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First Committee

13th meeting

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Koterec (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 88 to 104 (*continued*)

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

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom fully supports the statement made this morning by the Ambassador of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. We also welcome the timely and constructive high-level meeting several weeks ago and, by the same token, the inclusion of this item on the agenda of this year's session of the First Committee.

During earlier interventions this morning, we heard several speakers talk about "political will" and descriptions of the existing institutions as the "sole negotiating" or "deliberative forums". Words are of course important, in particular here in our discussions today. It is, however, quite clear that the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission do not have a monopoly on negotiation or deliberation in the field of multilateral arms control and disarmament; nor, if the tenor of the debate at the recent high-level meeting can be taken as a yardstick, is political will, or indeed fervour, absent from that debate.

So, today, I would rather turn our attention to the idea of responsibility, both individually as nation States and collectively as members of the United Nations committed to the ideals of the United Nations Charter. The United Kingdom is committed to meeting its

responsibilities under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Only a few months ago, together with the other four nuclear-weapon States that share that commitment, we individually and collectively reaffirmed our commitment at the NPT Review Conference. In so doing, we agreed to a number of detailed and practical steps in a groundbreaking 64-point action plan (see NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)).

Equally, the United Kingdom remains ready to engage on the issues that have been identified in the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work, to which a number of delegations specifically referred during this morning's discussion. The United Kingdom therefore considers that we are meeting our disarmament commitments. We continue to reduce our nuclear capability, which is down 70 per cent in terms of its explosive power over the past 20 years, and we keep our capability under regular review. Later this week, I shall report to colleagues on the latest United Kingdom Strategic Defence and Security Review, which will be published by the Prime Minister tomorrow. Equally, the United Kingdom continues to meet our responsibility to engage with others in an open and frank manner on the issues that they wish to have considered in that important field.

Consequently, during today's debate it is surprising to hear colleagues and regional groupings assert that the responsibility for the current inability of the Disarmament Commission or the Conference on Disarmament to accomplish, indeed even to effectively respond to, our collective ambitions lies with the NPT

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nuclear-weapon States. The evidence suggests quite the opposite. Indeed, it shows that over the past four years a remarkable communality of views has been achieved between the NPT nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States parties. The problem does not lie with those that have publicly eschewed nuclear weapons and those that are committed to and are engaged in a process of disarmament.

In conclusion, over the past four years, a coalition of NPT States parties that share a common commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons, including also a number of non-States parties in that group, has engaged in a collective effort to reinvigorate the work of the existing disarmament machinery. That coalition has held together against all attempts to divert it from its purpose. After four years, it should be clear to those inside this institution, as it is to those in the outside world, that the responsibility for the lack of progress lies elsewhere, and no amount of rhetoric or attempts to introduce extraneous issues or to reinterpret the past can really obscure the fact, no matter how inconvenient some might find that to accept.

Mr. Wilson (Australia): As Australia has indicated during this First Committee session on a number of occasions, Australia remains dismayed by the continuing lack of progress on multilateral disarmament negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

We very much welcome the initiative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in convening the 24 September high-level meeting to help identify constructive means to restore the Conference to its proper function, namely, a negotiating body for multilateral disarmament treaties. That meeting provided the international community with an opportunity to look at the Conference on Disarmament's well-known failings over the past 15 years and at creative ways in which we can get the multilateral disarmament machinery back to work and take forward multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.34, entitled "Follow-up to the high-level meeting held on 24 September 2010: revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations", introduced this morning by the representative of Austria, ensures that the process that the Secretary-General has rightly encouraged will

continue. Australia is pleased to join others in sponsoring that draft resolution and encourages the strongest support for it.

Mr. Jerman (Slovenia): Let me express my joy at seeing you, Sir, presiding as Chair of the First Committee. On behalf of my delegation, let me congratulate you on your election. I would like to express all our support and the expectation that this Committee will manage its time productively.

I would like to add a few points in my national capacity to the statement delivered this morning on behalf of the European Union by Ambassador Lint of Belgium, which Slovenia fully supports.

As we have known for some time now, the disarmament machinery no longer properly serves its purpose. In other words, it is in a state of crisis. That is why in Slovenia we warmly welcomed the initiative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to convene the high-level meeting on disarmament that took place on 24 September here in New York. We ourselves have to admit that there has been no real progress in the field of international disarmament and arms control at the global level for a very long time. At the high-level meeting, we heard many interesting and useful proposals and ideas. We believe it is now high time to move forward with substantive follow-up and to start to implement those ideas.

The present session of this Committee is a good opportunity for that. That is why Slovenia supported and sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.34 on this issue, which was presented by the representative of Austria and, in our view, should pave the way forward for modernizing and reforming the disarmament machinery to enable it to adequately respond to the challenges of our time.

One central element of that new process should be a modernization of the Conference of Disarmament in Geneva. Today, the Conference faces two essential problems. First, it does not reflect the post-Cold War reality of the twenty-first century and, secondly, it has not worked at all for almost a decade and a half. The situation in the Conference on Disarmament is indeed deplorable. To sum up our belief, the Conference urgently needs modernization and reforms.

In the view of my delegation, it would be most helpful to properly revise the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament in order to make it more

flexible and efficient, as well as to open its membership to all Members of the United Nations. Addressing the challenges of global disarmament is our common responsibility. The Conference should reflect that reality.

We believe that the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament could be part of the solution, rather than of the problem. Many observer States and States candidates for membership employ experienced diplomats in multilateral negotiations, including in the disarmament and arms control areas. The opening up and expansion of the Conference would, in our view, enrich its life and work. The proposal to appoint a Conference coordinator on enlargement in January 2011 would, in our opinion, be a welcome step in the right direction, and a possible element of a follow-up draft resolution to the high-level meeting.

Also with regard to the Conference on Disarmament, it should be noted that, this year, the delegations of observer States to the Conference, including my own, organized themselves into the informal group of observers to the Conference. The group was coordinated by the delegation of Thailand in Geneva. The delegations of observer States have started to participate visibly in the work of the Conference. Various statements of the group were delivered, including one at the high-level meeting. Our group also had several contacts with the Presidents of the Conference — the so-called P-6 — whose representatives attended our meetings and briefed our group on the ongoing activities in the Conference. Slovenia is grateful to this year's P-6 colleagues for their work and all their assistance to the group of observer States.

However, the 2010 annual report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly (A/65/27), which the First Committee will consider next week, is very brief on that issue and contains only a short reference to the letter that the group sent to the Conference President. We sincerely hope that this situation will improve next year and that future reports of the Conference will be more accurate in that regard and better reflect the activities of the observer group in the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, let me briefly say a few words on the Disarmament Commission. There is no doubt that the Commission is part of the disarmament machinery. The meetings that the Commission holds each April here in

New York, which are usually long, have not been successful for years.

We believe that the Disarmament Commission reform should follow the modernization of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and should be part of the future disarmament machinery reform package. In our view, we should consider opportunities to improve its work. In that context, we see a more prominent role of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the work of which Slovenia fully supports.

Mr. Proaño (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador associates itself with the statement made this morning by the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, on behalf of the Common Market of the South and associated States.

Ecuador thanks the Secretary-General for his initiative and his efforts in organizing the high-level meeting. In that regard, I wish to say that, as is widely known, the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament defined the bodies within the United Nations system that would have responsibility for addressing the issue of disarmament and international security. One such body is the Conference on Disarmament. In that regard, Ecuador reaffirms its position of endorsing the decisions of that meeting. Similarly, although we believe that it is necessary to revitalize its work, we recognize the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

Against that backdrop, as other delegations have stated, Ecuador believes that it is timely to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, at which special attention would be given, among other issues, to the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament in a deliberative process, led by States themselves, which could also include a review of the procedures governing membership.

Finally, my delegation wishes to reiterate the call made in that regard in the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, with which Ecuador associated itself.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker under the disarmament machinery cluster.

In accordance with the adopted work programme, we will now begin our thematic debate under the conventional weapons cluster by listening to an introduction by His Excellency Mr. Pablo Macedo, Chairperson 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. Following his presentation, we will switch to an informal mode so that delegations wishing to ask questions can do so. I warmly welcome Ambassador Macedo and I now give him the floor.

Mr. Macedo (Mexico), Chairperson 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 (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to express my deepest appreciation to each and every delegation that took part in the Fourth Biennial Meeting, which made it possible, for the first time in the nine years of the existence of the Programme of Action, to adopt by consensus a substantive document, which will certainly make it possible to make concrete progress in the effort to prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. With that step, States sent a clear sign of our commitment to preventing thousands of people from dying or being injured daily as a result of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. At the same time, the United Nations has demonstrated that it has the ability to make convincing progress in weapons control processes and thereby contribute to international peace and security.

The final document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3) of the Fourth Biennial Meeting, with which all Member States are familiar, focuses on addressing weapons trafficking across borders, international cooperation and assistance and the creation of an improved follow-up mechanism to ensure the continuity of the Programme of Action. In a separate segment of the meeting, a document was adopted (see *ibid.*, annex) on the way forward in the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

I should now like to highlight some of the elements that I deem to be most important in that document. For instance, States recognized the urgent need to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade

in small arms and light weapons across maritime, air and territorial borders, with the understanding that this phenomenon affects the security of States and the well-being of peoples and their social and economic development.

States reiterated that Governments bore the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects across borders, while fully respecting the sovereignty of each State.

Owing to the transnational nature and scope of this illicit activity, States recognized, for the first time at the multilateral level, the value of addressing the issue through an approach of common responsibility with full respect for each State's sovereignty.

States also acknowledged that the "porosity of borders" is an aggravating element of illicit weapons trafficking and may lead to the prolongation of conflicts, exacerbating violence, undermining the internal security of States and increasing the activities of transnational organized crime.

It was recognized and recommended that States should develop comprehensive border management strategies that include measures to strengthen the legal framework, improve infrastructure, develop national capacities and cooperate with specialized agencies or bodies, such as Interpol and the World Customs Organization.

One practical element that I would like to emphasize is that States were also encouraged to designate a technical contact to facilitate timely cooperation and exchange information. In that regard, I respectfully invite delegations to consider swiftly designating the contact point.

States were also encouraged to promote cooperation and assistance, including the transfer of technical and financial resources and the conduct of joint actions, as appropriate.

In another relevant point, States noted that assistance included the provision of resources and expertise, including financial and technical resources, by one country to another with a view to building national capacity to effectively implement the Programme of Action. States also noted that cooperation encompasses all forms of joint or coordinated action between two or more States, including the sharing of information and experience, in

support of efforts to implement the Programme of Action.

States encouraged greater efforts by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in the context of the Programme of Action Implementation Support System, to assist States, upon prior request, in preparing project outlines identifying country-specific needs. Those efforts would surely help to better identify donors.

States encouraged the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament to assist in the matching of regional expertise and resources with regional needs.

States endeavoured to ensure the continuity, coherence and complementarity of the follow-up mechanism of the Programme of Action, noting that it would be useful to standardize the schedule over a six-year period, including two biennial meetings and one review conference, and to reach an agreement on the convening of further meetings of experts.

States were urged to make every effort to submit their reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action every two years. It is hoped that extending the reporting interval from one to two years will lighten the workload of States and facilitate the presentation of substantive and quantifiable information.

States also recognized the need for a comprehensive assessment of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action, 10 years following its adoption, as an input for the 2012 Review Conference.

As an innovative element, States were encouraged to consider the possibility of setting up a voluntary sponsorship fund to ensure universal participation in the forum. This could facilitate the holding of more detailed technical and policy-related meetings through the participation of delegations of experts from capitals.

Finally, I wish to underline that during the meeting, in addition to the points I have mentioned, other issues of importance to delegations were also addressed, including responsible civilian possession of weapons, illicit trafficking in ammunition, the humanitarian repercussions of illicit trafficking and a culture of peace.

As members of the Committee will be able to note — and are aware owing to their familiarity with the document — the Fourth Biennial Meeting laid the groundwork for strengthening various aspects of the Programme of Action. It is now up to each State to demonstrate, through implementation, their commitment to eradicate this criminal activity.

I therefore invite all delegations to make every effort to publicize the results of the Meeting at the national, regional and international levels. In that way, the outcome will be reflected in the short term by a reduction in weapons trafficking and, even more important, by an increase in the number of human lives we could save if illicitly trafficked weapons were no longer circulated with impunity in our respective territories.

We have an enormous responsibility before us. Therefore, allow me once again to respectfully call upon Member States to rise to that challenge and thus respond to the legitimate demands of thousands of people who experience daily the violence and suffering caused by weapons trafficking.

Finally, in my personal capacity, I wish to reiterate my gratitude to each of the States, international organizations and civil society groups for their valuable contributions and for having made it possible for this endeavour to take shape through concrete actions to prevent and combat this criminal activity.

The Chair: I thank Ambassador Macedo for his in-depth presentation.

We shall now continue to hear statements under the conventional weapons cluster.

Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and its associated States, namely, Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my own country, Brazil.

The 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 is a matter of high priority and urgency for MERCOSUR and its associated States. In that connection, several steps are essential for the full implementation of the Programme of Action,

namely, first, the adoption of legally binding instruments in the areas of identification, tracing and illicit brokering; secondly, the establishment of effective verification systems for end-user certificates; thirdly, the development of an international framework for end-user certificate authentication, reconciliation and standardization; and, fourthly, the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation and assistance and national capacity-building as cross-cutting independent issues.

MERCOSUR and its associated States also understand that in referring to the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, the Programme of Action should necessarily contain provisions related to ammunition and explosives.

The effective implementation of the Programme of Action requires a comprehensive approach. Its non-binding nature should not be an obstacle in that regard.

The key role of the Programme of Action in the area of small arms and light weapons requires strict and continuous follow-up of its implementation by the international community. MERCOSUR and its associated States welcome the results achieved during the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in June, and express appreciation for the work of its Chair, Ambassador Pablo Macedo of Mexico, and the facilitators. The final substantive document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3), which was adopted by consensus, enables discussions to continue on a series of issues, such as the illicit cross-border trade, international cooperation and assistance, the strengthening of the follow-up mechanisms of the Programme of Action and the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

In that context, MERCOSUR Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence, meeting under the aegis of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in follow-up to the decision taken in 2009 by their respective Presidents at San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina, to strengthen South America as a zone of peace, decided to establish a mechanism on confidence- and security-building measures. One of the measures was to

“develop and refine national systems for marking and tracing weapons and active cooperation among the member States of UNASUR in efforts to address cases involving the diversion, smuggling and illegal use of weapons in their custody or from their territories”.

It is also relevant to recall that, in 2001, the working group on firearms and ammunition of MERCOSUR and its associated States was established in order to share national experiences, harmonize national laws on firearms and ammunition control and coordinate political positions on the issue. The working group, which serves as a forum in which to exchange views, meets twice a year and has become a very useful tool for coordinating positions among the countries of MERCOSUR and its associated States.

In that regard, we wish to emphasize that at its most recent meeting the working group discussed the establishment of a regional register of seized, confiscated and decommissioned weapons — based on the experience of Argentina — while ensuring confidentiality of the data of weapons-holders.

MERCOSUR and its associated States express their expectations with regard to the meeting of governmental experts that will be held in May 2011 under the chairmanship of Ambassador Jim McLay of New Zealand. That meeting, which should be technical in nature and enjoy the greatest possible participation of experts from member States, should contribute to the objective of strengthening coordination among the relevant national institutions, as a crucial aspect of the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action. That will be the spirit in which MERCOSUR and its associated States will participate in the meeting.

On this item of the First Committee's agenda, MERCOSUR and its associated States express their support to Colombia, South Africa and Japan for their annual initiative in presenting the draft resolution entitled “Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”.

Also with regard to small arms and light weapons, MERCOSUR and its associated States highlight the need to address problems related to the non-regulated trade in conventional weapons and their diversion for illicit trade. To that end, we have participated actively in the preparatory process for the 2012 United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. In that regard, we thank Ambassador Roberto

García Moritán of Argentina, Chair of the Preparatory Committee, for the way in which he has guided the Committee's work. The first meeting of the Preparatory Committee, held last July, allowed for an open and inclusive discussion on the various expectations and objectives that member States have on the issue. We hope that the upcoming meetings in 2011 will promote an increasing convergence of views that reflects the interests of all States.

MERCOSUR and its associated States believe that the outcome of the 2012 Conference should lead to the consensus-based conclusion of a legally binding instrument, negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis, establishing common international rules for the arms trade. It should also be said that such rules must not affect the right of legitimate self-defence recognized in Article 51 of the Charter, as well as the right of all States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and possess conventional weapons for legitimate self-defence and security needs.

MERCOSUR and its associated States reiterate their support for efforts by the international community towards the regulation of cluster munitions, with the goal of significantly reducing the humanitarian, social and economic consequences of the use of these weapons for the civilian population. In addition to the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions, which entered into force last August, it is important that the States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons maintain the necessary support for the work of the Group of Governmental Experts so as to continue to consider the issue with a view to adopting a protocol to that Convention.

We also reaffirm the need to eliminate anti-personnel landmines. MERCOSUR and its associated States welcome the results of the second review conference of the parties to the Ottawa Convention, including the adoption of the 2010-2014 plan of action and the Cartagena declaration. We would highlight the important discussions carried out in recent months about the Convention's Implementation Support Unit, which we hope will be strengthened in order to properly carry out its functions.

MERCOSUR and its associated States believe that confidence-building measures are an important tool in consolidating peace and security. The South American region has pioneered the implementation of

confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. For many years, States of the region have committed themselves to strengthening the existing consultation and assistance mechanisms on security and defence matters between its members and to promoting their progressive development, as well as to improving cooperation in security and confidence-building measures and to promoting their implementation.

MERCOSUR and its associated States reiterate the importance of continuing to promote an enabling environment for arms control and the limitation of conventional weapons, which would allow each member to devote more resources to their economic and social development, taking into consideration compliance with international commitments and their legitimate security and defence needs.

Since the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, MERCOSUR and its associated States have supported the draft resolution presented by Argentina on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. Our countries urge all States to support the draft resolution and to contribute to the electronic database created by these resolutions, which facilitates the assessment of the progress achieved in the elaboration and implementation of these measures on a global level.

Mr. Lint (Belgium): I speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries of Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Iceland, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this declaration.

The past 12 months have been particularly productive in the field of conventional weapons with, inter alia, 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, the first and second sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World. The European Union will continue to be a very active and committed player in all those processes.

Each year, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition cause the death or injury of hundreds of thousands of people, including women and children. Their illicit trade and excessive accumulation adversely affect regional and international security and stability, fuel conflicts and armed violence and threaten the lives of individuals. The EU remains committed to working with all Member States in addressing those challenges within the framework of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The EU continues to consider this international instrument as the main multilateral framework for responding to challenges posed by the illicit trade and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons.

The activities of the EU in this field are guided by the EU Small Arms and Light Weapons Strategy of December 2005, and implemented through various instruments and a variety of concrete projects. The EU supports third States and regional organizations in their implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as other relevant instruments such as the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The EU is similarly on the front lines of promoting regional cooperation in the field of small arms and light weapons. Regional cooperation is a key aspect in the achievement of sustainable results in complementarity to national efforts. Inter alia, specific projects are also being implemented to support third countries' efforts to dispose of their small arms and light weapons and ammunition surpluses and to improve their stockpile management, including marking and record-keeping. The EU reiterates its strong support for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The EU also supports the elaboration of innovative tools and practices to prevent the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, in particular via air.

We continue to consider the Programme of Action the most relevant international instrument in the field of small arms and light weapons. The EU remains committed to the full implementation of the

Programme of Action. It is the general platform on which new common strategies and tools should be developed in order to address evolving challenges. In this regard, the EU actively contributed to the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, in June 2010, and looks forward to the next step. In the framework of the follow-up mechanism of the Programme of Action, the EU underlines the importance of agreeing on precise and operational recommendations to ensure the full implementation of the Programme of Action and its capacity to address the specific challenges posed by the trafficking and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons.

In this context, it is crucial to maintain and improve useful and effective tools to better match needs with available resources, such as the United Nations Programme of Action Implementation Support System, and to identify additional mechanisms to make this process more effective. We highly appreciate the supportive role that the group of interested States in New York plays in that regard. The EU believes that the open-ended meeting of governmental experts to be held in May 2011 could be the next occasion to apply such a pragmatic and results-driven approach. In the view of the EU, the 2012 Review Conference should provide the occasion for States Members of the United Nations to assess thoroughly the level of implementation of the Programme of Action 11 years after its adoption, to consider its adequacy to respond to threats related to small arms and light weapons and to take the right decisions to further improve the Programme of Action and speed up its implementation.

The EU is strongly convinced that focusing our efforts to address only the illicit trade in arms is not enough. It is by regulating the legal trade in conventional weapons that we can more successfully address the challenges posed by the unregulated trade in conventional arms and their diversion to the illicit market. It is on the basis of that conviction that the EU firmly supports the negotiation of an arms trade treaty, a legally binding international instrument establishing the highest common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons.

The EU welcomes the first positive results of the sessions of the Preparatory Committee held in New York in July 2010. These results show that Member States are now constructively engaged in the process. The EU would also like to express its gratitude and

appreciation to Ambassador García Moritán of Argentina, who so skilfully chairs the Committee. The EU will work towards reaching agreement in the Committee on concrete and comprehensive recommendations on the structure and specific content of a future treaty, to be submitted for consideration by the 2012 United Nations Conference.

It is our view that the arms trade treaty should be as universal as possible, and thus have a real impact on the conventional arms trade. A strong and robust arms trade treaty would prevent conventional weapons from being used to threaten security, destabilize regions and States, violate human rights law or international humanitarian law, undermine economic and social development or exacerbate conflict. The arms trade treaty should also prevent the diversion of conventional weapons to the illicit market. To that effect, the scope of the treaty should be as broad as possible in terms of the types of arms and the activities covered. The treaty should require all States party to it to assess applications for arms trade against the highest possible standards and parameters as required by the treaty, including respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and a thorough analysis of the risk of diversion to unintended users. The arms trade treaty should include transparency, monitoring and assistance provisions.

The EU strongly believes in the need to ensure the broadest participation in the treaty negotiating process in order to ensure the universalization of the treaty, maximum ownership of this instrument and the engagement of all parties involved in its negotiation. To that end, the EU has redoubled its efforts to promote participation in the process. After the successful completion of a first series of outreach seminars in 2009, the EU has just launched another ambitious project comprising seven new regional events. This new series of seminars will be organized in cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and will aim at promoting the treaty process among Member States, civil society and industry, while supporting third-party countries in their efforts to establish, improve and implement, as appropriate, effective arms-transfer controls.

The European Union welcomes the substantial progress achieved in the universalization and implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The

Review Conference in Cartagena gave renewed impetus to our common efforts to reach all the objectives of the Convention, including a world free from anti-personnel mines. The EU is fully committed to implementing the Cartagena Action Plan. The European Union would be remiss not to take this opportunity to warmly thank Ambassador Eckey of Norway, for very ably chairing the Cartagena Review Conference, as well as His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan, for his tireless efforts at the universalization of the Convention.

Significant progress has been achieved in the implementation of the Convention, but much remains to be done. The financial and political support provided by the EU and its member States to mine action has been substantial. It clearly illustrates our commitment to the goal of a world free of anti-personnel mines. Our support has focused on the promotion of the universalization of the Convention and on assistance to States parties in complying with their obligations, including stockpile destruction, clearing mined areas, risk education and assisting victims.

The universalization of the Convention remains one of the highest priorities. Currently, there are 156 States parties. The EU appeals to all States outside the Convention, especially those that still retain large quantities of anti-personnel mines, to accede to the Convention as soon as possible.

The right of parties to an armed conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited. That fundamental rule of international humanitarian law has guided the international community when adopting, implementing and further developing the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols. By weapon-specific prohibitions and restrictions, the CCW regime strengthens several rules regulating the conduct of hostilities, such as the requirement that a distinction be made at all times between civilians and combatants, and the prohibition of the use of weapons that inflict excessive injury or unnecessary suffering on combatants.

The EU welcomes the recent ratifications of the Convention and/or its Protocols by Antigua and Barbuda, Belgium, China, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Italy, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. We call on all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the CCW and its Protocols. In particular, the EU welcomes continued developments in the

implementation of CCW Protocol V, on Explosive Remnants of War.

The EU remains firmly committed to responding to the humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions. The EU considers it essential to make strong commitments in this area that are likely to have concrete results on the ground vis-à-vis the victims of those weapons, and thus to have a true humanitarian impact.

The EU welcomes the entry into force, on 1 August, of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Furthermore, the EU welcomes the growing number of ratifications and looks forward to the First Meeting of States Parties, to be held in Vientiane, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, in November.

As some States are not yet in a position to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the EU remains convinced that concluding a complementary agreement in the framework of the CCW that takes into account both humanitarian and military aspects could contribute significantly to addressing the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. The Group of Governmental Experts within the CCW dealing with cluster munitions has continued its work in 2010. The EU would like to underline its appreciation for the strong commitment of its Chair. In our view, a future legally binding instrument on cluster munitions within the CCW must be compatible with, and complementary to, the Convention, and should also include provisions on cooperation and assistance. We expect such an instrument to make a significant humanitarian contribution and to contain an immediate prohibition of the use, production or transfer of cluster munitions.

The exchange of information on national legislation, regulations and procedures on the transfer of arms, military equipment, dual-use goods and technology contributes to mutual understanding and confidence among States. Such transparency is also beneficial to States that are in the process of developing legislation on transfers. The EU encourages Member States to provide the relevant information to the Secretary-General for inclusion in the electronic database. We also call on all Member States to submit an annual report on their conventional arms transfers to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

The EU reiterates its strong support for the Register of Conventional Arms. We commend the members of the Group of Governmental Experts for

their efforts to make the Register more relevant to a larger number of countries by including a separate category on small arms and light weapons, although we are disappointed that the Group could not reach consensus on recommendations to that effect. The inclusion of small arms and light weapons as a separate category remains a priority for the EU vis-à-vis the next meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts, in 2012.

Transparency in the area of military expenditure is another key element in building trust between States and preventing conflict. The rise in global military spending in the last decade emphasizes the need for an effective United Nations mechanism for reporting such expenditures. That is why the EU looks forward to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts established by the General Assembly with a mandate to review in November the continuing operation and further development of the standard instrument for accounting for military expenditures.

We encourage the further mobilization of resources to assist countries affected by armed violence and the irresponsible spread of small arms and light weapons. We continue to support the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, given the close link between security and development. The EU welcomes the Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence and will work with all States, international organizations and civil society to achieve measurable reductions in armed violence and to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Chair: Before proceeding, I should like to remind delegations that we have a long list of speakers. Members are therefore kindly asked to keep their statements as short as possible and to circulate the full versions of their texts.

Mrs. Ledesma Hernández (Cuba) (spoke in Spanish): In recent decades, the sophistication and destructive power of conventional weapons around the world have increased considerably, making them more and more deadly. The result is the worrying, marked imbalance in the priority and attention given to specific categories of conventional weapons — such as small arms and light weapons — to the detriment of others, such as sophisticated conventional weapons, whose effects are significantly more devastating.

Cuba believes that, in order to prevent and eradicate the traffic in small arms and light weapons in

the medium and short terms, its underlying causes must be tackled. Cuba defends the legitimate right of States to manufacture, import and possess small arms and light weapons in order to address their security and legitimate defence needs, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time, we support the adoption of more effective methods for preventing and combating the illicit trafficking in such weapons and to prevent their use by those who commit terrorist and criminal acts at the international level.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has serious social, humanitarian and economic consequences for many countries around the world, leaving their right to life, peace and sustainable development seriously compromised. Cuba will continue to firmly support the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Cuba has also fully complied with the Programme of Action's commitments and practical measures. We reiterate our support for an effective follow-up mechanism that would ensure the full implementation of the Programme of Action, which has been able to show some results. However, much remains to be done in order to implement it fully.

International cooperation and assistance are essential if all Member States are to make progress towards full compliance with the Programme of Action. To that end, our country participated in the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in June.

In the context of the work of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty, Cuba stresses the need for the process to take place within the framework of the United Nations in a balanced, gradual, transparent and inclusive manner, based on consensus. Pressured or forced decisions have no place here. The issue of the transfer of conventional arms is complex; it has significant political, economic, legal and security implications for all States, and as such does allow for preconceived or simplistic solutions. The views of every State should be duly taken into account.

Cuba shares fully the legitimate humanitarian concerns associated with the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of anti-personnel landmines. At the

same time, it is well known that for more than five decades our country has been subject to a policy of continued hostility and aggression on the part of the military super-Power. Consequently, Cuba cannot renounce the use of such weapons in its efforts to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity, in keeping with the right to legitimate defence recognized in the Charter. For that reason Cuba is not a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines and on Their Destruction.

We will continue to fully support, including in our capacity as a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, all efforts that, while maintaining the necessary balance between humanitarian and national security issues, aim to eliminate the terrible effects that the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines has on the civilian populations and economies of many countries. Cuba urges all States in a position to do so to provide the financial, technical and humanitarian assistance necessary for the removal of landmines and the social and economic rehabilitation of their victims.

Mr. Moktefi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): In this thematic discussion on conventional arms, the Algerian delegation would like to underscore its position on certain issues of concern to the international community.

The illicit trade in and transfer of small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and stability in many countries, especially in Africa, and is thus a source of ongoing concern for Algeria. My delegation would therefore like to reiterate our commitment 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, which was adopted in 2001 at the United Nations Conference on the subject, as well as to call for strengthening it. That important instrument has clearly contributed to genuinely raising awareness about the harmful humanitarian and political consequences of this scourge, which serves as a source of weapons, especially for terrorist groups and organized crime.

In that regard, my country has not let up in its intensive efforts to cut off at its borders the trafficking in light weapons organized by cross-border smugglers, which serves to fuel terrorism, especially in the

Sahelo-Saharan strip. In addition to adapting existing laws and regulations that provide for heavy penalties and fines against smugglers, Algeria has in recent years continued to strengthen its operational system for stopping criminal and terrorist networks.

As stated in the United Nations Programme of Action, regional and subregional cooperation are essential to ensuring effective border control and to achieving the eradication of the illicit trade in light weapons. Algeria has therefore been working on cooperative efforts with countries of the Sahel, especially through programmes for training security forces and customs agents to make it possible for those countries to develop their administrative, technical and operational capacities in this area.

The worrying situation that prevails currently in the Sahelo-Saharan region also requires commensurate assistance from developed countries and concerned international organizations to strengthen the capacities of countries in the subregion to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. My delegation notes with appreciation that the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/65/153 refers to a number of actions undertaken in that regard by Member States and the United Nations system in the context of implementing resolution 64/50.

By way of example, I would like to refer to the joint holding of a workshop last March by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, in collaboration with the Italian and German Governments, focused on improving the capacities of West African States in the areas of customs, border control and weapons circulation.

Algeria has been fully committed to implementing the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons since its adoption in 2005. Our efforts in that regard were noted in our 2010 national report. Likewise, our national regulations address the three main areas covered by the instrument, that is, the marking and registering of weapons and cooperating in tracing them, as the Algerian delegation stated at the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held here in New York in June.

Cooperation in the area of tracing arms nevertheless continues to be the main difficulty in implementing this international instrument. Given its non-binding character, most States parties, under various pretexts, continue to be reticent to exchange relevant information on illicit traffic in arms. It would therefore be useful for improving cooperation in this area to encourage agreements at international, regional and bilateral levels in order to exchange information to make it possible to trace small arms and light weapons.

With regard to the initiative towards an arms trade treaty, Algeria has from the beginning been involved in the process in a determined and constructive manner. That position is based on our belief that a legally binding international instrument, concluded under the auspices of the United Nations to regulate the arms trade, would contribute to strengthening international peace and security. To that end, it would be appropriate to establish common international norms for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons, while of course respecting the sovereignty and security of States.

The adoption by the General Assembly on 6 December 2006 of resolution 61/89 and the discussion in the open-ended working group established by resolution 63/240 showed the importance Member States attach to this issue. That was reflected even more clearly in resolution 64/48, which specifically launched a preparatory process towards an arms trade treaty. It is in that context that, last July in New York, the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty met to plan the United Nations Conference scheduled for 2012. Algeria was fully involved in the deliberations and explorations of the working group in 2008 and 2009, just as it made its contribution as a member of the Group of Governmental Experts in 2007.

Like all international conventions, there is a need to define the basic principles and the scope of application of that draft treaty. Algeria believes that the instrument should be based on the principles of the United Nations Charter, especially the equal sovereignty of States, the right of peoples to self-determination and the right of States to legitimate defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter. The provisions of the treaty should also be in keeping with the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, a ban on the acquisition of

territory by force or the occupation of the territory of others or the use of force in international relations.

Respecting the principles enshrined in international law is, in our opinion, fundamental to ensuring that the necessary legality and legitimacy attach to the treaty, as well as to ensuring its credibility and universality. Thus, the process of drafting such an important instrument should be carried out in a manner that is inclusive and transparent, so as to address general concerns. It also requires the participation of all stakeholders, especially countries that are the main exporters and importers of weapons. That condition is imperative for the adoption and the implementation of the future arms trade treaty.

It goes without saying that our commitment to such a treaty on conventional arms in no way changes Algeria's priority adherence to the goal of general disarmament, and nuclear disarmament in particular.

Mr. Danon (France) (*spoke in French*): Once again this year, many of the draft resolutions before the First Committee address conventional weapons. France welcomes the very high quality of these draft resolutions.

Although in reality the Committee spends more time on negotiations pertaining to nuclear weapons, that fact must not lead us to lose sight of other multilateral disarmament negotiations. We must remain mobilized on all fronts — biological, chemical, conventional, ballistic proliferation and space. The aim is not only to improve international security but also to prevent nuclear disarmament being compensated for by new arms races in these other fields.

With respect to conventional weapons, three important negotiating processes have been concluded in the course of the past 15 years, which France welcomes, particularly as we were active participants. They include those of the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions. From this we can see the positive influence of civil society and its ability to mobilize. The role of civil society in the multilateral system must be further strengthened. Indeed, we can see a common thread linking these three instruments — that is, they pertain to conventional weapons that do not play a decisive role in determining the outcome of a conflict but inflict

unacceptable harm from a humanitarian point of view during and after conflicts.

We will of course be present in Vientiane next month to welcome the entry into force of the Oslo Convention and to begin working on its effective implementation. Subsequently, we will resume negotiations in Geneva on a sixth protocol to the CCW, on cluster munitions. I wish to reaffirm my country's unwavering position in that regard, namely, that we want to see these negotiations lead to a successful outcome and a future protocol that is legally binding, equipped with strong humanitarian components, compatible with the Oslo Convention and effective immediately. We are hopeful that the Meeting of States Parties in November will give impetus to continued negotiations on the basis of new gains, which we hope will be decisive when it comes to discussions with a certain number of key players.

Likewise, we hope that increased effort will be devoted to small arms and light weapons, the illegal traffic and excessive accumulation of which affect international security and stability and fuel armed violence, which significantly slows development in a great number of countries.

Following an initiative by the French presidency of the European Union, the topic of small arms and light weapons is now systematically included on the Union's agenda for the negotiation of association agreements with third countries. This goes to show that we remain fully committed to improving on the United Nations Programme of Action, as we did during the Biennial Meeting of States in June. We welcomed its adoption of a final document (see A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3) and the fruitful discussions on themes close to our hearts, including notably the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, border controls and international cooperation and assistance. Moreover, we regret that the work of the expert group did not lead to the adoption of light weapons as an eighth category in the Register, even though consensus was nearly attained on this point.

The draft resolution adopted here last year aimed at launching negotiations on an arms trade treaty (A/C.1/64/L.38/Rev.1 and resolution 64/48) has borne fruit. A process was put in place that saw the holding of a series of preparatory meetings for the Conference, which is scheduled for 2012. The first Preparatory Committee meeting, which was held in July, led to two

important outcomes. The first is that ever fewer countries are questioning the relevance of an arms trade treaty. Some still express doubts, but the existence of such a treaty in principle now seems to have been well accepted. In that regard, the change in stance by several key actors last year, beginning with the United States, was decisive, which we welcome.

The second notable result is that the architecture of a future treaty is beginning to be sketched out thanks to our valuable discussions. We are moving towards a treaty based on three pillars. The first is a normative part, under which each State party would have to establish a national structure to control exports, imports and transfers. The second entails that the treaty would have to provide for the criminal prosecution of traffickers and their accomplices, with special attention to the means they use, notably corruption and money-laundering. Finally, the third has to do with the treaty incorporating a significant cooperation element. Such cooperation, essential for the treaty's proper implementation, would have to cover in a thorough and non-discriminatory manner a wide range of provisions, from technical assistance to administrative cooperation and mutual legal assistance.

In conclusion, the treaty must promote international humanitarian law, human rights and economic and social rights within the framework of sustainable development, to which my country is particularly committed.

Mr. Suda (Japan): I shall endeavour to deliver a shortened version of my prepared statement.

Japan welcomes the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and congratulates the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for hosting the First Meeting of States Parties, which will be held next month in Vientiane. We are pleased to contribute to the upcoming Meeting, at which we will serve as friend of the Chair on universalization. It is our strong hope that more and more countries, including the main producers and possessor States, will join the CCM and take concrete action on related humanitarian problems.

Japan attaches importance also to the creation of an effective and meaningful international legal instrument within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in which major producers and possessors of cluster munitions are involved. We believe that it is the duty of responsible

members of the CCW to conclude the ongoing negotiations with political will.

On landmines, at the Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World in December last year, States parties reviewed the status and operation of the Ottawa Convention 10 years on from its entry into force and renewed their firm commitments for further cooperation. The adoption of the Cartagena Action Plan and the 2009 Cartagena Declaration were remarkable outcomes of the Summit. Japan is determined to steadily put into practice the commitments contained in the Action Plan and the Declaration. We call on all other States parties to do the same, and also call on all countries that are not parties to the Ottawa Convention to accede to it forthwith.

In order to address the humanitarian problems caused by anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, since 1998 the Government of Japan has extended to 44 countries approximately \$390 million in aid for clearance activities and victim assistance. Japan will continue that support and contribute to curbing the humanitarian problems caused by these weapons.

Small arms and light weapons take the lives of hundreds of thousands of people worldwide every year. The United Nations needs to continue to actively address this issue. Japan welcomes the adoption of the outcome document (see A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3) of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States, held in July, which includes a follow-up mechanism to the Programme of Action. We believe that the outcome document will serve as an important tool for implementing the Programme of Action on the ground. Next year, we will have to carry out a comprehensive review on the 10 years of activities under the United Nations Programme of Action as an input for the 2012 Review Conference. For that, we encourage all Member States to submit their regular reports.

This year, Japan, together with Colombia and South Africa, has once again submitted a draft resolution on small arms and light weapons. In so doing, we renew our determination on the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and put forward a road map for the follow-up to the Programme of Action. We call on all Member States to extend their support to the draft resolution, which we hope will be adopted by consensus.

The process of establishing an arms trade treaty is of great importance for the international community, as it could enhance responsible international transfers of conventional weapons and thus prevent their diversion to illicit markets. The Preparatory Committee in July this year produced a valuable Chair's paper and facilitators' summaries that identify many elements for establishing a clear framework of an arms trade treaty. It is vital that productive discussions continue among Member States so as to produce a treaty that sets strong, high-level, common international standards in 2012. Japan, as one of the co-authors of the draft resolutions on an arms trade treaty, is ready to actively contribute to the success of this process.

In conclusion, I would like to mention here that Japan has taken a unique and strict policy of prohibiting the export of any arms in principle. Conventional weapons could exacerbate armed conflicts around the world. Japan has been working comprehensively on rule-making, development and humanitarian concerns, including victim assistance. Japan is committed to continue such work in cooperation with other States and civil society.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): Like the representative of Japan, I will also deliver a condensed version of my statement, the full text of which will be circulated.

We note with satisfaction that since the last session of the First Committee progress has been made in the field of conventional arms. In some areas, the implementation of existing instruments has been strengthened, while work continues on the elaboration of new international norms and instruments regulating the use, production and stockpiling of such weapons. However, much remains to be done.

Small arms and light weapons continue to be responsible for a large number of casualties every day. Most of the weapons responsible for these fatalities and injuries are illegal, which illustrates the magnitude of the challenge we face to curb the unnecessary deaths of innocent people. It is our strong belief that we need to put peace, security, combating criminality and humanitarian concerns ahead of commercial interests if we are to successfully address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

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. In that connection, we welcome the successful conclusion of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, which took place in June here in New York. The Chair's summary provides us with action-oriented measures in support of the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

Colombia, Japan and South Africa — with the coordination of Colombia — will again this year submit the omnibus draft resolution on addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The draft resolution provides an update on issues related to the implementation of the Programme of Action, especially the outcome of the Fourth Biennial Meeting, and an operational framework for its future implementation. My delegation hopes that the General Assembly will be able to adopt the text by consensus due to its non-controversial nature.

South Africa will continue to work hand in hand with other Member States in the process spelled out in resolution 64/48, entitled "The Arms Trade Treaty", which mandates a preparatory committee process to negotiate a legally binding instrument that will establish the highest possible common standards for the regulation of arms transfers. The first Preparatory Committee session, held in July this year, saw a robust debate develop that allowed for an encouraging exchange of ideas. South Africa wishes to express its satisfaction with the progress that was made towards establishing a common understanding around some of the key issues that the Treaty will address.

South Africa attaches great importance to the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. In that regard, we welcome the successful holding of the second review conference in Cartagena, Colombia, in November and December of last year. While we welcome the progress that has been made to date, it is clear that much more needs to be done to achieve our goal of a world free of anti-personnel mines. Many mine victims still do not have access to medical care, education, physical rehabilitation, social services and vocational training and subsequent employment. We are also concerned that a number of States parties could not meet their clearance deadlines and consequently requested extensions. The slow pace of clearance hinders reconstruction and development efforts in communities that desperately need land for agriculture and other important uses.

South Africa shares the concern about the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. As a signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, South Africa is fully committed to the ban on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster munitions. We therefore welcome the entry into force of the Convention on 1 August. My country has been playing an active role in the preparations for the first meeting of States parties, scheduled to take place in the Lao People's Democratic Republic next month.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions represents a landmark humanitarian disarmament instrument that sets new standards in our collective commitment to the principles of international humanitarian law. As a former producer of cluster munitions that have an area-wide effect, South Africa believes that these weapons have not only become obsolete as weapons of modern warfare but that their recent use in conflicts has shown them to cause unacceptable harm to civilians even long after the cessation of active hostilities. South Africa has a relatively small stockpile of obsolete cluster munitions that has already been earmarked for destruction. We welcome the significant support that the Convention on Cluster Munitions has received to date and the fact that it has been endorsed by most African States.

As a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), South Africa remains committed to the full implementation and universal application of the provisions of the framework Convention and its five Protocols. In addition, South Africa has also been actively participating in recent years in the CCW meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts negotiating a possible protocol on cluster munitions. While we appreciate the efforts that have been made for many years to deal with cluster munitions in the CCW context, we are concerned about the lack of progress in the CCW towards the finalization of a credible instrument that will address the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. We note that the current draft text under consideration still contains a number of elements that contradict the principles of international humanitarian law. In addition, the transition periods provided for in the draft text remain a serious concern for my delegation. In our view, this draft provision only serves to legitimize the continued use of indiscriminate cluster munitions and does not serve our goal of protecting civilians during and after armed conflict.

In conclusion, I wish to assure you, Sir, of South Africa's full cooperation and support as we work towards a successful conclusion of this First Committee session that will guide our activities in the coming year.

Mr. Manhiça (Mozambique): I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

The Mozambique delegation commends the Secretary-General's report on assistance to States to curb the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them (A/65/153). It demonstrates the engagement of the United Nations system and of Member States with the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, in accordance with resolution 64/50. We note with satisfaction the progress made during the period under consideration.

The Government of Mozambique reiterates the importance of the consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures at all levels. In that regard, we support the adoption of joint mechanisms that contribute to peace and security, particularly the protection of civilians. We believe that the Programme of Action adopted in 2001 is the most important instrument we have for addressing illicit trafficking in small arms, as it represents a framework for establishing international norms and measures to address small arms issues and for promoting their responsible implementation by States.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome and encourage the establishment of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism. We consider it a valuable contribution that will reinforce the role of the United Nations in preventing violence and mitigating the impact of small arms and light weapons on society, communities and individuals.

The Government of Mozambique has set up a partnership with the United Nations to conduct weapon-risk mitigation and the mainstreaming of mine action, small arms and light weapons controls by working with technical advisers in the areas of stockpile management and control and of firearms registration and weapons collection, management and destruction, as well as in training law enforcement

officers and working with civil society in the area of civic education. Our Government continues to strengthen its national laws, regulations and administrative procedures in order to exercise control over small arms and light weapons in the areas of production, export, import, transit and retransfer, as well as in regulating the movement of firearms inside the country.

In the framework of the Programme of Action, Mozambique continues to be actively involved in border management. In that regard, my country has been part of a joint cross-border operations and training programme conducted under the supervision of the Southern African Regional Police Cooperation Organization, aimed at preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms. That partnership is extended to other countries around the world that are facing similar situations in the area of illicit trafficking in small arms. One of our priorities in this regional partnership is the development of an integrated electronic firearms registry, one of the pillars of our arms and ammunition policy.

In 2008, we approved two major programme instruments in the area of demining, namely, our National Mine Action for the period 2008 to 2014 and a request to extend the deadline for concluding the demining process in Mozambique from 2009 to 2014, in compliance with the Ottawa Convention. These have served to keep demining at the centre of the Government of Mozambique's development agenda. The Government has in fact adopted a strategy aimed at demining district by district, in order to address the problems caused by mines at the community level. Our priority for demining in Mozambique is to be able to resettle areas earmarked for social infrastructure and socio-economic areas of interest, such as agriculture, roads and bridges, railways, dams, power transmission lines, as well as industrial infrastructure. Civic education on the danger of mines continues in the areas where demining activities are held or where the presence of mines is suspected.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique to accelerating our demining process so that it is completed by 2014. We concur within the view expressed in the Secretary-General's report that the growing recognition of the issue of small arms and light weapons should be addressed through a wider, multisectoral approach, as was also stressed in the

discussions at the Fourth Biennial Meeting held in June.

Mr. Obindza (Republic of Congo) (*spoke in French*): The proliferation and excessive use of small arms and light weapons, which are so prone to illicit trafficking and whose use is so widespread in armed conflicts, poses a real challenge to international peace, stability and security. Statistics give an idea of the extent of this threat. By 2008 more than 870 million firearms were in circulation around the world, which on average cause the death of some 740,000 people every year. Even outside areas of conflict, they have continued to sow death and desolation.

The United Nations, indeed the entire international community, is engaged in combating this scourge, which continues to spread, especially in Africa. The 2001 adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons is a clear illustration of these efforts. That frame of reference has since been reinforced by other actions aimed at eradicating this scourge. The adoption in 2005 of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as the biennial review of the Programme of Action, held for the fourth time in June, also contribute to that goal. But there should be more dynamic cooperation driving the actions of the international community forward in this fight.

The most recent review, held during the Fourth Biennial Meeting from 14 to 18 June in New York, produced a consensus on relevant measures to be taken, in particular strengthening cooperation among the institutions responsible for border control and coordinating their activities, as well as improving national capacity-building in the area of international cooperation and assistance.

Congo is committed to working in concert with the international community to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. To that end, our Government has been working at the international, regional and national levels. The Republic of Congo, in joining the Programme of Action and the International Instrument, is resolutely committed to supporting the efforts of the international community in combating the trade and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons. Just 10 days ago, during the general debate, my delegation

welcomed the adoption — in April, at the end of the thirtieth Ministerial Meeting in Kinshasa of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa — of a convention on the control of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition, parts and components that can be used for their manufacture, repair or assembly. Brazzaville, the neighbouring city of Kinshasa, will host the solemn signing ceremony in the middle of November of this year.

The Central African subregion has been particularly plagued by numerous armed conflicts that have affected the stability of States and destroyed its socio-economic fabric. Many of these States are in post-conflict situations. Others, after recovering with great difficulty from civil wars, are engaged in the laborious process of reconstruction and economic recovery.

This convention, which reflects the commitment of our States to rid the subregion of such phenomena of cross-border insecurity as armed robbery and extortion will also strengthen measures to spare civilians, especially women and children, from the ravages of small arms and light weapons. The States of Central Africa have thereby taken up the challenge to fight together this scourge that has fuelled for over three decades the conflicts and the related phenomena of transnational crime in our region.

My country's determination to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons has also resulted in the signing of a tripartite agreement with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Angola, which allows the organization of regular patrols on their respective borders in order to curb cross-border crime; the signing in December 2000 of the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime; the accession in May 2009 to the process that is being led by the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and neighbouring countries; the creation of a high commissioner for the reintegration of former combatants responsible for the implementation of disarmament programmes; digital and nominal control systems designed to identify and register all weapons used by the police; the computerization of the management flow of weapons; an inventory of weapons equipment in the structures of the police force in order to establish new weapons registers; and the drafting and submission to United Nations bodies of

reports on the implementation of the International Instrument and the Programme of Action.

It seems clear that the effective control of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is critical. In this regard, the machine for electronically marking weapons that my country now has is a valuable tool in the fight against this scourge. The encouraging results that the Congolese Government has achieved in the fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons can be seen in the context of a country that has experienced the horrors of civil war. Between 2000 and 2009, 8,244 firearms, 696 weapons with blades and 304,818 pieces of ammunition and explosives were collected and destroyed. All these efforts have benefited from the multifaceted support of our multilateral and bilateral partners, to whom I wish to reiterate the gratitude of the Congolese Government. I invite them to join us in carrying out other activities related to this issue.

The Republic of Congo fully supports the conclusion of a binding arms trade treaty.

Before I conclude my statement, let me appeal for the strengthening of collective action with a view to ridding the world of the threat of small arms and light weapons, which are the source of many conflicts and hotbeds of tension.

Mr. Wilson (Australia): In the interest of time, I too will deliver an abridged version of my statement.

The past year has seen important developments in conventional arms control, which Australia strongly welcomes. The Convention on Cluster Munitions, which will play an important role in reducing the threat posed by cluster munition remnants, entered into force on 1 August. The first meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the Diplomatic Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty in July made genuine progress towards bringing that treaty into being. And the consensus adoption of a substantive report from the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons was a significant achievement. These developments show that we can make progress on difficult security issues so long as States are committed to a common goal and determined to see it achieved.

Australia welcomes the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which is a significant humanitarian achievement. The

Convention's provisions on victim assistance now set the standard for other conventional arms control regimes. The Convention's clearance and assistance provisions will help communities free their lands of contamination and the debilitating effects of these weapons. The First Meeting of States Parties, to be held in the Lao People's Democratic Republic next month, will lay the foundation for implementing the Convention. We warmly welcome the Lao Government's commitment to and early leadership of the Convention.

Australia has been honoured to work with the Lao People's Democratic Republic as a friend of the President on clearance and risk reduction education. The Convention's strong provisions on clearance, coupled with international cooperation and assistance, will facilitate intensified efforts to remove cluster munition remnants.

While Australia and many others are prepared to accept the prohibitions of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, some major producers and users seem likely to remain outside its framework. We appreciate and continue to support the efforts of all States parties in negotiating what could become Protocol VI to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in order to achieve meaningful prohibitions on the use of cluster munitions.

Cluster munitions, landmines and other explosive remnants of war are a tragic legacy of conflict. Australia continues to be strongly committed to international instruments that promote effective action on explosive remnants of war. Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is one such instrument. Australia is pleased to serve as its President at the Meeting of High Contracting Parties in November this year. We encourage all States Parties to the Convention to consent to be bound by Protocol V as soon as possible.

Australia is a leading contributor to mine action around the world. The Australian Government has committed to provide \$A 100 million to mine action from 2010 to 2014. The goal of our mine action strategy is to reduce the threat and socio-economic impact of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. It will deliver improved quality of life for victims, reduce the number of deaths and injuries and enhance the capacity of countries to manage their mine action programmes.

The illicit trade and use of small arms and light weapons have a direct and devastating impact on communities, undermining security and exacerbating conflict. The widespread availability and misuse of these weapons not only represents a security threat, but it is also a crucial retarding factor on socio-economic development. Australia remains strongly committed to international cooperation to ensure that the objectives 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 are fully implemented. The Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action in June this year helped bolster our collective will to fulfil the Programme's broad aims. We were honoured to have assisted the Chair of the Meeting, Ambassador Pablo Macedo of Mexico, by serving as the facilitator on the important topic of international cooperation and assistance. This meeting built upon the success of previous meetings and provided the framework for future meetings.

Australia also welcomes the commencement of United Nations-mandated negotiations on an arms trade treaty, which is a key concern for States throughout the world. Australia has been playing a leading role in this process. Ambassador Quinlan was honoured to serve as a friend of the Chair at the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee, held in New York from 12 to 23 July. These are early days but our assessment is that the meeting made genuine progress in examining the structure and prospective content of a comprehensive and effective treaty to establish an interim framework for the legitimate arms trade and eradicate illicit trafficking.

Australia also contributed to building on the work of the Preparatory Committee by sponsoring, with the Governments of Austria and Luxembourg, the Boston Symposium on the Arms Trade Treaty last month. This was just one more step towards our goal, namely, the conclusion of an arms trade treaty in 2012. The papers prepared by the technical experts for each of the Symposium sessions, as well as the summary report, are available at the back of the room and on the Symposium's website. We recommend those resources to delegations.

In all our work on conventional arms control, the international community is aided by the involvement of civil society. Civil society organizations have provided significant assistance to States by highlighting weapons of concern and advocating for negotiations.

Australia appreciates the balanced and detailed contributions of civil society to discussions, and to promoting treaty implementation.

Australia has seen in its own region the humanitarian costs of conventional arms proliferation. I assure the Committee of our continued commitment to addressing the challenges posed by the proliferation, misuse and unacceptable harm of conventional weapons.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): The Philippines remains deeply concerned with developments in the field of conventional arms. The various types of weapons that fall into this category are used widely and kill indiscriminately. They threaten entire regions and adversely affect States' economic development.

The Philippines considers the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons to be a serious threat to international peace and security, since such weapons are easily concealed, diverted and transported. Illicit small arms and light weapons promote and prolong conflicts. They provide criminal elements with the means to commit crimes. What is worse, there are around 1 billion small arms in circulation all over the world, with more than half in civilian hands, as estimated by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The Philippines believes that the best way to solve the problems caused by illicit small arms and light weapons is by 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, the main framework for addressing the illegal trade in such arms. We call on producer-States to abide strictly by the legal restrictions preventing illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and to supply only responsible Governments and their authorized entities. The military transfer of arms should be closely monitored. It is imperative that States abide by United Nations arms embargoes in order to prevent the transfer of arms to non-State armed groups engaged in organized crime, terrorism and other illegal activities. The Philippines encourages States to utilize the Register on Conventional Arms as a means of monitoring arms transfers between nations.

The Philippines wishes to highlight the need for greater cooperation between States in the areas of information exchange, sharing of best practices and

establishing national points of contact. In particular, there should be increased cooperation among law enforcement, border and customs control agencies. This can be done by convening regional, subregional and even interregional meetings. We support efforts at capacity-building and welcome information on the type of assistance that other States are willing to provide. It is therefore essential that States submit national reports in which they can outline national programmes that can be studied and used by others in applying to particular situations.

In the area of the export and import of small arms and light weapons, the Philippines ensures control through the use of end-user certificates or letters of intent. The Philippines does not re-export or retransfer previously imported small arms and light weapons.

On cluster munitions and landmines, the Philippines is mindful of the harmful effects of cluster munitions and landmines long after conflicts have ended. These indiscriminate weapons cause humanitarian crises by killing and maiming innocent civilians and preventing the use of economically viable tracts of land. The Philippines supports both the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We welcomed the August entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and we commend our friend and neighbour in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, for hosting the first meeting of States parties to the Convention this coming November.

Like many other States, the Philippines believes that the time has come to regulate the arms trade through an arms trade treaty, and views the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market as a threat to international peace and security. An arms trade treaty should represent a reaffirmation of Member States' existing responsibilities in adhering to international law, and could crystallise the development of a mechanism to be consistently, transparently, lawfully and effectively applied in the arms trade. Its principles should be based on a range of existing multilateral and regional instruments already implemented by Member States, which would serve as building blocks for such a treaty.

The treaty should be able to address political and economic instability, and international terrorism and transnational organized crime brought about by illegal transfers of arms, while at the same time respecting the inherent right of States to self-defence as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as their right to territorial integrity and political independence.

An arms trade treaty should have a clear, detailed and standardized definition of conventional weapons. The Philippines believes that the scope of the treaty should encompass the seven categories covered by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, as well as small arms and light weapons. It should contain provisions regarding the non-transfer of arms to countries that are under a Security Council arms embargo and ensuring that arms transfers do not undermine the stability of the region where the weapons are being sent.

The Philippines commends Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina for his efforts in guiding the first arms trade treaty Preparatory Committee meeting to a successful conclusion in July. We look forward to actively participating and contributing at the next meeting, in February 2011.

Mr. Yatani (Kenya): Kenya welcomes today's opportunity to address the First Committee on the issue of conventional weapons. As we stated a few days ago in our contribution to the general debate, however serious we consider the threat of nuclear arms to humankind, we need to pay equal attention to the problems caused by conventional weapons.

Kenya welcomes the progress made so far in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. In that context, my delegation welcomes the outcome of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, held in June. The Meeting highlighted an important aspect of the Programme of Action, namely, the need for international cooperation in order to effectively address the problem of illicit arms. It is the view of my delegation that if we are to make progress on the Programme of Action, we need enhanced cooperation and coordination between neighbouring States and between subregions. Activities undertaken to implement it at the subregional level, for example by the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, constitute a solid basis for the crucial link between

subregions and international commitments. In order to strengthen the linkage between subregional and international activities, it is important that national action plans are aligned to international efforts in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We look forward to further engagement with a view to strengthening the United Nations Programme of Action. In this regard, we welcome the convening of the meeting of governmental experts scheduled for May 2011.

Kenya has continuously undertaken various initiatives at the national, regional, subregional and international levels to address the problem of the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, including the development of a legal and policy framework thereon. Our Government has also continued to partner with civil society in combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Through its policy on small arms and light weapons and its strategic plan for arms management and control, Kenya has put in place modalities to address both the supply and demand for small arms and light weapons through complementary livelihood programmes, an arms-marking exercise for State-owned firearms, the collection and destruction of illicit small arms and light weapons, stringent regulations for arms transfers, imports and exports, the conduct of disarmament exercises and public education and awareness-raising programmes.

We are pleased to see tangible progress towards the conclusion of an arms trade treaty. In the July 2010 Preparatory Committee meeting, we managed to carry out a very useful discussion on the scope, parameters and implementation of a future treaty. Consultations carried out in various forums, including the Symposium in Boston a few days before the commencement of the First Committee's session, are a testimony to a growing realization of the need to move the arms trade treaty process up a notch.

It is therefore with much anticipation that we look forward to the next round of negotiations, scheduled for February 2011. It is our hope that during the third Preparatory Committee session, we will be able to continue negotiations on the substantive issues outlined in the outcome paper of the Committee's second session so that, come July 2011, we will be in a position to separate the wheat from the chaff for an eventual comprehensive and effective arms trade treaty.

Kenya remains committed to the fight to end the death and suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. We were privileged to host the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention and have actively participated in all the meetings of States parties to the Convention, including the Second Review Conference, held in Cartagena, Colombia, in May 2009. We reiterate our resolve to join others in strengthening our efforts to overcome the remaining challenges in order to achieve a mine-free world and call on those who have not joined the Convention to do so as a matter of urgency.

My delegation welcomes the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in August 2010, which was a significant milestone in international humanitarian law. We urge those who have not done so to sign the treaty, which, like the Mine Ban Convention, seeks to ensure a more humane and safer world. We welcome and look forward to actively participating in the First Meeting of States Parties, scheduled for November 2010 in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Kenya recognizes the nexus between armed violence and development. In the Horn of Africa, and indeed in many parts of the continent, armed violence, often facilitated by easily available illicit small arms and light weapons, has impacted negatively on human, social and economic development. Armed violence has undermined Governments' efforts to provide basic social services to their peoples and contributes to a vicious cycle of conflicts and underdevelopment.

It is for that reason that Kenya was among the first signatories of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. We continue to participate actively in the core group in Geneva charged with the implementation of the Declaration. We acknowledge the considerable progress made by the international community to address the problem of armed violence and welcome the adoption in May 2010 of the Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence, which are aimed at achieving measurable reductions in armed violence.

I wish to conclude by urging all delegations to go the extra mile in seeking to find common ground in a bid to ensure a better and safer world. Let us seize this opportunity to adopt practical steps to address the menace caused by conventional weapons. We assure you, Mr. Chair, of Kenya's support in these efforts aimed at building international peace and security.

Mr. Hauge (Norway): Norway is strongly committed to humanitarian disarmament. Our engagement in the fields of landmines, cluster munitions, small arms and other related issues is rooted in the unacceptable harm to civilians caused by the use of these weapons.

On 1 August, the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force. The Convention has been signed by 108 States and has so far been ratified by 42 States — a number that continues to grow. That is promising, and we urge all States to accede to the Convention without delay. The First Meeting of States Parties will be held in November this year in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the country most affected by this issue. We commend Laos for the commitment shown by taking on such a task. We are convinced that the meeting will be successful.

The fact that the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force so rapidly after its adoption is proof of the value attached to the Convention by signatory States, as well as an indication of the need for its speedy implementation. The Convention is not only a categorical ban of a weapon that causes unacceptable harm both during and long after conflict. It is also a comprehensive agreement with strong obligations in the fields of clearance, stockpile destruction and victim assistance. The partnerships between affected and other States and the cooperation with international and humanitarian organizations and civil society will remain as important in the implementation of the Convention as they were during its development.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is establishing itself as a new international norm. The experience with the Mine Ban Convention and other conventions has been that a new legally binding instrument becomes an international norm that goes beyond the membership of the Conventions. That is demonstrated by the broad support for the annual resolution on the implementation of the Mine Ban Convention. In that connection, my delegation would like to make reference to this year's draft resolution on the implementation of the Mine Ban Convention, presented by Switzerland, Norway and Albania. Norway urges all States to support this important draft resolution, invites all States that have not signed the Convention to accede to it, and focuses on the humanitarian importance of its full implementation.

As President of the Second Review Conference on the Mine Ban Convention, which was held in Colombia last year, Norway focused on the humanitarian objectives of the Convention, with a continued emphasis on realities in the field and what is needed to address the challenges that remain. Challenges do remain. Thousands of women, girls, boys and men are injured or killed each year, which is an unacceptable situation. We would like to thank Colombia for its excellent cooperation in making certain that the Second Review Conference put survivors and victims front and centre.

Since the establishment of these two Conventions, we have seen increasing international support for the protection of civilians and their communities from the consequences of armed conflicts and wars. The main lesson has been that the humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons are simply unacceptable. That is also the focus for Norway in the negotiations taking place on a cluster munitions protocol for the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in Geneva. For us, it is important that these negotiations do not result in fragmentation or a lowering of emerging international norms from the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The effects of armed violence raise similar concerns and trigger the same humanitarian imperative for us to act as responsible States. Armed violence kills 2,000 people every day, in the majority of instances by the use of small arms and light weapons. But other conventional weapons and explosives are also being used in violation of human rights and international humanitarian law. By reducing and preventing armed violence, more people will be able to live their lives in safety and security, which will have a positive effect on development.

Together with the United Nations Development Programme, Norway took the initiative earlier this year to organize a conference on armed violence, which resulted in the endorsement by 62 States of the Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence. Those States committed themselves to work to include armed violence prevention in development strategies and plans, to better monitor and report on the problem, to recognize the right of victims of armed violence and to strengthen international cooperation and assistance to reduce armed violence.

Armed violence is complex and requires complex and multifaceted responses that address both the demand and supply sides of the problem. On the supply side, we see multilateral efforts to control and regulate certain weapons as an essential tool to prevent and reduce armed violence. Therefore, Norway is a strong supporter of an effective arms trade treaty, and we participate actively in the preparatory process. We believe that the goal of an arms trade treaty should be the reduction and prevention of violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law through the use of conventional arms.

Norway is also of the opinion that an arms trade treaty should address the rights of victims of armed violence, including the rights to adequate care and rehabilitation, as well as their social and economic inclusion. We also believe that an arms trade treaty should have a wide scope of application and apply to all conventional arms, ammunitions, arms technology and related services. The treaty should also place a responsibility on States to publicly report on all licensed international arms transfers, in order to ensure transparency and accountability.

Finally, let me touch upon the question of the use of depleted uranium in ammunition and armour. We have registered concerns stemming from signs of worrying health and environmental implications in areas where depleted uranium ammunition and armour have been employed. While further research is needed, we feel that such concerns warrant our serious attention. To be on the safe side, Norway does not use depleted uranium, and we encourage others to show similar restraint. This is of particular concern within the wider context of fighting in densely populated areas. Norway supports research to bring more knowledge to this field.

Mrs. Sinjela (Zambia): Zambia 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, because we were greatly affected by the scourge of landmines, in terms both of human resources and delayed economic development of the mined areas. Given our role as a base for a number of liberation movements during the wars of liberation in Southern Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, Zambia had significant numbers of landmines in parts of the country. However, a nationwide survey concluded that

by September 2009 Zambia had succeeded in clearing almost all areas of the country of those mines and in declaring all such areas as safe for normal human activities.

Consequently, Zambia declared at the Second Review Conference of the Convention, held in Cartagena, that it was in full compliance with article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty. Because of that, Zambia is now ahead of schedule as regards its obligations under the Convention, which we ratified in 2001. In that connection, Zambia welcomes the assistance rendered by cooperating partners in making that achievement possible.

In spite of that, nine areas — especially those along the borders with Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — are still contaminated with other explosive remnants of war. An independent evaluation by the Norwegian People's Aid survey has concluded that those explosive remnants of war will continue to be present in those areas for years to come, because the areas are sparsely populated. During the period of July 2009 to December 2009, five sites, covering an area of four square kilometres, contaminated with explosive remnants of war were cleared. In the process 1,420 explosive remnants were destroyed.

Although Zambia is now landmine-free, contamination by explosive remnants of war is still a major concern, requiring that risk education activities continue in all affected areas. In that regard, the Zambia Mine Action Centre completed the development of an unexploded landmine-risk education handbook for teachers and learners in 2009. Plans are under way to translate the handbook into local languages and to distribute it to schools in risk areas once the department of curriculum development in the Ministry of Education approves it.

Under article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Zambia is required to complete the clearance of all areas contaminated by cluster munitions remnants under its jurisdiction or control by 1 August 2020. In compliance with that article, Zambia has already conducted a baseline survey to identify the affected areas, and has since embarked on the process of clearing them.

Zambia wishes to express concern at the upswing in the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The continued proliferation of such arms in Africa is one of

the urgent problems besetting the continent, undermining good governance, democratization efforts and negotiations, in addition to jeopardizing respect for fundamental human rights and hindering economic development. As a landlocked country with limited resources and many long international boundaries, Zambia finds it difficult to police its borders against the flows of small arms and light weapons. The situation is made all the more difficult by the unregulated global trade in small arms and light weapons. Moreover, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is often closely linked with organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking. Attempting to contain those scourges — especially for developing countries, and Zambia in particular — entails the diversion of much-needed, scarce resources from other priority areas, such as education and health, which are critical in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Zambia remains committed 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, and will continue to strive to undertake various initiatives at the national, subregional, regional and international levels aimed at addressing the problem. In that connection, Zambia appreciates and welcomes assistance from regional organizations, such as the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons, whose efforts have culminated in the acquisition of the necessary technology and expertise for marking State-owned firearms. It was in that spirit that Zambia hosted the fourth Regional Coordinating Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons alongside a workshop of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the Standard Operating Procedures of the SADC Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials, in 2009.

Since the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues unabated, coupled with their excessive accumulation, the security challenges that the issue poses, especially to developing countries, demand a multilateral approach, which should include, among other things, a requirement that Member States submit relevant reports on small arms and light weapons to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. In that regard, Zambia calls upon concerned civil organizations, regional groupings and the international community at large to keep track of

any illegal transactions by reporting those engaged in this practice to the United Nations.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms continues to be an important global confidence-building mechanism that is promoting global transparency in conventional arms transfers. As the only global register — and because it contains almost 90 per cent of all the information on annual conventional arms transfers in which all the permanent members of the Security Council participate and also includes all those countries considered to be the main weapons sellers — its role as a promoter of both regional and international stability, peace and security cannot be overemphasized. However, the absence of a legally binding arms trade treaty that could effectively regulate the international trade in conventional arms means that the attainment of universal participation in the United Nations Register continues to be elusive.

In that regard, Zambia strongly supports efforts towards the negotiation of a comprehensive and binding arms trade treaty. Zambia acknowledges the importance of an arms trade treaty to national security and international peace and supports the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2012.

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

Finland associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add some brief remarks in my national capacity, namely, on the arms trade treaty, small arms and light weapons and the Ottawa Convention.

Finland has been an active proponent of the arms trade treaty and was one of its original initiators. The treaty would provide an international regulatory framework and rules on the conventional arms trade and would help to prevent the diversion of those arms to illicit markets. The current lack of a treaty continues to cause instability, fuel conflict, undermine human rights, hamper sustainable development and enable organized crime. By addressing the regulatory demands of the conventional arms trade and clearly defining the rights and responsibilities of States, we can set international standards and help to resolve those issues.

We applaud the decision by the General Assembly to convene the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2012, and meetings of its Preparatory Committees in 2010 and 2011. Finland is content with the work of the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee, which succeeded in defining a first outline and identifying the central elements of a future treaty. The Chair, Ambassador García Moritán, and the three facilitators all did an excellent job in making that happen. Now, we need strong engagement by all.

The two remaining Preparatory Committee meetings, in February and July, must be used to maximum effect. In order to achieve that goal, the negotiation process requires a high level of preparation at the national level. It is also important to maintain sustained, constructive dialogue in various ways leading up to 2012. We welcome all efforts to that end.

Finland believes that it is possible to achieve an agreement on the arms trade treaty by 2012. In our view, we need an ambitious international instrument regulating the global arms trade. That treaty needs to address the interests and concerns of all countries. A universal and robust arms trade treaty would be an important ingredient for stability and sustainable development.

Preventing the illicit trade in, and excessive accumulation of, small arms and light weapons is another important factor in attaining the goals to which I have referred. They both have a negative humanitarian impact and contribute to conflicts and their escalation.

Finland fully supports the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. As a non-legally binding instrument, the determined implementation of the Programme of Action is essential to its success. We regret the waning level of national reporting under the Programme of Action and stress the need for improvements in its implementation, all the more so as national reporting will be an important part of the future arms trade treaty.

Mine clearance, the disposal of explosive remnants of war, the destruction of stockpiles and victim assistance remain topical challenges at the global level. To that end, Finland has supported humanitarian mine action, which reduces the post-conflict threat and the impact of landmines and

unexploded ordnance. In 2010, Finland has supported mine action in seven countries, namely, Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Chad, Ethiopia, Iraq and Somalia. We will also continue our support for humanitarian mine action in the future.

Finland will join the Ottawa Convention in 2012 and destroy its landmine stockpiles by the end of 2016. The national legislative measures required for our accession to the Convention are already under way.

Ms. Valenzuela Díaz (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor at this session, we would like to join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee during the current session of the General Assembly. We are confident that, under your wise leadership, the Committee will help to bolster disarmament efforts in the field of both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

For El Salvador, conventional weapons and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in particular, are among the most important issues, as such weapons are the most commonly used by criminal organizations, drug cartels and gangs and are responsible for exacerbating armed violence. They are also the most commonly employed in both domestic and international armed conflict.

It is no secret to anyone that small arms and light weapons are today the leading cause of death across the world. According to the Small Arms Survey project, there are 875 million firearms in the world. Obviously, a large percentage of them are illegally obtained to commit a range of crimes, resulting in high homicide and extortion rates and grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia alike, the manifestations of armed violence stemming from the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons associated with drug trafficking and trafficking in persons, among other crimes, pose a serious challenge to both central and local Governments, as such violence seriously undermines law and order, economic progress, the rule of law and democratic institutions.

Also worth noting are the high financial costs of investments made in public safety and policing and

efforts to restore the health of victims of armed violence — resources that could very well have been invested in social projects, including those related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

We therefore believe that it is of paramount importance to scale up international cooperation and technical assistance to build national, subregional and regional capacities in our common efforts to make progress in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the context of the Programme of Action.

El Salvador will continue to support all relevant initiatives to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as we did last year as one of the sponsors of resolution 64/50, which the General Assembly adopted unanimously.

In that regard, the delegation of El Salvador awaits with great interest the outcome of the exchange of views to take place at the meeting of governmental experts to be held in May 2011, in particular in terms of any innovative new proposals made to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

In that overall context, El Salvador supports the negotiation process to establish a legally binding instrument on the highest possible international standards to regulate the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. We believe it to be of the utmost importance that, in those negotiations, delegations show the greatest possible flexibility with regard to including small arms and light weapons in any eventual arms trade treaty. That fair request simply reflects the desire on the part of the majority of the countries represented at this Organization to see small arms and light weapons included in the treaty. That stems from the great need for control over the conventional weapons trade; failure to do so only benefits individuals and groups in promoting political instability and deriving economic gain by encouraging armed violence, crime and terrorism.

In that regard, we must take into account the views of the Group of Governmental Experts examining the feasibility, scope and parameters of a comprehensive, legally binding draft instrument on the matter as expressed in paragraph 28 of the conclusions and recommendations of its August 2008 report

(A/63/334), in which it notes that the weapons being traded on the illicit market could be used for acts of terrorism, organized crime and other criminal activities. In addition, the Group recognized the need to prevent the diversion of conventional arms from legal to illicit markets.

Against that backdrop, we believe that we are all in agreement. We therefore hope that the principle of consensus will not be used to hinder not only the negotiations process but also the drafting of a pertinent, legally binding instrument that includes small arms and light weapons. The trend of using consensus as a tool to thwart the progress of a negotiating process runs counter to the multilateralism that we all invoke and aspire to. It also contributes to minimizing the role of the United Nations as a forum for negotiations, thereby leading to a tendency to create parallel forums.

We cannot be subjected to individual or minority positions that oppose the wishes of the majority. That is why the countries that are reluctant, for various reasons, to establish a legally binding instrument on the subject have a legitimate sovereign right to refrain from being part of this or any other instrument, even if it is desirable for them to be part of it in order for it to acquire a universal character. Therefore, we support and fervently appeal to all delegations to, in a constructive spirit and good faith, contribute with us to achieving substantive progress in negotiations for the Conference on Conventional Arms Treaty scheduled for 2012.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): As this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor at this session, allow me to join others in expressing our congratulations to you, Sir, and to the other members of the Bureau on your election. We are confident, Mr. Chair, that under your guidance and leadership the deliberations of the Committee will achieve a successful outcome.

The attainment of international peace and security is of paramount importance to Botswana. I wish to reiterate that the ability of States to maintain safety and stability is an essential precondition for the achievement of sustainable economic and social development. Botswana recognizes the need for the international community to step up its efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

In June of this year, Botswana welcomed the conclusion 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, which produced a consensus-based outcome (see A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3). We are committed to the full implementation of the Programme of Action and measures mandated by regional and international legal instruments, including the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in the Southern African Development Community Region.

As reflected in the outcome document of the Fourth Biennial Meeting, my delegation agrees that cooperation and assistance measures remain critical and primary in determining the success or failure of national efforts in implementing all aspects of the Programme of Action. In that respect, it would be useful for us to consider how the limited resources from various donors can be effectively utilized to attain concrete results.

Botswana is of the view that one of the ways of ensuring efficiency in the utilization of available resources is to place emphasis on regional approaches. It is important for States in different regions to harmonize their efforts in addressing critical issues such as border control, stockpile management, marking, tracing, specialized training, information-sharing and the development of legislation.

Botswana supports measures to enhance international assistance and cooperation, in particular encouraging donors to provide technical and financial assistance to facilitate technology transfers and assistance for the implementation of regional agreements to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Botswana also supports the development and enhancement of follow-up mechanisms so as to ensure effective coordination and instil a greater sense of urgency in addressing the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

In that regard, Botswana fully endorses the Programme of Action Implementation Support System, which seeks to match the needs of States with

resources for the purpose of promoting the goals of the Programme of Action — an initiative that opens up a useful channel for facilitating and expediting international cooperation and assistance.

It is for that reason that Botswana is this year a sponsor of the draft resolution entitled “Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures” (A/C.1/65/L.36), which echoes our views on the strengthening of practical cooperation and assistance. Botswana would welcome the strengthening of the Programme of Action Implementation Support System initiative, including the convening of meetings where potential donors could meet directly with potential beneficiary countries.

Finally, I wish to put on the record that Botswana has submitted a request for assistance through the Programme of Action Implementation Support System for the computerization of our central arms registry. We would highly appreciate support for that project.

Mr. Tejeira (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that we take the floor at this session of the First Committee, may I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on the important work that you have been doing as the head of the Committee. I also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Last June’s 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 and its follow-up mechanisms was a step forward in our efforts to effectively address the multidimensional problem posed by the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and their munitions and components. In that regard, we believe that the consensus outcome (see A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3) will make it possible for Member States to strengthen the Programme’s follow-up mechanisms. We express our appreciation for the work undertaken by Ambassador Pablo Macedo of Mexico in achieving the outcome of the Fourth Biennial Meeting.

Panama reiterates its commitment to combating trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their munitions and components. We are also committed to continuing to cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally with the international community through exchanges of information and intelligence in order to prevent and halt this international crime and to strengthen public security institutions.

My country recently set up its Ministry of Public Security. Among its responsibilities is to prevent and combat new urgent threats. In that connection, we have established various maritime monitoring stations to combat drug trafficking, illicit arms trafficking, organized crime and other transnational crimes.

In that regard, I wish to inform the Assembly that, between January and 10 October, authorities in Panama seized from organized criminals and drug traffickers more than 29 metric tons of illicit substances, including cocaine, heroin, crack and marijuana. As of 8 October, Panamanian authorities had destroyed more than 22 metric tons of those drugs.

With the aim of meeting our commitments, we have submitted to the National Assembly a draft bill on a general law on firearms, which principally aims at the prevention and reduction of armed violence, the establishment of a legal regime to control the possession and carrying of weapons by individuals and the regulation of the import, export, marketing, purchase, sale, storage and transport of weapons and all other arms- and ammunition-related business. We should also highlight the creation of a national register for firearms and munitions, as well as the licensing of gun sellers and the marking of all weapons entering our national territory.

In September our national Government, along with the national police, the national assistance programme, community and religious leaders and the Panama gun owners’ association participated in a programme to exchange weapons and munitions for food, whose purpose is to remove from circulation illicit weapons and munitions in the hands of individuals, thereby reducing armed violence. The programme was successfully carried out in high-crime areas, removing from circulation 458 firearms and 50,237 munitions of all types, including an RPG-18 cylinder, which is a lethal weapon capable of bringing down an airplane. To date, the programme has invested \$83,960 in vouchers redeemable for food and medicines, benefiting hundreds of Panamanian families. An integrated provincial disarmament task force in the Province of Panama is planning the public destruction of those weapons on 22 October.

The Republic of Panama is committed to working towards an arms trade treaty, with the understanding that such an instrument would strengthen the fight against the arms trade and help to avert its

destabilizing effects on international peace and security. Our foreign policy is based on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons. We therefore always support initiatives in that regard at international, regional and subregional forums. We join those States expressing their support for a comprehensive and legally binding instrument to establish common international norms on the export, import and transfer of conventional weapons.

We believe that the conclusion of an arms trade treaty would represent the culmination of our efforts to put an end to the illicit arms trade and to the irresponsible transfer of weapons, which do such grave social, humanitarian and economic damage to many people in our countries. We must put a stop to those activities. Even as we debate here, thousands of victims all over the world are cut down by firearms, be they legal, illegal or smuggled. Our debate today must serve as a platform from which spring new, determined initiatives to combat the heinous consequences of the use of small arms and light weapons.

Panama hopes that small arms and light weapons will be included in a category of conventional weapons. We also firmly support the draft resolution to be introduced at this session on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which is being coordinated by Colombia along with South Africa and Japan. Panama would also like to express its appreciation to Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina for his determined leadership in the first meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty.

We were pleased to see the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in August. Panama ratified the Convention through its Law No. 49 of 16 September. In that regard, we express our support for all international efforts to address problems caused by the use of cluster munitions and their humanitarian consequences.

Mr. Lee Joo-il (Republic of Korea): I shall deliver a shortened version of my statement and make available the full text in the back of the room.

As a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) since 2001, the Republic of Korea has faithfully implemented the Convention in both letter and spirit. The Republic of Korea's commitment in that regard was again confirmed by our accession, in 2008, to Protocol V on

Explosive Remnants of War. We will continue to do our part to contribute to advancing the effective implementation of the CCW and ensuring its continuing relevance and vitality.

As a State party to Amended Protocol II, the Republic of Korea also attaches great importance to international efforts to mitigate the humanitarian suffering caused by landmines. The Republic of Korea has so far contributed \$7.1 million to demining and victim-assistance projects through various channels, as a part of its endeavour to join global efforts. We will continue to do so in cooperation with other countries, international organizations and civil society.

The Group of Governmental Experts on cluster munitions under the CCW framework held nine formal rounds of intensive negotiations within three years, with the goal of producing a tangible solution to humanitarian concerns arising from the use of cluster munitions. My delegation believes that the CCW, in which States most involved in this issue participate, is the most practical forum for tackling the challenges arising from conflicting positions on this topic. In that connection, the Republic of Korea has participated in the Group of Experts in a constructive and flexible manner so as to produce results that strike an appropriate balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations. We look forward to a meaningful decision on this issue during the upcoming Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention in November.

Let me now turn to the arms trade treaty. Certainly, we are still a long way from reaching full codification of an arms trade treaty. In order to achieve that goal, we must understand that we are embarking on an arduous but necessary path. The Republic of Korea resolutely affirms its support for the goals and objectives laid out in the relevant General Assembly resolutions and the Chair's summary of the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in July.

It is very important that the arms trade treaty be developed with the maximum participation of Member States, as a higher number of participants will lead to more effective implementation of the Treaty. However, we know that some of the largest arms-exporting countries have expressed dissenting views. Without their participation, the arms trade treaty will be critically deficient. With this in mind, the Republic of

Korea believes that the lasting success of the arms trade treaty rests mainly on a robust global consensus that includes those countries. That being said, the deliberation process should proceed step by step, without succumbing to the temptation to proceed hastily or cut corners by obtaining a watered-down consensus.

My Government is of the view that the scope of the arms trade treaty must cover all conventional arms. Furthermore, we must clearly define which activities relating to the transfer of conventional arms will be controlled by such a treaty.

In that regard, an annex to the treaty containing controlled items and activities might serve to reduce the ambiguity, inconsistency and confusion stemming

from different interpretations among countries. My delegation stands ready to discuss all of the relevant ideas indicated in the facilitators' summary relating to scope in the July meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

The Republic of Korea believes that legally binding parameters are among the significant elements of the arms trade treaty. The principles of such a treaty must be essentially agreeable to the membership in the broadest possible manner. As such, pre-existing regional or international parameters and other parameters suggested in relevant resolutions of the General Assembly could serve as a starting point for further discussion.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.