to address the problem. There should be respective responsibilities for exporters and importers alike to address the current situation, based on the principles established in the United Nations Charter, in a non-discriminatory manner.

In view of the complexity of the issues of conventional arms transfers, further consideration of efforts within the United Nations framework to address international conventional arms transfers is required on a step-by-step basis and in an open and transparent manner in order to achieve, on the basis of consensus, a balance that will benefit all, with the principles of the United Nations Charter at the centre of such efforts.

**The Chairperson** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.16.

**Ms. Kelly** (Ireland): As this is the first time that Ireland takes the floor at this year's session, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Bureau on your election and to assure you of my delegation's full support.

I take the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.16, entitled "Convention on Cluster Munitions". As the Committee is aware, the

Convention on Cluster Munitions was adopted in Dublin on 30 May 2008 and opened for signature in Oslo on 3 December 2008. As of today, the Convention has been signed by 100 States and ratified by 23. It will enter into force six months after the thirtieth ratification.

The Secretary-General is the depositary of the Convention, and the United Nations was closely associated with its development. The Convention assigns various administrative tasks to the United Nations, and to this end the General Assembly adopted resolution 63/71 last year, which requested the Secretary-General to render the necessary assistance and to provide such services as may be necessary to fulfil the tasks entrusted to him by the Convention on Cluster Munitions. My delegation was very pleased that this resolution was adopted without a vote.

The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic has generously offered to host the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, which must take place within one year after the Convention's entry into force. This is particularly appropriate, as Laos is more affected by cluster munitions than any other country in the world.

Therefore, Ireland and the Lao People's Democratic Republic have jointly presented to the Committee for its consideration a draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/64/L.16. It is short and simple, its only purpose being to place on record the kind offer of Laos to host the First Meeting of States Parties and to request the Secretary-General, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, to undertake the preparations necessary to convene the First Meeting of States Parties following the Convention's entry into force.

The draft resolution is procedural in nature. As last year's resolution already requested the Secretary-General to perform all administrative tasks assigned to the United Nations under the Convention, this draft does not seek to impose any additional tasks on the United Nations. As the costs of meetings are to be borne by States parties to the Convention, neither does the draft resolution impose any financial burden on the Organization.

It is our hope that the Committee will be able to adopt this draft resolution by consensus.

**Mrs. Phommachanh** (Lao People's Democratic Republic): My delegation is taking the floor to make a brief statement on draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.16, entitled "Convention on Cluster Munitions", which has just been introduced by the representative of Ireland.

The issue of explosive remnants of war, known as cluster munitions or unexploded ordnance, continues to threaten and to pose serious obstacles to the socio-economic development and poverty eradication efforts of more than 80 countries across the world.

Among these, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is the most affected. Cluster munitions victims in the Lao People's Democratic Republic — about 300 victims recorded annually in the course of the 30 years since the end of the war — account for 50 per cent of global cluster munitions victims. This is due to the fact that 37 per cent of the whole country's territory remains contaminated by unexploded ordnance. The presence of these remnants of war represents an immeasurable and continuing burden on the socio-economic development of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In particular, it hampers the Government's national growth and poverty eradication strategies.

In the light of the adverse impact of cluster munitions, the Lao People's Democratic Republic attaches great importance to the Convention on Cluster Munitions banning and eradicating cluster munitions.

Therefore, it is our great honour to join Ireland in presenting the draft resolution entitled "Convention on Cluster Munitions" in the First Committee at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. As delegations are aware, the Dublin Diplomatic Conference, held in May 2008, adopted the Convention on Cluster Munitions in order to address the worst humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions.

My delegation fully supports the statement by my colleague from Ireland that this is a technical draft and there are no substantive implications. The draft resolution welcomes the offer of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to host the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and requests the Secretary-General, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, to undertake the preparations necessary to convene the First Meeting of States Parties following the Convention's entry into force.

My country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, will be very happy and greatly honoured to host this important conference. We hope that our hosting of this event will be given broad support by the international community, in particular by the Member States present at this meeting. It is our hope that the Committee will be able to adopt this draft resolution by consensus.

**Mrs. Medina** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its support for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It is a key political instrument for channelling international cooperation against this illicit activity. In this respect, we note the holding of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms to consider this important instrument, which will be held in June 2010.

We believe that the international community must work for the negotiation of a binding legal international instrument to mark and trace these weapons in order to contribute to the fight against crimes related to the traffic in small arms and light weapons. In this respect, we value the efforts made to combat illicit arms brokering.

We are gravely concerned about proposals being made on the issue of conventional weapons with regard to resolution 63/240, entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons". Our delegation believes that these proposals considerably weaken the climate of confidence that the General Assembly decided to establish through the creation of the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty and through a gradual process of discussions that included six substantive sessions of one week each.

Indeed, as Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group, stated, a climate of confidence and dialogue prevailed at the two sessions held this year. This is a very sensitive topic, given its intimate link with national defence systems. The Group therefore made progress in drawing up an initial report, but did not reach any kind

of decision, much less that which is being imposed upon us.

We therefore believe it completely inappropriate to attempt to cancel the sessions to be held in 2010 and 2011, at which all States should continue to discuss the viability, parameters and objectives of a potential instrument for common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons.

At future sessions, as was decided by the General Assembly in resolution 63/240, we should make progress towards identifying elements that ensure the right and duty of States to strengthen their defence systems by adopting a sanctions mechanism for coercive measures unilaterally dictated by certain producer countries. Such a mechanism should sanction countries that ignore their commercial agreements on the sale of conventional weapons, among other important aspects.

Our Republic has a tradition of pacifism, and, as established by our national Constitution, we are a peaceful country. The only time that military contingents have left our territory was when they contributed to South America's independence efforts. We are, however, aware of our duty to defend our sovereignty, our territorial integrity, our population and our natural wealth.

Venezuela has no weapons of mass destruction. We are not producers of conventional weapons. We are, however, a country that is threatened by the country with the greatest military power that can also claim the greatest and most severe violations of international law, human rights and international humanitarian law. That country is trying to prevent us from strengthening our defence system and is ignoring its military trade agreements. In the light of this reality, we would ask why the international community has been given to understand that 192 States are already prepared to negotiate a legal agreement, when the possible parameters and scope of that instrument are not yet clear.

We should recall that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have suffered military interventions by foreign and imperial Powers, with dire results. Our societies are still suffering the effects of those interventions. Today, we have a situation that threatens the peace and substantive progress in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres that we are achieving on various levels in Latin America and

the Caribbean. A clear example of this threat is the establishment of seven United States military bases in Colombia. This has led to a climate of mistrust in our region.

In this respect, we recall the joint declaration of the special meeting of the heads of State of the Union of South American Nations, held in the city of Bariloche in the sister Argentine Republic, in which it was concluded that these seven military bases pose a threat not only to potential peace in Colombia, but to peace in Latin America.

Even under such conditions, the Latin American and Caribbean region has one of the lowest levels of military spending in the world. This is borne out by statistics. Statements intended to sow alarm by listing the purchases of several States of the region, aimed at repositioning their stockpiles of conventional weapons, and characterizing these purchases as evidence of an arms race, are therefore unfounded.

Finally, our delegation reaffirms its full commitment to promoting a safer and more peaceful world, and emphatically reiterates our respect for the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. In this respect, we would like to inform all delegations that we have presented a series of proposals to the delegation of the United Kingdom aimed at conserving the spirit of dialogue and trust and the gradual approach that prevailed in this year's sessions on the subject under consideration. We hope for an answer from the United Kingdom. If we do not receive one, it will be difficult for the First Committee or the General Assembly to make progress on this subject, which is so important to all of us.

**Mr. Ojanen** (Finland): As this is the first time Finland is taking the floor, we wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair. You and your Bureau can rely on our full cooperation and support.

Finland fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. We would like to add brief national remarks on three topics: small arms and the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms; the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development; and the arms trade treaty.

The humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of excessive flows of small arms and

light weapons are well known to all of us. The illicit spread of small arms and light weapons does not respect state borders. It is a shared problem. While some parts of the world are more heavily affected by small arms and light weapons than others, the human cost makes them every State's concern. To find effective solutions, a concerted effort of the international community is required.

Finland has a long-standing commitment to addressing the problems related to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In our view, the United Nations must play a central role in establishing global, effective means to counter these problems. Finland consequently underlines the importance of the Programme of Action on Small Arms as the global framework addressing these issues. We were encouraged by the progress in the Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms held in 2008, since the outcome document gives us tools for a more effective implementation of the Programme of Action. We urge all Member States to work constructively for a successful Fourth Biennial Meeting of States in 2010. Finland will do its part to achieve this common goal.

With regard to the complexity and extent of the problems related to small arms and light weapons in different regions, we welcome the key role that regional and subregional organizations can play in complementing the work of the United Nations. We appreciate the important work carried out by the Economic Community of West African States and other regional organizations.

From the European perspective, we can express our satisfaction with the fact that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has small arms and light weapons issues high on its agenda. Only last month, the OSCE held a review conference on its document on small arms and light weapons. The outcome of that conference will contribute to the preparations for the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States.

We would also like to underline that issues related to small arms and light weapons cannot be isolated from the overall concept of development. On the contrary, they should be an integral part of it. As a core group member of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, Finland continues to be active in highlighting the direct link between security and development. We also emphasize the role of civil society in this regard. The implementation of



the Geneva Declaration has also moved to the country level. In the case of Finland, we have the honour to act as the focus country political coordinator in Kenya.

Concerning the arms trade treaty, Finland has been encouraged by the progress in the Open-ended Working Group and looks forward to the beginning of actual negotiations on a treaty. The time has come to take a decisive step forward. To that end, Finland, together with six other co-authors, has submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/64/L.38) with the aim of holding a United Nations conference on the arms trade treaty in 2012. An arms trade treaty would provide an international regulatory framework and global rules on arms trade and help to hinder the flow of arms into irresponsible hands. The lack of such rules has, over the years, caused instability and undermined human rights and sustainable development.

*Mr. Laudi (Germany), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

All States should comply with the same agreed rules on conventional arms trade and prevent legal transfers from ending up on the illegal market. An arms trade treaty would set common standards on responsible transfers of conventional arms to all countries without affecting the right of States to self-defence.

As we are on the verge of a historic decision, we hope all delegations will work together for a consensual arms trade treaty resolution that would enable us to launch effective preparations for the 2012 United Nations conference.

**Mr. García López-Trigo** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation full aligns itself with the statement made on this subject by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In recent decades, we have seen a dizzying expansion of conventional arms around the world. Every day, they are becoming more sophisticated and deadly. Their vast destructive power has been demonstrated in military actions in recent years in various parts of the world.

The Non-Aligned Movement has issued warnings on several occasions about the significant imbalance that exists between industrialized and developing countries in terms of the production and possession of and trade in conventional weapons. The Non-Aligned

Movement has stressed that industrialized countries should significantly reduce the production and trade in these arms with a view to promoting international and regional peace and security.

We are concerned to note the marked imbalance in the priority given in international forums to certain categories of conventional weapons, such as small arms and light weapons, to the detriment of others, such as sophisticated conventional weapons, the effects of which are significantly devastating.

Illicit arms trafficking has certain severe social, humanitarian and economic consequences for many countries around the world whose right to life, peace and sustainable development is seriously threatened. Cuba has supported and will continue to support the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We have fully complied with our commitments in this context and are cooperating with the initiatives and practical measures laid out in the Programme of Action.

We reiterate our support for the implementation of an effective follow-up mechanism that will ensure the full implementation of the Programme of Action. After eight years, the Programme has yielded some results, but we believe that much remains to be done to achieve its full implementation.

Cuba defends the legitimate rights of States to manufacture, import and store small and light arms to meet their needs of legitimate self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. At the same time, we advocate the adoption of more effective measures to prevent and combat illicit arms trafficking and to prevent their use by those who commit international terrorist and criminal acts. International cooperation and assistance will be essential if all Member States are to make progress towards full compliance with the Programme of Action.

The past year witnessed the holding of the first two substantive sessions of the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly to promote a legally binding instrument that would establish common international parameters for the export, import and transfer of conventional weapons, established under resolution 63/240. Delegations had the opportunity in that context to present their points of view on this important and sensitive subject and to make progress

towards the necessary consensus, as we heard this morning.

We reiterate the importance of avoiding the imposition of fictitious deadlines for the negotiation of a treaty on this subject. The consideration of this complex and sensitive matter should continue to be undertaken within the framework of the United Nations in a balanced, transparent, open and step-by-step manner on the basis of consensus. The complex problem of the transfer of conventional weapons has no easy answers and cannot be dealt with by applying preconceived or simplistic recipes.

As a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Cuba fully shares the legitimate humanitarian concerns associated with the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of anti-personnel landmines. At the same time, it is well known that our country has, for almost five decades, been the victim of a policy of continuous hostility and aggression by the military super-Power. As a result, Cuba has not found it possible to renounce the use of this kind of weapon for the preservation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, in keeping with the right to legitimate self-defence recognized by the United Nations Charter. Cuba is therefore not a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

We will continue to wholeheartedly support all those efforts that, while preserving the necessary balance between humanitarian matters and national security, are designed to eliminate the horrifying effects of the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of anti-personnel landmines on the civilian population and economy of many countries. Cuba urges all States that are in a position to do so to provide the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance for mine clearance operations and the social and economic rehabilitation of the victims.

**Ms. Millington** (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The international community must remain alert to the urgency of resolving the problems related to small arms and light weapons, anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war.

The adoption in 2001 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 was a major achievement.

Its full implementation will remain a challenge in the years to come. While progress has been made, the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons continue to have a devastating impact on the lives of civilians around the world. Canada hopes that the States attending the 2010 Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms and the 2011 meeting of experts will build on the success of the 2008 Biennial Meeting and the momentum achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

We are heartened by the progress that has been made over the past three years towards an arms trade treaty. The first two sessions of the Open-Ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty allowed all the States that attended to openly express their points of view on the goals, scope and parameters of an eventual treaty. We are pleased that States were able to reach agreement on the need to resolve the problems relating to the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market. Canada calls for the start of negotiations to reach a legally binding arms trade treaty.

The aim of an arms trade treaty should be to limit the misuse of conventional arms and their diversion to the illicit market, in accordance with the international obligations of States. At the same time, such a treaty must recognize that States have the right to meet their own defence and security needs. Such a treaty should also recognize that there is a legitimate trade in firearms for certain civilian uses, such as for sporting, hunting and collecting purposes. A treaty should not impose restrictions on how arms may be bought, held or used within a State's territory.

(*spoke in English*)

We are pleased that, with Canada's ratification in May of this year of Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which addresses the issue of explosive remnants of war, Canada has now ratified all five Protocols to the Convention. Canada has also been heavily engaged in the work of the Convention's Group of Governmental Experts on cluster munitions. Unfortunately, after many weeks of negotiations over the course of almost two years, States remain divided on several key issues, and work on this matter within the Convention, from our perspective, has unfortunately all but stalled.

Fortunately, we now have the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which, in our view, is a state-of-the-

art, legally binding instrument that establishes the right balance between humanitarian and military considerations. Canada was pleased to have participated actively in the negotiation of the Convention and to have been among the 94 States that signed it in Oslo on the day that it was first opened for signature and ratification.

Canadian officials are now preparing to seek authority to ratify the Convention, which can take place as soon as Canadian domestic legislation is established to ensure our full compliance with all of its provisions. Looking forward, it is important to note that the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention will most likely be held next year and that the Lao People's Democratic Republic has offered to host the meeting. Canada urges all States that have not yet done so to become party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention and the various Protocols of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

In closing, we wish to note how much we are looking forward to the upcoming Second Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention, which Colombia has generously offered to host in Cartagena. In just over a decade, this has become one of the most successful disarmament treaties in history, with a membership of 156 States parties and remarkable results achieved through our global collective effort. Now is the time to chart our course for the next five-year period.

Whether we speak of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, small arms and light weapons or other conventional weapons, it is our wish and, indeed, our shared responsibility to do everything we can to put an end the devastating impact that such weapons can have on civilians throughout the world.

**Mr. Im Han-taek** (Republic of Korea): The destructive power of conventional weapons may not surpass that of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), but their humanitarian and development implications require just as much attention from the international community as those of WMDs. Among these issues, my delegation would like to focus on small arms and light weapons, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and an arms trade treaty.

Small arms and light weapons are the weapons of choice in present-day conflicts, and their excessive accumulation prolongs armed violence and aggravates

regional conflicts. Diverse socio-economic and human rights problems, such as child soldiers, refugees, food insecurity and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, are all associated with and in many cases aggravated by the proliferation of small arms. The illicit trade in small arms is often closely linked to organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking.

In preventing and addressing the problems associated with small arms, my delegation reiterates its unchanging support for the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as the primary mechanism to deal with the issue, and would like to emphasize the usefulness of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Small arms need to be included as the eighth category of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

The central role of the CCW cannot be overemphasized in addressing the humanitarian concerns related to conventional weapons and in realizing the principles of international humanitarian law. Indeed, the Convention is a dynamic instrument capable of responding to developments in weapons technology and to the changing nature of armed conflict through the adoption of new protocols, each containing specific rules regulating a particular type of weapon.

The Republic of Korea has faithfully implemented the principles and provisions of the Convention since 2001 and will further contribute to advancing the effective implementation of the CCW and ensuring its relevance and vitality.

The Republic of Korea, as a State party to Amended Protocol II, attaches great importance to international efforts to mitigate the humanitarian suffering caused by landmines. It has been making contributions through demining activities and to victim assistance through various projects, and will continue to do so in close cooperation with other countries, international organizations and civil society.

There is a pressing need to reduce the humanitarian suffering caused by cluster munitions, and the Republic of Korea supports international efforts to address the problems associated with the use of cluster munitions. The CCW, to which most States involved in that issue are party, should tackle the

problems of cluster munitions and the challenges arising from conflicting positions on that topic. It is regrettable that, despite two years of intensive negotiations, the Group of Governmental Experts was unable to reach consensus on the draft of a new protocol.

My delegation believes that a new CCW protocol on cluster munitions, if adopted and faithfully implemented, would have a significant impact on the ground. In that regard, we have been actively participating in the negotiations in an accommodating manner to help strike an appropriate balance between humanitarian concerns and military needs. The Republic of Korea will participate actively and constructively in future negotiations if the continuation of further discussions within the CCW framework is agreed upon at the Meeting of States Parties to the CCW in November.

Last but not least, my delegation would like to express our support for the resolutions on an arms trade treaty, and welcomes the latest draft resolution on such a treaty (A/C.1/64/L.38). We appreciate the efforts made by the authors to achieve the broadest possible agreement among Member States.

**Mr. Koterec** (Slovakia): Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee. I would like to assure you and the members of the Bureau of my delegation's full support for your endeavours in advancing our work.

The representative of Sweden has conveyed the views that the members of the European Union share in the domain of conventional weapons. My delegation would like to add several brief remarks reflecting Slovakia's views on two specific issues that we deem particularly important: national reporting 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 (CCW) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; and the arms trade treaty.

Addressing the issue of national reporting in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the mine ban Convention, it is essential to stress that the high contracting parties to the CCW have a political obligation to annually submit their

national reports on the implementation of that instrument as a whole under the CCW compliance mechanism established by the Third Review Conference in 2006. Furthermore, there are even legal obligations required under two of its protocols, namely, Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices, and Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War. The States parties to the mine ban Convention are also bound to a similar legal obligation within the instrument.

National reporting ranks high among the elements essential to the implementation of the CCW and the mine ban Convention. It promotes a culture of compliance, enhances consciousness of the obligations of the States parties at various national levels, including those related to their internal structures, and sets up a basic framework for international cooperation. Furthermore, complying with those obligations would set an excellent example among the States parties and create a credible precedent for treaty implementation.

Statistics reveal that, despite the political and legal commitments, participation in submitting national reports remains relatively low. In quantifiable terms, the percentage of annual returns varies from approximately 30 to 60 per cent on average, which is testimony to the poor level of engagement by the respective States parties in their efforts to reach the lofty goals set out in the respective instruments that they have adhered to.

However, national reporting under the CCW Protocols not only should be perceived as an obligation, thus creating an excessive burden on the national administrations of the States parties, but also deserves to be recognized as a very useful tool that can bring many benefits to the States parties, especially to their internal structures dealing with the various aspects of national implementation. Therefore, the burning question that remains is why the participation in submitting national reports continues to be so unsatisfactory.

A number of different factors may bring the States parties into non-compliance with their political or legal obligations under the instruments to which they are party. Lack of awareness may feature high among these. A number of States parties may be unaware not only of the obligation to submit national reports or their updates on a regular basis, but also of

the fact that there is an abundance of resources that States can take advantage of in the process of drawing up the required submissions.

Those resources consist of, first, databases of all national reports submitted and, secondly, guides on national reporting. Notably, the guides on national reporting were drawn up with the intention to serve as a handy tool in the form of recommendations that would motivate and assist the States parties in preparing and submitting their national reports so as to fulfil their obligations under the respective provisions of the instruments to which they are party.

The existing databases within the Amended Protocol II, Protocol V, the CCW compliance mechanism and the mine ban Convention provide a golden opportunity to compare and study the approaches that other States parties have taken in their submissions and to draw relevant lessons from them. The guides relating to the CCW Amended Protocol II and to the mine ban Convention have already been in use for some time now, while the guide on national reporting under Protocol V only exists, for the time being, as a preliminary draft version and will be considered formally at the forthcoming Third Conference of the High Contracting Parties to CCW Protocol V in November this year. Both the databases and the aforementioned guides are available at the websites devoted to those respective issues. I have mentioned them in the written version of my statement, which is currently being distributed.

States parties that have so far failed to submit their required national reports should do so without delay. The availability of the aforementioned resources considerably facilitates their duty to deliver on that essential commitment.

Nonetheless, the most important element here is the will to comply with the obligations vis-à-vis national reporting. While the quality of submissions is of high importance, that aspect can be addressed in a step-by-step process. Annual updates of national reports provide an opportunity to enhance the quality of submissions, if necessary, so that they fully serve their purpose. In other words, it is imperative that the States parties do not shy away from submitting the required reports because of concerns about the quality of the initial data.

It is our hope that this message will reach the relevant authorities of the high contracting parties to

the CCW and to its respective Protocols and those of the States parties to the mine ban Convention. A positive effect of participation in national reporting, substantive enhancement of the quality of the reports and the universalization of those instruments is the expected outcome of the endeavours of a number of actors engaged in that field.

I would like to use this opportunity to briefly comment also on an issue that, in our view, has constituted the most important development in the domain of conventional weapons in the past couple of years and will remain high on our agenda in the period ahead. The proliferation of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, has risen to such dimensions that their effects are justifiably compared to those of weapons of mass destruction. Intensive discussions on regulating the trade in arms in global terms have already been ongoing in this forum for some four years. We are convinced that the need to lay down international standards for transfers of conventional weapons and ammunition is becoming increasingly pressing.

In order to address the matter adequately, the time is ripe to move from general discussions to substantive negotiations with a view to developing a truly comprehensive, universal and legally binding instrument that would effectively prevent the diversion of legally traded products of defence industries to illicit markets and irresponsible users. Slovakia is convinced that the United Nations is the proper forum for negotiating such an instrument. It goes without saying that civil society engagement is pivotal to the success of our endeavours, and we appreciate its active involvement in the process.

Let me conclude by reiterating Slovakia's commitment to working with all partners in advancing such efforts and in establishing expeditiously the highest possible legally binding international standards that would stop the terror stemming from their absence.

**The Acting Chairperson:** I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.42.

**Mr. Wensley (South Africa):** My delegation is pleased with the continuing progress that we have been able to make in recent years in the field of conventional arms, both in terms of the implementation of existing instruments and in the progress in the

development of new legally binding standards relating to such arms.

In that regard, since our last thematic debate on conventional arms, South Africa was pleased to be present in Oslo in December 2008 as one of the almost 100 signatories to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. South Africa is fully committed to the full implementation of its provisions. The Convention sets a new international norm on cluster munitions, and we are confident that the comprehensive ban that it sets on the vast majority of cluster munitions stockpiled around the world will swiftly lead to their stigmatization as weapons of armed conflict. We are particularly pleased with the Convention's groundbreaking provisions on victim assistance.

South Africa has a fairly small number of obsolete cluster munitions in its stockpile, which, in any event, have been earmarked for destruction, and my Government is committed to destroying those stocks well in advance of the destruction deadline set by the Convention. With regard to ratification, South Africa has embarked on the ratification process, consistent with my country's constitutional provisions.

South Africa is pleased to note that a number of States have completed their ratification processes, thus bringing the Convention's entry into force closer. We also encourage those States that have not already signed the Convention, particularly African countries, to do so. South Africa is encouraged by the offer of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to host the First Meeting of States Parties.

South Africa attaches great importance to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In that regard, we welcome the successful conclusion of the Preparatory Committee process for the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the mine ban Convention, which will take place in Cartagena, Colombia, later this year. South Africa also welcomes the opportunity that States parties had to provide substantive inputs for the outcome documents to be adopted by the Review Conference.

South Africa also hosted an African Union conference on anti-personnel mines in Pretoria from 9 to 11 September 2009. The aim of that conference was twofold — first, to assess the developments in Africa since the 2004 African Union conference with a

view to updating the Common African Position on Anti-Personnel Landmines. The conference also gave African countries the opportunity to prepare for the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention.

South Africa looks forward to participating in the Second Review Conference in Cartagena. We hope that the Conference will come out united in its quest for a world free of anti-personnel mines and that it recommits States parties to the Convention's implementation provisions relating to victim assistance, mine clearance, cooperation and assistance, and stockpile destruction.

Our discussions on an arms trade treaty have moved forward to the next phase, namely, that of the preparatory work for a United Nations conference to take place in 2012. South Africa supports efforts to conclude such a conference within the framework of the United Nations, which will make it as broad and as inclusive as possible. My delegation believes that this is essential if an arms trade treaty is to be truly effective and to make a difference as far as the future arms trade is concerned.

The final issue that we wish to touch on is that South Africa continues to attach great importance to the 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. Since the adoption of the Programme of Action, we have negotiated and agreed to the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. A Group of Governmental Experts has also drawn up a set of recommendations on illicit brokering. My delegation therefore believes that those outcomes on the two substantive issues mentioned in the follow-up section of the Programme of Action provide a wealth of measures that will complement our implementation of the Programme of Action.

South Africa continues to believe that ammunition is an integral part of the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We have noted that we agreed, during the process to negotiate the international tracing Instrument, to deal with ammunition as part of a separate process. While we respect that decision, we view the recommendations of the Group of

Governmental Experts on ammunition as complementary to our work on the implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons.

South Africa, in coordination with Colombia and Japan, has the honour to introduce the so-called omnibus small arms draft resolution this year and hereby wishes to submit the draft text of the resolution entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", as contained in document A/C.1/64/L.42. The draft resolution contains mostly technical updates of last year's General Assembly resolution 63/72, adopted at that session by the vast majority of Member States. We trust that all members will be able to join the consensus on this draft resolution during the current session.

**Ms. Orrattanachai** (Thailand): Thailand associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and would like to highlight some additional points.

At present, the international community continues to face threats posed by conventional weapons. Peace, stability and development are threatened by non-traditional threats, such as terrorism and transnational organized crime. Those, in turn, have been made more deadly by the illicit transfer and abusive use of small arms and light weapons, which have a devastating impact in many parts of the world. It is therefore an urgent and important task of this Committee to address those challenges in a concerted manner.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is often linked to armed violence, transnational crime and terrorism. To address that issue, Thailand supports the full 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, which, in our view, is the key multilateral framework for coordinating efforts of Member States to prevent the illicit manufacture, export, import and transfer of small arms and light weapons.

To strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action, resources and capacity-building need to be ensured, especially in developing countries. In that regard, a regional approach should be explored. Regional cooperation in information-sharing and the exchange of best practices in controlling small arms

and light weapons would further contribute to the ability of Member States to comply with the provisions of the Programme of Action.

The outcome of the third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held last year, reflected the collective will of Member States to tackle the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Thailand was pleased that the third Biennial Meeting was able to adopt a final document that identified a number of measures for improving and strengthening the implementation of the Programme of Action. It is our hope that the fourth Biennial Meeting of States, which is to be held next year, will also succeed in furthering the international community's work on this important issue.

The diversion of conventional weapons to unauthorized recipients can pose a serious threat to political stability and economic development. That is why Thailand wishes to reaffirm our support for discussions on an arms trade treaty. We are ready to work closely with the international community towards its establishment. We commend the work of the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty, which achieved some progress during its two substantive sessions earlier this year. We also support the efforts to convene regional seminars, which will provide opportunities to explore opinions and perspectives on an arms trade treaty. Work remains to be done to bridge the different positions of Member States.

Thailand is of the view that a step-by-step process is desirable to attain an effective arms trade treaty. Discussions and negotiations on the treaty should be further pursued within the United Nations and be based on a relevant existing framework that is universally accepted, such as the Programme of Action.

In addition, the work process towards the arms trade treaty should also take into consideration the different capacities and circumstances of Member States in implementing the future treaty. Pending its conclusion, Thailand is of the view that, in the course of multilateral negotiations, manufacturing, exporting and receiving States should share responsibility for preventing the unregulated trade in small arms and light weapons and hold discussions on ways to forge cooperation through exchanges of experiences and know-how.

Another area where concerted action on conventional weapons is well under way is in the global effort to rid the world of the scourge of anti-personnel landmines. Thailand is fully committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Mine Ban Convention, namely, mine clearance, stockpile destruction and promoting universal acceptance of the Convention.

At the ninth Meeting of States Parties, Thailand was granted an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel landmines in mined areas. In order to complete our mine clearance within the specified deadline, Thailand needs to mobilize its internal resources and develop existing capacities. In the meantime, international assistance is also key to success. Thailand is ready to work with all parties concerned and will increase its efforts to obtain financial and technical support from the international community, in accordance with article 6 of the Convention.

In our experience, mine action needs combined efforts, integrated planning and adequate financial resources. It is our belief that international cooperation, especially in terms of technical and financial assistance, will further enable affected States parties to overcome the challenges of mine action. Thailand supports and encourages all efforts to secure international assistance in mine action within existing international frameworks.

Thailand also attaches great importance to the socio-economic consequences of landmines and to victim assistance. As co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration, together with Belgium, we wish to reaffirm our commitment to promoting the well-being of landmine survivors so that they can be rehabilitated and reintegrated into their societies as fully productive members.

It is our hope that the upcoming Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World will not only review the progress made in the implementation of the Convention, but also work on a concrete plan to further strengthen efforts to put an end to the suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines. Thailand stands ready to work closely with other States parties and to actively participate in that important Summit.

**The Acting Chairperson:** I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.37.

**Mr. Hellgren (Sweden):** I speak on behalf of Sweden.

Sweden has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.37 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). I do so as well on behalf of Pakistan, as Chair of the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties; Switzerland, as the President of the Tenth Annual Conference of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II; and Lithuania, as the President of the Second Annual Conference of High Contracting Parties to Protocol V — all of which took place in 2008. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to the three Ambassadors of those countries, who generously took the time and contributed their valuable experience to serve as Chairmen of those meetings.

The purpose of the CCW is to ban or restrict the use of certain specific types of weapons that cause excessive injury or unnecessary suffering to combatants or that affect civilians indiscriminately. The Convention forms an essential and integral part of international law applicable to armed conflict. It is designed to provide a framework within which humanitarian concerns regarding conventional weapons can be dealt with. We need the CCW to be a dynamic instrument that responds to urgent humanitarian challenges before us. With the adoption and entry into force of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants Of War in November 2006, the CCW showed that it is a living and important instrument of international humanitarian law.

Today, the CCW has some 110 States parties. The number of States parties to the Convention continues to increase, but it still falls short of achieving universal membership. Let me take this opportunity to express my hope that the countries that have not yet joined the Convention will find it in their interest to do so and become parties to the Convention and its Protocols, including the important amendment that extends the scope of the Convention to include situations of non-international conflict.



The purpose of the draft resolution that I am introducing today, namely, draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.37, is to continue to express support for the CCW, with particular focus on the universalization of the Convention and its Protocols. The text of the draft resolution also reflects the ongoing work within the framework of the Convention since the adoption of last year's resolution 63/85. It is an expression of support for the CCW as an important international humanitarian law instrument.

However, the draft resolution does not pronounce itself on the substance of issues being discussed in the various expert groups, and it does not prejudice the outcomes of any future discussions among States parties. The specific substantive issues will of course have to be addressed by the States parties at their forthcoming meetings, including at the Meetings of States parties that will take place in November of this year.

In conclusion, I wish to express our sincere hope that, as in previous years, draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.37 can be adopted without a vote.

**Mr. Belaoura** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to associate myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I shall address two issues of particular importance to my delegation.

The efforts made throughout the years at the United Nations to adopt principles and standards to regulate the trade in conventional weapons illustrate the awareness of the international community and the importance it attaches to this issue owing to its impact on international peace and security and on international humanitarian law. It is for that reason that Algeria has from the outset associated itself with that international effort in a spirit of responsibility and determination.

The success we hope to achieve with regard to an internationally binding instrument to regulate the import, export and transfer of weapons should be subject to certain conditions and principles. Such a treaty must respect international law, especially the Charter of the United Nations, including Article 51, guaranteeing States the right to legitimate self-defence.

We also need to be transparent and objective, to strike a balance between rights and obligations, and to arrive at a consensus guaranteeing the full participation

of all parties at every stage of negotiations, especially when it comes to adoption and implementation of the treaty. Algeria was pleased to see the General Assembly adopt resolution 63/240 at its sixty-third session in such a responsible and constructive spirit. That will obviously have a direct impact on the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Algeria has made every effort to implement the Plan of Action at the legislative and organizational levels and with regional and international cooperation.

The illicit traffic in arms elicits my country's concern, as it fuels organized crime and terrorist groups and poses a threat to our independence and the security of our communities. Small arms and light weapons are destructive in other regions of the world besides ours. In Africa, they lead to the death of hundreds of civilians every day.

Anti-personnel mines still claim the lives of many civilians on a daily basis, especially in rural areas. They destroy not only individuals, but the economic and social fabric of communities as well. Algeria has ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and we subscribe to its aims at all levels in order to achieve its universality. While we welcome the positive developments in the area of anti-personnel landmines since the conclusion of that important international Convention, we call on those States that have not yet ratified it to do so as soon as possible, so that the tens of millions of mines not yet covered by the Convention can come under its jurisdiction, and so that our collective demining and victim assistance efforts can be more far-reaching. We await with optimism the Second Review Conference, to be held in Cartagena, Colombia, in December, and hope for its positive outcome.

My delegation stresses the need to make progress and ensure transparency and consensus on the issue of conventional weapons. In our view, the United Nations is the optimal forum in which these issues should be considered. While we stress the importance of the complex issue of conventional weapons, that does not represent a change in or reconsideration of our priorities, foremost among which is the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction, beginning with nuclear weapons, which pose the greatest threat to

the peace and security of the international community and to humankind as a whole.

**Mr. Tarar** (Pakistan): The current session of the First Committee coincides with the emergence of positive signs in the international milieu. While renewed focus on nuclear disarmament is encouraging, it is self-evident that conditions conducive to the attainment of the cherished goal of a global zero cannot be created without addressing conventional asymmetries. This cannot come about if calls for disarmament mask a perpetual build-up of conventional arms and armed forces.

Global military expenditure, dubbed a colossal waste by the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I), stands at a staggering \$1,465 billion today. This travesty is rendered all the more poignant by the fact that the rich and powerful countries of the world are not willing to match their rhetoric with action by putting together a modest \$150 billion to meet the much-vaunted Millennium Development Goals, which have become a slogan that rises and founders on the rocks of United Nations conference rooms.

There is no denying the urgent need to address the challenge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. However, the debate on small arms and light weapons should not divert attention from the lucrative trade in combat aircraft, aircraft carriers, airborne and early warning and control systems, missile defence, nuclear submarines and warships, and so forth, as well as related technologies. By subverting regional stability for commercial considerations, such dealings disturb regional balance and stability, contributing to further discord.

Imbalance and tension create ideal marketing conditions for the sale of advanced weaponry. The global arms trade not only consumes resources that should be devoted to development, but creates the perennial cycle of an arms race. This state of affairs makes it a legal and moral imperative to promote control of conventional arms at the lowest possible levels of armaments and military forces, a *sine qua non* for an enabling environment for the resolution of outstanding disputes that can lead to regional and international peace and security.

The epoch-making SSOD I spelled out the prescription for nuclear disarmament negotiations, to be accompanied by the internationally negotiated

balanced reduction of armed forces, as well as conventional armaments. Such a process should be founded on the principles of equal and undiminished security for all States, as well as the promotion and enhancement of stability at a lower military level.

It is Pakistan's conviction that, if conventional arms control is to succeed, it should be pursued on a regional and subregional basis. Disputes and conflicts between States in the same regions or subregions generate most threats to peace and security. At the risk of stating the obvious, allow me to stress that the major onus in this regard falls on the militarily significant States. The egregious accumulation of conventional weapons, rooted in uncontrolled, commercially motivated transfers, is the bane of regional and global peace and stability. Conventional arms control should reduce insecurity by promoting balance, especially in former and possible theatres of conflict.

Greater transparency can greatly aid conventional arms control. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms should be used not only for reporting, but also as a means to develop global norms on transparency in armaments that are distilled from disarmament instruments by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and that can serve as meaningful early warning mechanisms in conflict prevention and the rationalization of arms acquisitions.

As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament should give serious thought to formulating principles governing frameworks for regional conventional arms control agreements. The disproportionate increase in the volume and sophistication of weaponry mars strategic stability, especially in tense regions. Such imbalances compel the pursuit of the equalizer potential provided by reliance on nuclear deterrence.

Pakistan's earnestness in promoting regional stability is evidenced by its pursuit of a strategic restraint regime comprising conflict resolution, nuclear and missile restraint, and conventional balance. The creation of a conventional weapons balance at the lowest possible armaments level will strengthen the dialogue process, thus leading to the resolution of outstanding issues and hence strategic stability. In the interest of peace and security in South Asia, extraregional players must recognize the imperative of balance policies.

In line with our well-known position on the issue of conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels, regional approaches to disarmament and confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels, as in previous years our delegation has, in addition to a resolution on negative security assurances, submitted three draft resolutions on these subjects. We thank the sponsors of the drafts and would like to point out that all four remain open to further sponsorship.

We are of the view that 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) and its five Protocols adequately address the humanitarian aspects of landmines. While noting the Convention on Cluster Munitions, we believe that, as an extra United Nations mechanism, it should supplement and not supplant the CCW process.

We have participated wholeheartedly and constructively in the process to examine the feasibility of an arms trade treaty and to establish its parameters and scope. We are convinced that any proposal with regard to the conventional arms trade has to take into account the right of all States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and retain conventional arms for self-defence and security. The destabilizing impact of conventional arms cannot be mitigated by the mere regulation of arms transfers and trade. There are larger questions about arms production and deployment and motivations for transfers and sale.

Leapfrogging from the Open-ended Working Group to an international conference is not likely to serve the purpose of international peace. We should not disregard the fact that the report of the Group of Governmental Experts (A/AC.277/2009/1) from which this process flows recommended a balanced, open, transparent, step-by-step and consensual approach.

**Mr. Rachmianto** (Indonesia): Indonesia fully subscribes to the statement made earlier on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Under this cluster, we would like to address four issues related to conventional weapons.

On the issue of small arms and light weapons, it is clear that the illicit use and trade of such arms and weapons have played havoc on societies. Tragically, these weapons continue to be the weapons of choice in many conflicts around the world, and their lethal

capacity to inflict heavy human and material suffering is self-evident. These weapons also contribute to organized crime, where their menace continues to impede socio-economic progress in many countries. The innocent will continue to suffer and live in fear unless all members of the international community fully implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Indonesia reaffirms the validity of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, and underlines the importance of continued and full implementation of the Programme of Action. In this regard, while we appreciate the outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States of 2008, efforts at the national, regional and international levels need to be accelerated to effectively address arms brokerage, marking, tracing, transfer control and the collection and destruction of illicit small arms and light weapons. We hope that there will be further progress in this respect prior to the next Biennial Meeting of States in June 2010.

As we highlighted at the Third Biennial Meeting, we stress the importance of regional approaches and emphasize that it is vital that they be supported. As part of the Programme of Action process, Indonesia will continue to work with the United Nations and the countries of our region to facilitate meetings and programmes to address relevant issues in the South-East Asia region.

International support is critical to the proper actualization of the Programme of Action, particularly in those countries and regions where the required capacities are lacking. Hence, we support the creation of a common framework linking needs with resources. We welcome the Programme of Action Implementation Support Unit of the United Nations and the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to develop a database for matching needs with resources.

As we emphasize the role of international cooperation and assistance, we underscore the legitimate defence and security needs of States, which must be fully respected. The inherent right of States to self-defence, including the fundamental right to maintain territorial integrity, must not be impinged in

any way in the efforts to prevent small arms from falling into the wrong hands.

With regard to an arms trade treaty, Indonesia stresses the complete and undiluted observance of these inherent rights of States also in the context of the ongoing deliberations on an arms trade treaty. The rights of sovereign States to acquire and possess conventional arms and of Governments to intergovernmental trade relations pertaining to these weapons must be fully guaranteed.

In the discussion towards an arms trade treaty, in which we have keenly participated both as a supporter and as a sponsor of last year's General Assembly resolution, we consider it important to reiterate some elements that remain essential to the ongoing intergovernmental deliberation process.

First, we need to take a fresh look at the issues related to an arms trade treaty, particularly those that are key. We reiterate that an arms trade treaty should clearly reaffirm the rights of all States to maintain their territorial integrity and political independence. It seems that the discussion affirming the right of self-defence has sometimes interpreted that right as not including the right of States to maintain their territorial integrity.

Secondly, there should be no doubt that the right to maintain territorial integrity is fully recognized in international law and the United Nations Charter. Regionally and bilaterally, too, there are several ongoing State practices that support a State's right to maintain its territorial integrity.

Thirdly, the right of all States to maintain their territorial integrity is neither against the intended object and purpose of an arms trade treaty nor against international humanitarian law. It also does not affect the States' efforts to protect the individual rights of their populations.

Fourthly, an arms trade treaty should be a legally binding instrument that sets the highest possible common and non-discriminatory global standards. In order to be non-discriminatory, an arms trade treaty would not merely universalize certain countries' or regions' interpretations of conduct in arms trade. A present proposal to employ a case-by-case basis approach in developing an arms trade treaty should be discussed thoroughly in order to avoid the concept of inconsistent application in the future arms trade treaty.

Fifthly, Indonesia looks forward to a substantial discussion on objective and transparent ways to determine how to define violations of certain provisions of an arms trade treaty. We want to discuss who will decide the provisions of an arms trade treaty, such as those ensuring that those which prohibit internal repression by States have been observed. An open, inclusive and judicious mechanism guided by the established principles of international law and international humanitarian law must be created to categorize such a situation. No one group of countries, including those that only export weapons, should have discretionary powers in this respect.

Lastly, the setting of all international standards for the arms trade treaty should be negotiated multilaterally under the principles laid down by established international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The process must duly consider the views and concerns of all Member States, including those developing countries that are the main importers of weapons.

On the issue of anti-personnel landmines, after becoming a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction in 2007, Indonesia immediately started taking action to fulfil its commitments as required by the Convention. We are pleased to say that, in less than two years, we have destroyed all anti-personnel mines in our stockpiles. We hope that similar steps will be taken by countries that remain outside the Convention, particularly in our region, since South-East Asia is one of the most mine-affected regions in the world, putting the lives of a large number of people at risk.

The forthcoming Second Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention, to be held in Cartagena in November, will be very important in that we will review the challenges and set the course for our collective efforts to implement the Convention in the next five years. Indonesia will continue to actively participate in striving to achieve the goals of the Convention and its universalization, with a view to reaching the objective of a mine-free world.

With respect to cluster munitions, the use of these inhumane and indiscriminate munitions which can cause harm to civilians is unacceptable. As part of the global efforts to promote the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Indonesia is organizing a regional

conference on the promotion and universalization of the Convention in Bali next month. This conference is being sponsored by the Governments of Germany, Norway, Austria and Australia, and by the United Nations Development Programme, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

Indonesia assures all Member States of its support and cooperation in strengthening the relevant international agreements and conventions on conventional weapons to which it is a party. We hope that those remaining outside these agreements will join them sooner rather than later in order to promote peace and stability for all.

**Mr. Boyoo** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Having already made a statement in the general debate, the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo would like to take this opportunity as well to thank the Chair for giving us the floor. We also wish to congratulate all the Member States present here on their efforts and the significant progress they have made in order to achieve disarmament and acceptable security conditions in their respect countries.

Like conventional armies, conventional arms are a constant danger throughout the world — in Africa, in the Central African region, in the subregion of the Great Lakes, and particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These weapons are veritable tools of mass destruction, and they continue to be the driving force behind inhuman violence of all kinds.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is logically lead to fight the scourge of these weapons and to make the most of the assistance provided by the international community as a direct result of the border insecurity situation, which threatens the inviolability of the Democratic Republic's borders as well as its geographic integrity; the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation; the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; the Ottawa Mine Ban Convention; the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which the Democratic Republic signed in New York in March 2009; as well as the importance of the country's strategic military potential.

My delegation's statement will focus essentially on small arms and light weapons and the reduction of armed violence, anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions.

With respect to small arms and light weapons and the reduction of armed violence, the Democratic Republic has made significant progress in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. On this front, the Democratic Republic of the Congo created a national control commission for small arms and light weapons and to reduce armed violence, which is directed by the Ministry of the Interior and Security, and backed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Defence. The commission has facilitators, a permanent Secretariat and three directors who assist it in its tasks. The commission also has representatives from the 11 provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At that level, there is bilateral and multilateral involvement in support of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that respect, we highlight the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme and its material support for the United Nations Programme of Action. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is implementing its own national action plan, which will be concluded in 2010, as well as a bill on small arms and light weapons currently being studied in Parliament with a view to its adoption and promulgation by the Head of State.

As to the destruction and clean-up of our national territory, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has destroyed 97,661 weapons and over 472 tons of ammunition for small arms and light weapons and weapons of other calibres. With regard to armed violence, as a result of confrontations with foreign armed forces in our territory and the aggression to which the Democratic Republic of the Congo was subject, more 4 million Congolese have been killed, over 2.3 million women raped, over 8,800 children raped and 2,370 elderly abused.

This violence is still being committed by negative forces operating in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The latest statistics, confirmed by the Secretary-General in his report for the period from July to September 2009 (S/2009/623), indicate that 2.2 million people are internally displaced in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1.1 million of whom have fled their homes. The Lord's Resistance Army from Uganda has provoked the displacement of 270,000 people, without counting the atrocities and killings that have taken place at the hands of herders from Chad and the Central African Republic, numbering in the thousands of civilian deaths in Orientale province in the North of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At the regional and subregional levels, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been a member of the Nairobi Protocol since 2004. We are working in close cooperation with the Regional Centre on Small Arms for the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, which assists our country in the application of the Nairobi Protocol, derived from the United Nations 2001 Programme of Action.

Under the leadership of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo joined the 2003 Brazzaville Declaration on Cooperation for Peace and Security in Central Africa as a State party. The Declaration, which was initiated by Sao Tome and Principe, aims to make Central Africa a weapons-free region of peace and development. Recently, at the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting, held in Libreville, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was elected as the Committee's rapporteur. Along with other Central African States members of the Advisory Committee, the Central African Republic also adhered to the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa.

Following the ratification of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction — which is a model legal instrument — the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has unfolded as follows.

In 2008, we established a national mine action focal point under the leadership of the Ministry for Security and the Interior, along with the Ministry for Defence and former combatants. The focal point has identified 3,004 areas suspected or known to be contaminated by landmines. It has also destroyed 3,079 landmines and 620,525 unexploded devices, demined 4,351.093 square metres of territory, destroyed 387,197 pieces of ammunition of varying calibre, demined 260 kilometres of roadway, raised awareness among 1,349,249 people, held 7,022 events to highlight the dangers posed by mines and unexploded remnants of war, and provided assistance to 3,420 victims.

Those activities have been made possible by our national mine action focal point, working in the context of international assistance with the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the non-governmental organizations Mines Advisory Group and Handicap International of Belgium. Certain demining and awareness-raising operations have been carried out by the military engineers of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I should also mention the participation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNICEF and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of the Congo attaches particular importance to an arms trade treaty. Such a treaty on conventional weapons must be robust, binding and incumbent upon every Member State. Such arms are veritable weapons of mass destruction that foment insecurity and instability in democratically elected Governments throughout the developing world that seek peace and development.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*