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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Viinanen (Finland)

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

Agenda items 87 to 106 (continued)

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

The Chair: In accordance with our programme of work, we will again focus on the conventional weapons cluster. I shall first give the floor to those speakers whose names were inscribed on yesterday's list but who did not have time to speak.

Mr. Ganev (Bulgaria): Since the Third Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), it has become the practice of Chairpersons of the Meetings of the High Contracting Parties to report to the First Committee on CCW universalization efforts and progress. As President-designate of the Fourth Review Conference, which will take place from 14 to 25 November in Geneva, I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide an update on universalization efforts within the CCW.

Over the past 12 months, much activity has taken place in support of CCW universalization. The President of the Fourth Conference to Protocol V, Ambassador Peter Woolcott of Australia; the President of the Twelfth Annual Conference to Amended Protocol II, Ambassador Germán Mundaraín Hernández of

Venezuela; and I wrote to the foreign ministers of all States not party to the CCW urging them to join the Convention.

In line with the resolutions of the First Committee, there has been an increased focus on promoting the universalization of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War. Both Australia, as President of the Fourth Review Conference of Protocol V, and Belarus, in its current role as President-designate of the Fifth Conference, have encouraged States parties to join the Protocol. These efforts are greatly appreciated as Protocol V continues to be the centrepiece of the CCW.

One of Protocol V's unique attributes is that, for the first time in a treaty of international humanitarian law, it established a clear rule that explosive remnants of war must be cleared once the fighting has ended. In order to promote Protocol V, the CCW sponsorship programme produced a DVD on the Protocol and the work of its States parties. The DVD is entitled "Before the Blast", and is available in the room today. I hope that delegations will find it useful.

In preparation for the Fourth Review Conference, I have been holding a number of bilateral meetings. During these meetings, I have urged States parties to join all CCW instruments. Also, at the preparatory session held during the third 2011 session of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts in August, I spoke on the issue of universalization and how it could be advanced.

Taking an overall perspective, since the Third Review Conference in 2006 important progress has

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been made on CCW universalization. For example, in 2006 the CCW had 100 States parties and now has 114. Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War has seen the largest increase, with its number of States parties increasing from 27 in 2006 to 75 in 2011.

States parties should take considerable satisfaction from that progress. However, much more needs to be done in this area. At the Fourth Review Conference, States parties will have the opportunity to strengthen the plan of action agreed at the Third Review Conference and put in place actions that will, it is hoped, accelerate progress on universalization within the Convention. I urge all States not party to the CCW to join, and I look forward to working with CCW States parties to achieve a truly universalized Convention.

I should like to take this opportunity to inform the Committee that later today Sweden will present a draft resolution on the CCW.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): I take the floor today to address certain important issues involving the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) — which my Bulgarian colleague has just addressed — small arms and light weapons, man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures.

First, on the CCW, the United States continues to support the negotiation of a comprehensive and binding protocol within the framework of the CCW that addresses all aspects of cluster munitions, including use, transfer, stockpiling and destruction, and that will have a significant humanitarian impact on the ground.

We urge the CCW high contracting parties to take the opportunity at the Fourth CCW Review Conference in November to conclude a protocol that will contain concrete and substantive provisions. CCW high contracting parties can achieve real and immediate humanitarian benefits with a protocol on cluster munitions, as reflected in the draft text of the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts, and should not settle for a purely aspirational document that is unlikely to have any impact on the ground. The Chair's draft protocol would extend a set of binding norms, rules and regulations to the major users and producers of cluster munitions, which represent 85 to 90 per cent of the world's cluster munitions stockpiles.

As a high contracting party to the Convention and all its Protocols, the United States looks forward to this November's Review Conference, not only for the opportunity to conclude a protocol on cluster munitions, but also to reinforce our commitment to this important instrument of international humanitarian law. We encourage those States that have not yet become high contracting parties to the CCW or any of its current five Protocols to consider announcing their intent to accede at the upcoming CCW Review Conference, which I am delighted to note will be held under the presidency of our Bulgarian colleague.

The United States continues to implement the CCW Protocols, and our national policies meet or exceed all the requirements of the CCW Protocols. In addition, while we continue to review our landmine policy, we have maintained our commitment to addressing the potential humanitarian consequences caused by landmines. The United States ended all use of persistent landmines, both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle, at the end of last year. These are the landmines that can remain active years or even decades after a conflict ends and, if left in the ground and improperly maintained, present a serious threat to civilians.

The United States also continues its strong support for eliminating ageing, surplus, loosely secured or otherwise at-risk conventional weapons and munitions, as well as explosive remnants of war. We have provided more than \$1.9 billion in aid to 81 countries for conventional weapons destruction programmes, including clearance of landmines and unexploded munitions.

Concerning small arms and light weapons, the United States is dedicated to the full implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We are a global leader in providing assistance to fulfil the Programme's objectives.

The United States supports implementation 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 recommendations of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons. The United States signed the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related

Materials in 1997, and the Obama Administration is seeking advice and consent to ratification by the United States Senate.

The United States also supports the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, a confidence-building measure whereby States annually report on conventional arms transfers. The United States works to enhance global and national mechanisms for controlling weapons by assisting States in improving their export control practices, providing physical security and stockpile management for at-risk arms and munitions, and destroying excess weapons and munitions around the world. These efforts include supporting initiatives of the United Nations and other international and regional organizations to address illicit transnational arms transfers through the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons and strengthening controls on arms brokers.

The United States is committed to working closely with numerous countries and international organizations to counter the proliferation of MANPADS. In the hands of terrorists, criminals or other non-State actors, MANPADS — also known as shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles — pose a serious threat to global passenger air travel, the commercial aviation industry and military aircraft around the world. Since 2003, the United States has cooperated with countries around the globe to destroy more than 32,700 excess, loosely secured, illicitly held or otherwise at-risk MANPADS in more than 30 countries.

Finally, the United States believes in transparency and openness in military expenditures, and we support the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. We commend Germany and Romania for their leadership in sponsoring the draft resolution entitled “Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures” (A/C.1/66/L.35). We also particularly thank Germany for its role in chairing the 2010-2011 Group of Governmental Experts, which reviewed the operation and further development of the Instrument, under the admirable leadership of Ambassador Wunderlich, whose reporting yesterday we very much appreciated. The United States participated in the work of the Group and welcomes the recommendations issued in its final consensus report.

Our delegation looks forward to collaborating successfully with other delegations on all of these important issues as well as on the remaining work of this session.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/66/L.35 and A/C.1/66/L.36.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): In order to stay within the time limit, I will read out a shortened version of my statement.

Germany fully supports the arms trade treaty (ATT) process and congratulates Ambassador García Moritán for so ably leading it. We continue to believe that the establishment of a universal, legally binding and robust arms trade treaty regulating the global trade in conventional arms will tangibly contribute to the enhancement of international peace and security. Together with its European Union partners, Germany will spare no effort to achieve agreement within the United Nations on such a new international instrument.

We noted with great satisfaction the high level of engagement in the Preparatory Committee, in particular at its latest session in July. We consider that the Preparatory Committee is well on its way to deliver what it has been mandated to do — that is, to make recommendations to the 2012 United Nations Conference on the elements that would be needed to attain an effective and balanced ATT. Germany urges all States to further strive for such recommendations in order to be prepared to set the scene, without prejudging the proper negotiations.

The draft paper proposed by Ambassador García Moritán has been subject to continued improvements. At the same time, as is natural at this stage, it needs to be further refined. Let me mention a few examples.

References to transfers should be spelled out in a consistent yet differentiated way throughout the paper, including language that details the depth of controls, with a focus on export controls. Controls on other types of transfers need to be considered very carefully and in an adequately differentiated manner. The difference between national information collection and international reporting should be further developed. We also need to clearly define the terms used, including types of military equipment. Finally, we also consider that provisions on victim assistance are not appropriate

in a treaty on arms transfer controls, which is not a treaty on prohibitions.

Germany strongly welcomes the fact that the set of criteria included in the current paper is in line with the mandate of the ATT Preparatory Committee to elaborate the highest possible international standards for arms transfers. We further welcome the inclusion of small arms and light weapons within the scope of this paper. They need to be included without exception, alongside ammunitions and munitions.

Let me express our highest appreciation for the way Ambassador García Moritán continues to guide this process. Against the background of the progress achieved so far and the very positive atmosphere in consultations, we cannot but continue to support his chairmanship through to the successful conclusion of the negotiating process in 2012.

On the Review Conference 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, Germany strongly supports a proactive approach. During the past 10 years, the Programme of Action has been the reference document in the field of small arms and light weapons control. It is time for an assessment.

The United Nations Programme of Action has contributed to raising awareness regarding the challenges and dangers posed by uncontrolled small arms and light weapons proliferation. It has led to new regional arrangements and, in some cases, to a significant reduction of surplus weapons and ammunition. However, implementation needs to be improved. Germany stands ready to strengthen the Programme of Action in a cooperative spirit. After 10 years, the challenge will be to include additional issues in the broader context of human rights and conflict prevention — in particular gender issues, the protection of children against armed violence, and social and economic aspects of small arms and light weapons proliferation and its relation to conflict prevention.

Germany looks forward to the Fourth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) in Geneva in November. A successful Review Conference will review, clarify and strengthen the existing obligations and their implementation. It

should also set perspectives for useful future work. The ongoing negotiations on a CCW protocol on cluster munitions should lead to substantial improvements on the ground, which should be compatible with and complementary to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. A new instrument needs to make a significant humanitarian contribution, containing an immediate prohibition on the use, production or transfer of cluster munitions.

I now have the honour to introduce two draft resolutions proposed by Germany, together with partners. With Romania, Germany proposes its biennial draft resolution entitled “Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures” (A/C.1/66/L.35). Together with France, Germany introduces draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.36, entitled “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus”. I should like to thank all sponsors of both draft resolutions. Let me encourage those delegations that are still considering co-sponsoring to do so. We hope that, as with similar resolutions in 2009, both draft resolutions will be adopted by consensus.

I should like to thank my colleague and good friend, Ambassador Claus Wunderlich, Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Operation and Further Development of the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, for introducing so ably the outcome of the Group of Governmental Experts, and I congratulate him on the achievements of the Group.

The draft German/Romanian biennial resolution contains a number of new elements reflecting the work of the Group of Governmental Experts. Its well-considered conclusions and recommendations were developed with a view to enabling the broadest possible participation in military expenditures reporting. Our draft resolution endorses the Group’s consensus report (see A/66/89) and recommendations, as well as the simplified name of the instrument — that is, the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures.

The very concrete and practical recommendation of the Group of Governmental Experts will, once endorsed, make the instrument more user-friendly and more relevant to today’s changing world. Reporting on global military expenditures could benefit from the Group’s recommendations as early as 2012.

In his foreword to the report of the Group of Governmental Experts, the Secretary-General underlines the instrument's potential to contribute tangibly to achieving peace and security. He furthermore expressed his hope that it could also contribute to freeing up resources for economic and social development. In this perspective, the draft resolution contains a new and final preambular paragraph referring to Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, which calls for the promotion of

“the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources”.

Let me appeal to all delegations to join in sponsoring the draft resolution, thus giving an important impetus to its expanded implementation. Germany and Romania are convinced that Member States will show their commitment to the common goal of global transparency and trust by once again adopting this draft resolution without a vote.

The second draft resolution I am introducing regards the proper management of surplus ammunition. Conventional ammunition stockpiles can, when becoming unstable, pose a serious threat to public safety. They also increase the possibility of diversion to illicit use, fuelling criminal use or armed violence and possibly undermining arms embargoes and sanctions. Several serious accidents and explosions at ammunition storage sites in the past few years have sadly proven the continued relevance of the issue.

France and Germany presented a draft resolution on surplus ammunition in 2005. Our last joint resolution in 2009 endorsed the recommendation of the Group of Governmental Experts to develop technical guidelines for the stockpile management of conventional ammunition. I am pleased to confirm the completion of these technical guidelines by the technical review panel. The draft presented today reflects the outcome of this effort and commends the work of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Mine Action Service, which have contributed to the establishment of the guidelines and the United Nations “SaferGuard” knowledge resource management programme associated with them. We are confident that this draft resolution will also be adopted without a vote.

Mrs. Kazragienė (Lithuania): We are at the outset of a very intensive conventional disarmament season.

The diplomatic Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty and the Review Conferences of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and 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 just a few events that will focus the attention of the disarmament community in the next 12 months.

As a member of the European Union (EU), Lithuania fully subscribes to and actively supports the EU policies in the domain of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation. Let me now elaborate on the matters of particular importance to our delegation.

Lithuania supports the negotiations on the arms trade treaty. We are convinced that only a legally binding instrument that sets the highest international standards for the transfers of conventional weapons can prevent them from being used against international humanitarian law and human rights obligations and from threatening international, regional and national security. Lithuania welcomes the positive results achieved during the arms trade treaty preparatory process and the constructive engagement of fellow Member States. We also express our appreciation for the way Ambassador Roberto García Moritán guides this process and will continue to support his chairmanship through the conclusion of the negotiations in 2012.

The illegal trade in and accumulation of small arms and light weapons continues to be a major cause of violence and suffering and an impediment to development. We continue to consider the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons to be the central multilateral framework addressing the scourge of these weapons.

Lithuania looks forward to the forthcoming Review Conference on the Programme of Action. The agreement on an operational follow-up mechanism, enhancement of regional cooperation, further progress on marking and tracing, and an improvement in matching needs with resources are issues of particular importance. Furthermore, given the close relationship between security and development, Lithuania has signed and supports the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.

On the Convention on Cluster Munitions, just over a year after its entry into force the Convention has already had an important humanitarian impact as countries clear contaminated land, destroy stockpiles

and establish victim assistance programmes. Lithuania became the fifty-fifth State party to the Convention in March. We have also submitted a voluntary transparency report under article 7. Lithuania welcomes the growing number of ratifications and accessions to the Convention, and calls for more effort in keeping, and indeed increasing, the momentum to make this Treaty universal.

We also welcome the adoption of the Vientiane Action Plan for 2010-2015 and the Beirut Declaration. We are pleased that the proposed mechanism of implementation architecture and intersessional work closely follows the successful example of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Indeed, as forums and instruments related to conventional weapons are becoming more numerous and complex, there is a clear need to explore ways for a more integrated approach, increased coherence and cooperation between their respective memberships, secretariats, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

On the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Lithuania is convinced that negotiations on a new additional protocol on cluster munitions should lead to the adoption of a legally binding document that would have a significant humanitarian effect and strengthen international humanitarian law. We are convinced that an agreement on such a document at the forthcoming CCW Review Conference would be an important step and contribution to ongoing restrictions on the use of cluster munitions that would eventually lead to their prohibition.

On the anti-personnel landmine ban Convention, Lithuania remains convinced that the main responsibility to implement the Convention lies with the relevant State party. However, assistance from other stakeholders is vital. At the same time, donors should take into account the particular situation of each recipient country, encourage national ownership and contribute to building national capacities. It is also essential that aid-receiving and aid-providing parties alike honour their mutual commitments to cooperating. That is what Lithuania has learned from its experience of assistance programmes and as a co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction.

In the latter capacity, our delegation wishes to thank all concerned countries and stakeholders for their cooperation in implementing the stockpile

destruction provisions of the Convention. We call on the mine action community to further assist affected States, including through the development of technical solutions to overcome the particular challenges, such as destroying PFM mines in an effective, sustainable and environmentally sound manner.

On confidence- and security-building measures, reporting and transparency in particular make an important contribution to creating trust between countries and to the overall peace and security situation. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is one of the tools created for that purpose. We welcome a new initiative to enhance the use of the Register's database by presenting it on the official United Nations website in a user-friendly way. Lithuania calls on all Member States to submit their annual reports and to include, on a voluntary basis, information on the transfers of small arms and light weapons.

Confidence- and security-building measures are no less important at the regional level. As a co-Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Lithuania would like to underline the significance of the innovative toolbox of confidence- and security-building measures developed within the framework of the OSCE, which could also be considered by other regional initiatives.

Finally, let me express Lithuania's strong conviction that multilateral, regional and national programmes related to security and development should take into account gender aspects, in particular by promoting the participation of women as beneficiaries, practitioners and decision-makers. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security provide us with a relevant framework in this regard.

Mr. Gumbi (South Africa): Since the previous First Committee session, we note with satisfaction that 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.

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 this regard, we welcome the successful conclusion of the first Meeting of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons that was held here in New York in May. The Meeting was the first of its kind and provided member States with an important opportunity to consider the implementation challenges on marking, record keeping and cooperation in tracing in accordance with the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

South Africa was particularly pleased that pledges were made to assist developing States to redress their lack of the necessary regulatory frameworks, funding, equipment and capacity in the fields of marking, record-keeping and tracing. South Africa is also pleased that Ambassador Jim McLay of New Zealand, Chair of the Meeting of Governmental Experts, has prepared a Chair's summary, which places on record some of the elements of the more substantive discussions in greater detail. My delegation would be in favour of institutionalizing the Meeting of Governmental Experts as a biennial event.

South Africa has remained an active participant, together with other Member States, in the process of negotiating an arms trade treaty (ATT) during the ongoing Preparatory Committee process. South Africa believes that, while resolving our differences on certain aspects and draft provisions of the ATT will not be an easy task, we must not be distracted from our resolve to adopt a treaty that makes a real difference in the legal conventional arms trade and in improving the quality of life of all our citizens through the regulation of the arms trade and related transfers.

Whatever final provisions will be adopted on this issue — such as on scope, parameters or criteria — my delegation believes that the creation of an Implementation Support Unit will, among other things, be one of the keys to the successful implementation of the ATT. My delegation is of the view that the Chair's latest text is fairly balanced and represents a good basis for consideration during the July 2012 ATT negotiations.

South Africa attaches great importance to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We look forward to the consideration of the Phnom Penh progress report at the next Meeting of States Parties to

the Convention in Cambodia later this year, and wish to thank the Kingdom of Cambodia for its generous offer to host the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention.

My delegation has always highlighted the importance of the text of the Convention as the primary legally binding commitment to its implementation and regards the successive action plans that have been adopted since the first Review Conference as being complementary, practical guides to its implementation in relation to victim assistance, mine clearance, stockpile destruction, cooperation and assistance, as well as on universalization.

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, vocational training and subsequent employment.

We are also concerned that a number of States parties have not been able to meet their clearance deadlines and have consequently requested extensions. We continue to believe that early planning and implementation and the allocation of adequate resources will go a long way to addressing problems related to mine clearance.

South Africa shares the concern about the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. As a signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), South Africa is fully committed to the ban of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster munitions. In this connection, South Africa welcomes the entry into force of the CCM on 1 August 2010. South Africa believes that the CCM 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 not only that these weapons become obsolete as weapons of modern warfare, but that their recent use in conflicts have shown them to cause unacceptable harm to civilians, even long after the cessation of active hostilities.

As a State party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), South Africa remains committed to the full

implementation and universal application of the provisions of the Framework Convention and its five Protocols. To demonstrate this commitment, the South African Parliament consented to South Africa being bound by Protocol V and the amended article 1.

In addition, South Africa has also been actively participating in the CCW Meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts that has been negotiating a possible protocol on cluster munitions, and we look forward to the consideration of this issue during the forthcoming Fourth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties later this year. 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 urgently address the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions.

In our view, the latest Chair's text continues to raise concerns, particularly in relation to definitions, prohibitions and restrictions, deferral periods and technical annexes that will, if adopted, reverse the gains made under the CCM. Of particular concern to my delegation is the implicit legitimization of the continued use and production of cluster munitions that have been banned under the CCM. We believe that it is incumbent on all States parties and signatories to the CCM that are also States parties to the CCW to work towards an outcome to the CCW process that does not in any way undermine the letter or the spirit of the CCM. South Africa remains committed to contributing towards that aim.

In conclusion, Colombia, Japan and South Africa, this year under the coordination of Japan, will again submit the annual omnibus draft resolution on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. The draft resolution provides an update on the implementation of the issues related to the United Nations Programme of Action and provides an operational framework for the future implementation of the Programme. My delegation hopes that, given the text's non-controversial nature, the General Assembly will be able to adopt it by consensus. South Africa also looks forward to a successful outcome of the 2012 Conference to review the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/66/L.29 and A/C.1/66/L.33.

Mr. Van den IJssel (Netherlands): I should like to touch upon three major events in the field of conventional arms — the Fourth Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), the fourth Preparatory Committee and Diplomatic Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and the Preparatory Committee and the Second Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Next month, Geneva will be the venue for the Fourth Review Conference of the CCW. The Convention constitutes an essential part of international humanitarian law and we are committed to its preservation and further development. We welcome progress in the implementation of the latest addition to the CCW family, Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, and we support the further development of innovative mechanisms for the exchange of information, such as the annual Meetings of Experts and the web-based information system.

With regard to the ongoing negotiations on a sixth protocol on cluster munitions in the framework of the CCW, the Netherlands hopes that they will be concluded with agreement on an instrument. The new protocol will need to contain meaningful prohibitions and restrictions on these types of weapons for those countries as yet not in a position to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). We consider a future protocol VI as an intermediate step towards universalization of the CCM. As a party to the CCM, the Netherlands has committed itself never to using cluster munitions again. The destruction of our stockpiles is in full progress and will be completed long before the deadline stipulated in the CCM.

Regarding the arms trade treaty, the Netherlands strongly supports the establishment of a strong and robust ATT. We believe that a responsible arms trade is a legitimate part of international trade relations, but it is also clear that an irresponsible or illegal arms trade may be a factor in threats to peace, security and stability, and may lead to violations of international

law, including human rights law and humanitarian law. It is in the interests of the entire international community that the international trade in conventional arms be submitted to a comprehensive, legally binding instrument containing common minimum standards for transfers of conventional arms. Our aim is a robust treaty that includes as many States as possible.

An ATT should oblige States to adopt and implement national legislation in order to prevent transfers of conventional arms that may, directly or indirectly, provoke, prolong or exacerbate conflicts, or otherwise affect security or stability, or be detrimental to human rights or sustainable development. An ATT therefore should have the broadest possible scope, in terms both of categories of arms and equipment, and types of transfers.

It should include obligatory transparency and reporting requirements, as transparency is an important tool to ensure implementation of the standards to be agreed upon. The Netherlands itself has a tradition of openness regarding its arms trade. This shows that transparency and a thriving defence industry go very well together. The Netherlands deems the support of civil society essential for a successful ATT. While the final decisions will have to be made by sovereign States, we aim for broad participation of non-governmental organizations in the process. Equally, the Netherlands believes that the involvement of the defence industry will be a key to success.

Small arms and light weapons annually cause more deaths worldwide than any other category of weapons. Their illicit trade and uncontrolled spread adversely affect regional and international stability; they fuel conflicts and armed violence and pose a threat to the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people around the globe.

The United Nations Programme of Action is the only global instrument in this field. At the Third and Fourth Biennial Meetings of States and at the first Meeting of Governmental Experts held earlier this year in this very building, we, as the international community, showed our commitment to fighting the scourge of small arms and light weapons. We see the forthcoming Second Review Conference as a unique opportunity not only for taking stock of our achievements, but for a genuine assessment of the Programme of Action. That implies that we not only celebrate our successes but also identify where the shortcomings lie and agree

on actions to remedy them. We are committed to the further development of the Programme of Action and to the strengthening of its implementation. We look forward to working with all other States to make the Review Conference a success.

While I have the floor, I should like to take this opportunity to introduce two draft resolutions. First I have the honour to introduce on behalf of 80 sponsors the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/66/L.29 entitled "Transparency in armaments". The rationale behind the transparency in armaments resolution, of which the Netherlands traditionally is the main sponsor, is that openness in military matters, and particularly transparency in transfers of armaments, contributes to confidence- and security-building between States.

Against that background, with resolution 46/36 L of 1991 the United Nations established the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms through which all United Nations Member States can provide annually, on a voluntary basis, data on their imports and exports of conventional arms. Member States can also make available background information regarding their military holdings, procurement through national production, relevant policies, and transfers of small arms and light weapons. I should like to compliment the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on the new and more user-friendly on-line version of the Register that will be launched later today.

Every three years, a Group of Governmental Experts reviews the operation and further development of the Register. Through resolution 64/54, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to convene a Group of Governmental Experts in 2012. Given the very busy disarmament agenda in 2012, it is foreseen that the Group will have its first of three meetings only very late in the year. The present draft resolution therefore decides to take up this issue again at our sixty-eighth session.

The draft resolution already enjoys the support of a large number of sponsors from across all regions. While I thank those delegations that have already sponsored it, it is my pleasure to invite other delegations to join us. The draft resolution is, of course, still open for additional sponsorships. We express the hope that it will be adopted by overwhelming support, as has been the case with similar resolutions in previous years.

The second draft resolution I should like to introduce is draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.33, entitled "National

legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology". With this biennial draft resolution, Member States are invited to enact or improve national legislation, regulations and procedures to exercise effective control over the transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology. States are encouraged to provide the Secretary-General, on a voluntary basis, with information on their national legislation, regulations and procedures, as well as the changes therein.

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs maintains a database where all information exchanged pursuant to this draft resolution can be consulted. This exchange of information not only contributes to mutual understanding, transparency and confidence among Member States, but is also beneficial to Member States that are in the process of developing legislation on these transfers. The current draft is an update of the 2009 resolution 64/40 on the same subject. At previous sessions of the First Committee, the draft resolution has been adopted by consensus. We trust that it again will meet with the approval of all Member States and we look forward to its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Hermoso (Philippines): In the interests of time, I shall read an abbreviated version of my statement, but would request that the statement being circulated be put on record as the Philippine statement.

The Philippines views and considers the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons as a serious threat to international peace and security, and believes that the best way to solve the problems caused by illicit small arms and light weapons is through 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 is the main framework for addressing the illegal trade in these arms. In this regard, the Philippines welcomes the outcome of the Meeting of Governmental Experts under the chairmanship of Ambassador McLay of New Zealand in May.

The Philippines recognizes that the major arms-producing States have a special responsibility and calls on them strictly to apply the legal restrictions that prevent the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons and to supply only responsible Governments and their authorized entities. The Philippines encourages States to utilize the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as a means of monitoring arms transfers between

States. For its part, my country is undertaking appropriate measures to prevent exports of small arms and light weapons that will violate sanctions issued by the United Nations or contravene bilateral, regional or multilateral commitments on the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The Philippines wishes to highlight the need for greater cooperation between States in the areas of information exchange, sharing of best practices, and the establishment of national points of contact. There should be increased cooperation, in particular among law enforcement, border and customs control agencies. The Philippines supports efforts at capacity-building and welcomes information on the type of assistance other States are willing to provide.

The Philippines calls for the strict implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The implementation of the Instrument is a joint responsibility of the major arms-producing as well as receiving States. The Philippines, for its part, cooperates with its neighbours on tracing through the Association of Heads of Police of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the INTERPOL National Central Bureau for the Philippines. The Philippines also gives importance to marking small arms and light weapons and addresses the matter through legislation that includes stiff penalties for violations relative to non-compliance in terms of marking requirements.

The Philippine Government has made progress on the implementation of the Programme of Action by maintaining appropriate partnerships with the local firearms industry, private security providers, gun clubs and civil society. The country has several laws to prevent the illicit transfer of small arms, which in some cases is even stricter than the Programme of Action. On the export and import of small arms, the Philippines ensures that there is control through the use of end-user certificates or letters of intent.

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.

On the arms trade treaty (ATT), the Philippines, like many other States, sees the urgent need to regulate the trade in conventional arms through a future arms trade treaty, and views the unregulated trade in these weapons and their diversion to the illicit market as a threat to international peace and security. An ATT should represent a reaffirmation of the existing responsibilities of Member States in adherence to international law and would crystallize the development of a mechanism for consistent, transparent, lawful and effective application in the trade in these arms. Its principles should be based on a range of existing multilateral and regional instruments already implemented by Member States, which would serve as the building blocks of the ATT.

The ATT should be able to address political and economic instability, 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. It must also be impervious to political abuse.

The ATT should have a clear, detailed and standardized definition of conventional weapons, contain explicit measures for effective monitoring and enforcement, and include mechanisms for increasing transparency and accountability in the international transfer of arms. A future ATT must also have a mechanism on how to provide assistance to developing and less developed countries that do not possess the capacity, expertise or even resources effectively to implement the treaty.

The Philippines commends Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina for his efforts in guiding the previous Preparatory Committee meetings to a successful conclusion, and looks forward to actively participating in and contributing to the Conference to negotiate the arms trade treaty next year.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/66/L.26, A/C.1/66/L.27 and A/C.1/66/L.28.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): In recent years, the arms control narrative seems to have focused predominantly on potential threats emanating from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, as well as their means of

delivery. This storyline is further buttressed by the fashionable lament over the disarmament machinery that, while dysfunctional, could evolve measures to address the challenges of weapons of mass destruction.

While such a level of focus and attention may have its own value, the threat of weapons of mass destruction should not lessen our attention to matters relating to regulation and reduction of conventional arms and armed forces. The destabilizing effects of conventional weapons on regional and subregional stability and their catastrophic humanitarian toll underscore the need for meaningful action by the international community.

Admittedly, lately there has been a certain degree of spotlight on regulating the trade in conventional armaments. What is missing however from this narrow agenda are the following major issues.

First, global military expenditures are rising again after a brief hiatus in the post-Cold War years. Reportedly the present expenditure on international trade in conventional arms has exceeded the colossal amount of \$1.5 trillion. Ironically, the total budget of the United Nations mandated to maintain international peace and security is around 3 per cent of the world's military expenditure.

Secondly, the growing military expenditure is accompanied by the increasing sophistication of conventional weaponry and technology. These armaments and their means of development are being traded in huge quantities among the like-minded or exported to those who have the financial means to purchase them.

Thirdly, developing countries are the primary recipients of the total value of international arms transfer agreements. These countries are the favoured destinations for arms sales. New markets are being explored, created and sought, with scant regard for the destabilizing impact on regional security and stability.

Fourthly, despite exhortations by the General Assembly for a comprehensive arms control approach, the only prescription on the counter is regulating the trade in such arms. Other equally important aspects — such as restraints on production, reduction in the number of weapons or forces and a decrease in deployments — continue to be ignored.

The Final Document (resolution S-10/2) of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) provides a definitive direction

for addressing the issues of global military expenditure, conventional disarmament measures in an equitable and balanced manner so that no State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage, and the balanced reduction of forces and conventional armaments. Therefore, in advancing the goal of global and regional peace, security and stability, as well as of regulating conventional weapons, it is essential to anchor our efforts in the consensus document of SSOD-I.

It is indeed ironic to witness commercial motives superseding the collective security approach of a comprehensive conventional arms control agenda. Arms sellers often encourage both sides in a conflict to buy more such weapons. The only question asked is: Who has the money? The result is a series of regional arms races, mostly in volatile parts of the world. While trying to facilitate talks to ease tensions, senior officials of the selling nations have used such occasions to lobby for the sale of sophisticated military equipment produced by their national manufacturers. These officials market their weapons even as they seek to mediate peace. The normative and legal force of their national and regional arms transfer policies seems to give way to the irresistible profits that trade in conventional arms brings to their exchequers.

On the other hand, the demand for weapons emanates either from insecurity or ambition. Some States are seeking to build up their national armed forces on land, in the air and at sea with the declared objective of emerging as a global Power, often with the self-proclaimed intent of dominating their own region. Other States affected by the imbalance are then obliged to acquire weapons to ensure a minimum capability to deter aggression and domination. The build-up of such massive arms acquisitions not only diverts resources from the desperate requirements of development and poverty alleviation, but also contributes to instability and insecurity at the regional and global levels.

In view of these disturbing trends, it is imperative that we pursue conventional arms control at the lowest possible levels of armaments and military forces, since most threats to peace and security arise mainly in States located in the same region or subregion. States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility to promote such agreements for regional security. We can adapt and follow good practices, such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which is a cornerstone of European security.

It is in the light of these considerations that Pakistan has presented the following draft resolutions to this Committee, as it has done with similar resolutions in the past. The first is "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels", contained in document A/C.1/66/L.27. The second is "Regional disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/66/L.26. The third is "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context", contained in document A/C.1/66/L.28. We hope that, in keeping with past practice, the Committee will continue to endorse these draft resolutions.

We share international concern over the negative impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We support efforts towards the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Programme of Action strikes a balance between humanitarian concerns and the legitimate security needs of States, and rightly focuses on the illicit trade. That balance and focus must be maintained. Member States have made considerable progress in implementing the Programme of Action nationally, regionally and at the international level. We look forward to actively participating in next year's Review Conference, which we hope will maintain the spirit of consensus that has characterized the discussions and negotiations on the various aspects of small arms and light weapons.

Pakistan is fully committed to the faithful implementation of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the Protocols thereto. We are a party to the Convention and to all its Protocols, which maintain a delicate balance between minimizing human suffering without sacrificing the legitimate security interests of States. Pakistan shares the view that the issue of cluster munitions should be addressed within the CCW framework while striking a balance between military and humanitarian considerations. The proposed Convention must evolve in a non-discriminatory manner. The technology-based distinctions between various types of cluster munitions should not deviate from the established and agreed principles enshrined in SSOD-I, namely, that disarmament measures should be pursued in an equitable and balanced manner so as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual

State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage.

Before concluding, we wish to say a few words on the issue of transparency in armaments. We agree with the broader objectives of pursuing transparency in armaments as an early warning system of global armament trends and a potential force that ought to put some moral pressure on States responsible for destabilizing arms transfers. However, in our view that tool should be used in combination with others. A level of trust between States is necessary if transparency measures are to succeed. Such measures must be supplemented by efforts and solutions to reduce tensions and resolve disputes through negotiations, dialogue and mediation. Transparency is a means to an end, not an end in itself. The ultimate objective should be to seek restraints and promote confidence-building measures at the regional, subregional and global levels. Transparency in armaments must not restrict the right of a State to acquire arms for self-defence.

Mrs. Comfort (Jamaica): I thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to address the Committee in the debate on conventional weapons. Jamaica associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago (see A/C.1/66/PV.14) on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Jamaica remains concerned that conventional weapons in the form of anti-personnel mines, small arms or light weapons continue to threaten human life on a daily basis. On any given day across the world, more innocent lives are claimed by conventional weapons than lives are lost in the current theatres of war. In recognition of the adverse humanitarian impact caused by this category of weapons, and the need to eliminate their indiscriminate effects on humanity, Jamaica has in recent years become a State party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its Protocols. Jamaica is also a signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. While we have not yet ratified that Convention, we hope to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

Of critical importance to my delegation are matters related to small arms and light weapons. For Jamaica, a country that manufactures neither weapons nor ammunition, the dangers posed to human life and social stability by the proliferation of small arms and light

weapons, and the illicit transfer of these categories of weapons and their ammunition, are an everyday reality.

The recently released United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *2011 Global Study on Homicide* indicates that within the Caribbean, a subset of the Americas region — the region with the second highest global homicide rate — close to 70 per cent of annual homicides are committed with a firearm. For Jamaica, the impact of the high levels of crime and violence threatens our advances towards reaching our millennium development targets and negatively affects our social and economic development.

These underlying factors have driven our engagement at the regional and international levels with respect to the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. To this end, we look forward to participating in the Review Conference to be held in 2012. For Jamaica, the 2012 Review Conference should provide an opportunity for more than an evaluation of the implementation of the Programme of Action. If we are to realize the true value of the Programme of Action, we must explore ways to enhance its implementation, particularly for small States with porous borders.

It is also our hope that the Review Conference will provide an opportunity to address all important issues within the Programme of Action, including border-related issues. That, we believe, would be a tangible outcome of the Review Conference. We also look forward to a positive decision being taken at the Review Conference on the convening of future Meetings of Governmental Experts within the framework of the Programme of Action. The first of these Meetings, which was held in May of this year, was an innovative approach that bore significant results. We reiterate our thanks to the Chair and his team for their valuable work.

Jamaica has also continued to be engaged in the preparatory process leading up to the 2012 Diplomatic Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). As we have stated throughout the preparatory process, our goal is a legally binding, objective, non-discriminatory treaty that establishes the highest possible international standards for the transfer of conventional weapons, including small arms, light weapons and their ammunition. Jamaica views the ATT as a necessary element in international efforts to stem the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons across borders

and to keep those weapons out of the hands of criminal organizations and individuals. It is also our hope that the treaty will reinforce our commitment to ridding the world of millions of such illicit weapons. While much work remains to be done leading to next year's Conference, we remain confident that, under the continued able guidance of Ambassador García Moritán, we will bridge the gaps that remain among delegations.

At the national level, within our limited resources we continue to implement our obligations under the various international and regional agreements to which Jamaica is a party. On the legislative front, we are currently in the process of drafting more comprehensive legislation that will strengthen Jamaica's capacity to combat the flows of illicit arms into the island, regulate brokering activities, and strengthen the regulatory framework. A comprehensive small arms policy is also currently being developed.

In addition, Jamaica has introduced a vehicle and cargo inspection system at the Kingston Transshipment Port, which is used for the detection of illegal weapons, and teams from the Jamaican Police and Defence Forces continue to patrol our territorial waters to prevent the smuggling of weapons and illegal drugs. These efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition have been assisted through the much-appreciated support of many of our bilateral and regional partners.

At the regional level, too, Jamaica and its CARICOM partners are working closely together within the context of the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security. Additionally Jamaica is supportive of, and participates actively in, regional efforts to harmonize legislation with a focus on strong penalties to deter the illicit use, sale and possession of firearms.

The coming year promises to be one of long-awaited and much-needed progress for the conventional weapons agenda. We have a moral obligation to lay the foundation for a better future for the entire international community. Advancing progress on the conventional weapons agenda will significantly contribute to meeting these lofty but achievable goals.

Mr. Dieng (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to participate in this thematic debate on conventional weapons, the control of which is of crucial importance to international peace and security. I should like to congratulate Ambassadors

Roberto García Moritán and Claus Wunderlich for their briefings.

I welcome in particular the significant progress made within the framework of the Preparatory Committee for the 2012 Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Indeed, the three sessions of the Preparatory Committee have enabled us to exchange in-depth information on the different elements of a future ATT. Moreover, the document drafted by the Chair of the Committee is a good basis for negotiations for the 2012 Conference. Those results were made possible in particular by the constructive spirit that prevailed throughout those meetings.

This positive momentum should be maintained until we have adopted a strong treaty on conventional weapons. The moral and urgent need to end the unspeakable suffering caused by these weapons requires us to harness all our energies to conclude the treaty in 2012. In the opinion of my delegation, such an instrument will be effective and feasible only if it includes all categories of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, munitions, technology and others. We also need a broader definition of transfer and brokering activities.

The ATT should also be based on the relevant and objective criteria and parameters to ensure that transfers are authorized only when these weapons will be used for the legitimate needs of defence and security in the beneficiary countries. We should therefore ban the transfer of these weapons if there is a chance that they will be used, *inter alia*, to commit serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law or fall into the hands of non-State actors. Furthermore, with a view to the development and reinforcement of States' capacities to implement the ATT, we need very strong provisions for assistance and international cooperation.

Senegal remains especially concerned over the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which contribute significantly to the perpetuation and resurgence of conflicts, whose exorbitant human, economic and financial costs seriously compromise the development of many countries in Africa. That is why my delegation reiterates its appeal for the effective implementation of the final document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3) 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. We believe that the essential points are international cooperation and assistance, the destruction of surplus, and marking and tracing. We need to monitor and follow up the first Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which took place in New York from 9 to 13 May 2011.

We should also show resolute commitment to ensuring that the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons becomes legally binding and that a similar instrument is being adopted for light weapons.

Regarding anti-personnel mines, Senegal is convinced that the universalization of the Ottawa Convention must remain a priority if we are to free the world of these devices, which sow indiscriminate death. We also think it would be wise, within the framework of technical and financial assistance to affected countries, to help them with their demining programmes, with special attention to the socio-economic rehabilitation of victims.

To conclude, I welcome the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 1 August 2010. Senegal ratified the Convention on 3 June 2011. The Convention's entry into force represents a significant step forward in the protection of civilians and the strengthening of international law.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.43.

Mr. Amano (Japan): We are witnessing some positive developments in the field of conventional weapons. The arms trade treaty process is now entering the final negotiation stage, and this year marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption 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. The universalization and implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction are steadily progressing. Japan has been actively engaged in these processes and is determined to continue to do so.

Japan fully shares the concerns about the serious humanitarian impact caused by anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. I should like to

reiterate Japan's call on all countries that are not parties to the anti-personnel mine ban Convention and the CCM to accede to them as soon as possible and join our collective efforts towards the universalization of these treaties. Japan, for its part, will continue its outreach activities in collaboration with various actors.

We consider it important for the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention next month in Cambodia to take stock of progress made in accordance with the Cartagena Action Plan. It is also important to consider how better to facilitate our work in carrying out the Plan. Japan has continuously extended its support to landmine and cluster munition clearance activities and victim assistance. It is our intention to continue this support in order to aid efforts to curb the humanitarian problems caused by these weapons. Since December 2010, Japan's contribution in this area has amounted to more than \$31 million. We welcome further discussions on the effective and efficient utilization of resources with other States parties and partners.

The establishment of a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms is an urgent task. Japan is pleased with the progress made in the arms trade treaty (ATT) process so far. Under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, we have deepened our deliberations towards the creation of an ATT over the course of its three Preparatory Committee sessions. The Chair's paper circulated at the last session covers important elements for the treaty and provides a good basis for negotiations. We count on Ambassador García Moritán's continued leadership in the lead-up to and during the United Nations Conference on the ATT in July. It is crucial that we ratchet up our political will in order to create a robust treaty at that Conference. As one of the strong promoters of the ATT process, Japan is determined to work diligently with the Chair and other States to this end.

Last May's Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on small arms held in New York was an excellent opportunity to exchange information and share experiences among the relevant experts on the marking, record-keeping and tracing of small arms. We commend the tireless efforts of the Chair, Ambassador McLay of New Zealand, and his team. Last week, Japan, together with Colombia and South Africa, submitted a draft resolution entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" (A/C.1/66/L.43) to

the Committee. We call on all Member States to support the draft resolution and hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The Review Conference on the Programme of Action next year will be a great opportunity to review the progress made in the implementation of the Programme over the past 10 years and to elaborate a future direction for promoting its implementation. Since each country interprets and puts into effect the Programme of Action of its own accord, it would also be beneficial to develop a common understanding of the Programme with a view to strengthening its implementation.

I should like to announce here today that Japan has decided to make financial contributions of approximately \$300,000 through the United Nations Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities to the following three projects proposed by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs: "Further Transparency in the Arms Trade"; "Promoting Synergy among Conventional Arms Information Platforms"; and "United Nations SaferGuard: Securing Ammunition From the Dual Dangers of Explosion and Diversion". We believe that these projects will benefit all States.

We will have a heavy workload ahead of us next year in the field of conventional weapons with the ATT Conference, the Programme of Action Review Conference and their Preparatory Committee sessions, as well as the annual Meeting of States Parties of the CCM, the anti-personnel mine ban Convention and the CCW. That will be a challenge, but also a great opportunity to strengthen legal and political frameworks, as well as to initiate various measures to address issues in these areas. Japan will engage actively and constructively in all of these processes and looks forward to working closely with other States and civil society.

Before closing my statement on small arms and light weapons let me briefly touch upon the issue of abandoned chemical weapons. Regarding the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons in China, the Foreign Ministers of Japan and China confirmed in July this year that their projects had been steadily implemented and that the two countries would continue to cooperate further. Both countries have held bilateral consultations since August. Japan considers that recognition by both countries of the destruction plan has become closer and wishes to report to the Executive Council of the

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons after reaching common recognition of the destruction plan.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): In the interests of time, like other representatives I will deliver an abbreviated statement. However, we are distributing a longer version for the record.

My own delegation is very encouraged by the forward momentum over the past year to address the threats posed by proliferation and the misuse of conventional weapons. The Preparatory Committee on an arms trade treaty has made steady progress towards bringing that treaty into being at the Diplomatic Conference next year. The Meeting of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was a successful first attempt at genuine expert-level discussions on practical implementation challenges. Last month, many of us met for the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. This comparatively new addition to the global response to explosive remnants of war will, we think, play a key role in reducing threats to vulnerable populations.

Australia remains strongly committed to international cooperation on curbing the illicit trade and misuse of small arms and light weapons. We have provided practical assistance to help ensure that the objectives of the United Nations Programme of Action are fully implemented, but we must all recognize that a great deal more work needs to be done. The productive exchanges at the first ever Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action in May this year will contribute, we hope, to a sound basis for success at the Review Conference in 2012. At that Conference, we will work with others to strengthen the follow-up mechanisms for the Programme of Action, undertake a thorough assessment of implementation, and improve understanding of its impact. Through this, we look to identify where more intensive efforts are needed.

Australia welcomes the near universal recognition of the need to better regulate the arms trade. The second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference made strong headway in providing a solid basis for a treaty text.

We congratulate the Preparatory Committee's Chair, Ambassador García Moritán of Argentina, on his extremely skilful guidance of our work and look

forward to his continuing in this role at the 2012 Conference. Australia itself has been very pleased to play a supportive role as a friend of the Chair. We are fully supportive of the Chair's paper as a solid basis for the Conference, including its extensive scope and indicative parameters.

Australia continues to pursue actively the achievement of a treaty that is comprehensive but also practical and effective. We want the ATT to help enhance global standards through the creation and strengthening of national control mechanisms. The treaty should also indicate a base of common minimum standards for assessments of the transfer of arms against given criteria. International cooperation and assistance should be available to strengthen the capacities of States to regulate the cross-border movement of arms and prosecute violations. None of that is new but that is the agenda we need to take forward next year.

Recognizing that the ATT will be strengthened by universal adherence, Australia has actively sought the views and participation of a broad range of countries, including small island developing States, many of which are particularly susceptible to illicit arms trafficking. We supported 18 Government and civil society representatives from the Caribbean and Pacific to attend the third critical Preparatory Committee session in July. We have contributed to regional efforts in the Caribbean by assisting the Caribbean Community to build common approaches through two workshops. We will host another in Jamaica in March next year. We will also be holding a similar regional workshop in March to enable Pacific island States to prepare for the Review Conference and the final negotiations.

Australia continues to place a top priority on mine action. We have committed A\$100 million over the next few years to this end. That will remain a top priority for us. We have supported projects across a very large number of countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Cambodia, Guinea-Bissau and Palestine. Working in partnership with affected countries, humanitarian organizations and local communities, clearly the globe is making some progress towards removing the threat of old conflicts so that new lives can be built. We have also been very pleased to co-Chair with Uganda a standing committee which has enhanced links between victim assistance and disability rights. There are very strong linkages between the practical efforts to assist survivors and the implementation of obligations

on non-discrimination, accessibility, mobility and inclusiveness.

On cluster munitions, we remain equally committed. We congratulate the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Lebanon on their bold leadership of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in its first two years. Likewise, we have worked closely as a friend of the Chair and will continue our support in the future. We are also a supporter of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, including the negotiations on a protocol VI to eradicate cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm. We appreciate the potential humanitarian benefits that could be achieved by the successful conclusion of a protocol, especially one that would include the major producers, users and stockpilers that have not signed the Convention.

My country was also honoured to serve as its President at the Conference of High Contracting Parties of Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in November last year. The Conference promoted efforts to clear affected land, enhance transparency, strengthen preventative measures and assist survivors of accidents from explosive remnants of war. We urge all States that have not already done so, to join these Conventions. Cluster munitions, landmines and other explosive remnants of war are a tragic legacy of conflict, but we cannot do enough to remove the problems that it continues to pose for vulnerable populations in the future.

To conclude, I would say the very obvious — that Australia remains committed to working with others to address the challenges posed by the proliferation, misuse and unacceptable harm of conventional weapons and that will remain a key and top priority for us.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.17.

Mr. Lindell (Sweden): I have a short statement. Sweden has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.17 entitled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects". We do so together with Bulgaria, the Chair of the Fourth Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

The purpose of the CCW is to ban or restrict the use of certain specific types of weapons that cause

excessive injury or unnecessary suffering to combatants or affect civilians indiscriminately. The Convention forms an essential and integral part of international law applicable to armed conflict. It is designed to provide a framework within which humanitarian concerns regarding conventional weapons can be dealt with. We need the CCW to be a dynamic instrument responding to the urgent humanitarian challenges before us.

Today the CCW has 114 States parties. Thus, the number of States parties to the Convention still falls short of universal membership. Let me take this opportunity to express our hope that the countries that have not yet joined the Convention will find it in their interest to do so and become parties to the Convention and its Protocols, including the important amendment that extends the scope of the Convention to include situations of non-international conflict.

The purpose of the draft resolution that we are introducing today is to continue to express support for the CCW, with particular focus on the universalization of the Convention and its Protocols. The text of the draft resolution also reflects the ongoing work within the framework of the Convention since the adoption of last year's resolution 65/89. It is an expression of support for the CCW as an important instrument of international humanitarian law. However, the draft resolution does not pronounce on the substance of issues being discussed in this connection, and it does not prejudge the outcome of any future discussions among States parties.

In conclusion, we wish to express our sincere hope that the draft resolution can be adopted, as in previous years, without a vote.

Mr. Ikongo Isekotoko (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): The Democratic Republic of the Congo, a post-conflict country, recognizes that in the area of conventional weapons the international community has been making ongoing efforts to shoulder its obligations and implement relevant measures. These efforts are visible in the following spheres.

With respect to the arms trade treaty, the Democratic Republic of the Congo notes with satisfaction the intensity of the work of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty with a view to reaching a common concept of what such an instrument should look like. We are pleased to participate actively in that work, and that the mandate bestowed by the General Assembly allows an operational approach

to the drafting of an effective, balanced and legally binding instrument.

My delegation commends Ambassador García Moritán and the Preparatory Committee for their work, and offers him our support. The treaty should be based on a consolidated version of the seven categories of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. It should also cover small arms and light weapons, as well as munitions, and should apply to all existing forms of transfers.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo encourages the adoption of stringent criteria to prevent any transfer to a State that has committed serious violations of international law, particularly international humanitarian and human rights law. These criteria should also apply in cases where there is a serious risk of exported or imported weapons being used against the civilian population or diverted to illicit recipients, taking into account the possible impact on the sustainable social and economic development of the receiving country. The Democratic Republic of the Congo reiterates its commitment to and support for a treaty establishing the highest possible common international standards for regulating the transfer of conventional weapons.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo also attaches particular importance to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. It is troubled by the drop in the participation of States in this instrument over the past three years. It believes that the level of participation in the Register depends chiefly on its relevance to Member States. In other words, they will communicate information only so long as the instrument responds to their security concerns. The fact that the Register does not cover certain categories of conventional weapons, such as small arms and light weapons, has a direct impact on the participation level. It is important for States parties to convey their opinions by next year in order to shed light on the work of the Group of Governmental Experts who are due to meet in 2012 to review the content of the Register and modifications that need to be made to it.

The adoption and entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) were among the most notable achievements of the past decade in the sphere of international humanitarian law and conventional disarmament. The Democratic Republic of the Congo will continue to participate in this sphere.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo actively participates in efforts of States parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) with a view to negotiating a legal instrument addressing the issue of cluster munitions. The CCW seeks to regulate weapons already outlawed by an international instrument, the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It would be seriously compromised if the parties to the CCW were to adopt an instrument that would have the effect of legitimizing the usage of weapons whose unacceptable humanitarian impact is known to all. We must therefore find a solution that will convince the main producer and user countries of the importance of a strong instrument that bolsters and guarantees the security of civilians and the members of international missions.

The result will have to meet the security needs of States by respecting the coherence of the existing legal regime. The delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo therefore welcomes the ongoing negotiations on a protocol on cluster munitions with a view to developing a legal instrument that does not undermine the standards set by the CCM but rather offers a judicious complementary alternative.

Eleven years after the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the States parties and international organizations and non-governmental organizations reiterated their commitment to a world without mines at the Cartagena Conference in November 2009. They agreed on far-reaching goals for the future, including universalizing the treaty. We were heartened by the recent positive signals sent by States that have long shared the humanitarian norms articulated by the Convention but have still to ratify it.

The Cartagena Action Plan stresses the importance of strict respect for the demining deadlines, which is a key challenge to the Treaty's credibility. Cartagena also enabled decisive progress to be made towards an integrated, non-discriminatory approach to assisting victims and integrating gender mainstreaming in anti-mine action.

Over the past two years, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has promulgated a law on the struggle against mines, created an anti-mine centre as an institution

responsible for mine activities, demined more than 82 dangerous contaminated zones throughout the national territory covering 14.4 square kilometres and assisted and reintegrated more than 2,418 victims.

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 was one of the highlights in the struggle against the illicit trade in those weapons. The Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomes the adoption of consensus outcome document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3) covering measures to bolster mechanisms to follow up the Programme of Action. We hope that the 2012 Review Conference will be able to review progress achieved in implementing the Programme of Action 10 years after its adoption.

The conclusions and recommendations of the Meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts should fuel the debates of the review conference. In that context, the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo recommends that the Meeting of Experts, in terms of the cross-cutting issue of international cooperation and assistance, should cover only one or two additional priority points in order to enable productive discussions.

Efforts made in the sphere of small arms and light weapons help to combat the scourge of armed violence, which undermines development and hinder the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. That reality was also recognized by the Secretary-General in 2009 through the reduction and prevention of armed violence, which offers an excellent basis for the Organization's future work.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, having signed the Programme of Action to the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, and ratified certain regional and subregional conventions and protocols, is now highly experienced in the prevention of and struggle against the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons and reducing armed violence, having carried out the following actions, which are not exhaustive.

We have drafted a bill on small arms and light weapons that is currently before the Parliament awaiting adoption and promulgation by the Head of

State; formulated a national action plan to combat the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo over the five-year period 2012-2017; built an arms dumps and trained of gunsmiths to manage and secure stockpiles; destroyed at least 210,422 weapons and 861 tons of munitions of all calibres; deployed units to sensitive provinces to track implementation; and launched the marking and tracing process for small arms and light weapons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As a post-conflict country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo encourages, through the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, more significant cooperation efforts between communities and institutions working in the field of disarmament, peacebuilding, humanitarian affairs and development, with a view to reducing armed violence and further bolstering human security throughout the world.

I take this opportunity to thank Germany, Australia, the United States and the United Nations Development Programme for their significant support to our country in the field of small arms and light weapons and disarmament. We also call on other States and United Nations agencies to follow in their footsteps to help the Democratic Republic of the Congo restore peace and security ahead of the next elections.

Finally, more than 100 States have signed the Geneva Declaration to date. The delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo takes this opportunity to encourage States that have still to do so to accede to the Geneva Declaration and its principles.

The Chair: I should like to remind delegations that I have 30 more delegations on the list of speakers in this cluster. I hope that delegations can observe the time limit of 10 minutes.

Mr. Shen Jian (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Over the past year, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) — an important international legal framework in the field of arms control dealing with humanitarian issues — has continued to increase in vitality. The implementation of the Convention and all its five Protocols has made steady progress. The Group of Governmental Experts on cluster munitions has carried out four years of hard work. The Convention has demonstrably played

an indispensable role in addressing the humanitarian concerns caused by certain conventional weapons.

The Chinese Government firmly supports and actively participates in the international conventional arms control process, attaches importance to and supports the work of the CCW, and is dedicated to addressing the humanitarian concerns caused by certain conventional weapons. As a high contracting party to the Convention and all its five Protocols, China has fulfilled and will continue in good faith to fulfil its obligations under the CCW and its Protocols and dedicate itself to enhancing the effectiveness and universality of the Convention.

Since 1998, the Chinese Government has provided humanitarian assistance to nearly 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the form of financial donations, demining equipment, personnel training and other means. It notes with satisfaction that China has offered demining assistance this year to Sri Lanka, the Sudan and South Sudan, and provided assistance with cluster munitions and mine victims to Laos and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, respectively.

China attaches great importance to the humanitarian concerns raised by cluster munitions and supports the Group of Governmental Experts in negotiating a protocol that would address this issue while striking a balance between legitimate defence needs and humanitarian considerations. China commends the work of the Group of Governmental Experts and appreciates the efforts of the Philippine Chair in pushing forward negotiations. We support the Group's ongoing negotiations on the basis of the latest Chair's text to reach an agreement at the Fourth Review Conference on the CCW in November.

China is fully aware that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons causes regional instability and fuels humanitarian crises. China has always attached great importance to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and has supported and actively participated in related international efforts. China believes that the comprehensive and effective implementation of existing international instruments — such as the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons — is of

vital importance to promoting the work of combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

China believes that poverty and social unrest are among the primary reasons for the spread of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We maintain that a comprehensive approach should be taken to addressing both the symptoms and the underlying causes of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The international community should take effective measures to help the countries concerned to achieve economic development, eliminate starvation, poverty and social injustice, and maintain peace, development and social stability. China hopes that all parties concerned will bear this in mind and prepare well for next year's Review Conference on the Programme of Action with a view to rooting out the causes of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

China has always taken a prudent and responsible approach to arms exports and has exercised strict and effective control thereof in accordance with its international obligations, and national laws and regulations. The Chinese Government has serious concerns over regional instability and humanitarian crises fuelled by the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. We urge the international community to take the necessary measures to regulate the international arms trade, prevent arms being diverted from legal channels to illegal markets, and combat such activities.

China actively participated and played a constructive role in the work of the sessions of the Preparatory Committee on the arms trade treaty (ATT). China believes that the primary goal of an ATT is to safeguard global and regional stability, and ensure a State's legitimate right to self-defence and its own security needs. An ATT should be internationally recognized, objective and non-discriminatory. It should avoid any politicized abuse of the treaty to interfere in the legitimate arms trade and a State's internal affairs. Relevant ATT processes should stick to the principle of consensus and proceed openly, transparently and incrementally in order to satisfy the reasonable political security and economic needs of all parties concerned. China will make further constructive efforts with all parties concerned within the United Nations framework to appropriately address issues related to the illicit traffic in conventional weapons.

China attaches importance to the issue of military transparency and is committed to enhancing mutual trust in the military field with other countries. China

welcomes the final report adopted by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures (A/66/89). China will continue submitting relevant data to the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Mr. Beremwoudougou (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation reiterates its congratulations to you, Sir, on the excellent way in which you are guiding the work of the Committee.

While the international community has agreed to recognize that the existence of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, constitutes the greatest threat to humanity, conventional weapons, in this case small arms and light weapons, are at the heart of insecurity and conflict in several regions of the world.

Given their cheap cost, their ease of transport from one conflict to another and, above all, their effectiveness, small arms and light weapons are today the preferred instrument of combatants, terrorist groups and bandits of all kinds. In recent years, they have been and continue to be trafficked and part of an illicit trade that has contributed significantly to igniting and escalating armed conflicts, unleashing incalculable human suffering. In the West African subregion, for example, around 7 million small arms and light weapons are in circulation, according to certain estimates, leading each day to increased insecurity for populations.

Given the multiple impacts of small arms and light weapons — human, political, social, economic and so on — we deem it important that the regulation of their trade, far from being a necessity, must now be an absolute priority on the peace and security agenda of the international community. My delegation therefore welcomes the broad mobilization, particularly within the United Nations, around this issue with a view to eradicating the illicit trade and traffic in small arms and light weapons.

The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted by consensus at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July 2001, is a step in the right direction. Although its provisions are not binding, the Programme offers a general framework for confronting this issue and

merges all the related initiatives and actions at the international and regional levels.

It has led to a better awareness of this issue on the part of the international community and the progressive establishment of international legally binding instruments. Moreover, review of its implementation at biennial meetings always offers an opportunity to see how far we have come and to shoulder new commitments for the future. These efforts also include the adoption on 8 December 2005 by the General Assembly of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, which offers States the capacity to identify and rapidly and reliably trace small arms and light weapons.

My delegation also greatly appreciates the progress made towards drafting an arms trade treaty, with a conference scheduled for July 2012. It hopes that the final obstacles will be lifted by then, thereby enabling the international community finally to adopt by consensus this long-awaited treaty, the implementation of which will mitigate the suffering of populations.

Burkina Faso attaches great importance to disarmament and in particular the struggle against small arms and light weapons. It played an active part, alongside the other States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in the adoption in 2006 of a Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, whose entry into force on 29 September 2009 allows us today to coordinate efforts at the national level and to make significant progress.

We regularly submit our national report on the implementation of the Programme of Action and take part at biennial meetings on implementation. The same goes for the implementation of resolution 64/22, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures" adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 2009.

At the institutional level, Burkina Faso has established a national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and a high authority to control the importation of arms and their use. Under the authority of the Prime Minister, those two structures are responsible, inter alia, for preventing and averting any illicit trafficking of weapons on national territory; ensuring control of all weapons imported by the Government or by individuals; keeping

statistics on weapons present on the national territory; providing training for stakeholders and outreach to the population; ensuring implementation of decisions taken at the subregional, regional and international levels in this field; and establishing and enhancing training for small arms manufacturers in order to establish good cooperation between them and the defence and security forces.

All these priorities are part of an annual programme of activities that is implemented with the help of partners. For example, in 2011, besides participating in numerous meetings and the holding of several workshops and seminars at the national level, these two bodies televised public outreach programmes on the dangers of holding weapons, and translated and popularized into three national languages of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the decree establishing the regulation of civilian arms and munitions in the country. My delegation thanks the United Nations Development Programme for all its help.

The resurgence of banditry and cross-border organized crime in West Africa, which is fuelled by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, is a threat to the internal stability and security of the States of the region and deeply undermines the great efforts made by the public authorities. Burkina Faso therefore calls for enhanced international, regional and subregional cooperation to promote a better synergy of action in combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Burkina Faso will spare no effort to contribute to international endeavours to eradicate this scourge. Furthermore, it would appreciate any support in the sphere of marking, documenting, tracing and brokering.

Burkina Faso is convinced that the struggle against the trafficking and proliferation of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, is a struggle that we must win for our own collective security. Robust action must therefore be taken to limit, if not halt, their illicit circulation. My delegation therefore reiterates its firm support for the formulation of an arms trade treaty and calls on the international community to work resolutely to that end.

Mr. Dondisch Glowinski (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are alarmed by the prevailing irresponsible and illicit use of conventional weapons, which threatens international peace and security. Specifically, the

number of victims, which increases every year because of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, is quite simply intolerable. Like many other countries, mine belongs to a region where this activity is a daily obstacle to my people's well-being. That is why concerted action through coordination and cooperation, as well as controls of these arms based on international instruments, must be a priority on the United Nations agenda.

We agree with the comments made yesterday (see A/C.1/66/PV.14) by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community. We believe that, unfortunately, the pursuit of absolute consensus in this room has limited calls for action that most countries here have requested. We hope that, in future, we can put the need for action before the nicety of absolute consensus before going to the General Assembly.

For Mexico, one of the most relevant United Nations processes in this field is the implementation and strengthening of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This year during the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts that took place in May under the leadership of Ambassador Jim McLay, we held a debate on some technical aspects that are key to implementing the Programme of Action, and we were able to adopt a consensus document (A/CONF.192/MGE/2011/1) that reflected our debates and included national experiences and lessons learned that could be used as a basis to amend or strengthen the complex network of existing national controls.

Ten years after the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action, we need to take stock and consider in good faith and greater depth those areas where we still need specific successes. Next year we will have the opportunity to do so during the Review Conference that will take place in the summer. At that Conference, we should not merely look back and review our experiences of the past 10 years; rather, we should look to the future and identify the areas that still need to be implemented effectively, including in the text of the Programme of Action itself in order to adapt it to the challenges faced by the international community today.

The Programme of Action is a living text and as such needs to be reviewed, improved and strengthened as part of a natural maturation vis-à-vis illicit and criminal activities that it is meant to cover and tackle.

My delegation is ready for a sincere dialogue with other delegations in order to achieve these aims.

However, we have identified a pattern of conduct that is used to dilute and weaken the aim of the Review Conference. We find this very worrisome, not just for its potential negative impact on the Conference itself, but for the future of the implementation and monitoring process of the United Nations Programme of Action within the framework of the United Nations.

In 2012, we will also have the opportunity to consolidate a new legally binding regime — the arms trade treaty (ATT). The ATT will certainly establish clear rules to guarantee that the legal arms trade takes place under the strictest levels of control, and to prevent the misuse of arms and illicit trafficking and their falling into the hands of unauthorized users. We call on all countries to work with the best will possible to reach an agreement that can make a positive difference in the lives of all our citizens. We can neither postpone these actions nor let any possible agreements be limited by differences of process or parliamentary issues. We commend the work of Ambassador Roberto García Moritán as Chair of the ATT Preparatory Committee, and we will continue working with him and members to achieve a solid and legally binding agreement. We cannot make mistakes with the treaty because too many lives depend on it.

Mexico has consistently advocated general and complete disarmament and has urged in particular the banning of weapons of indiscriminate effect. That was why we sought a ban on anti-personnel landmines through the Ottawa process. The Ottawa Convention is a success story in which one category of arms was banned because we wanted to avoid the humanitarian impact of that weapon.

Mexico and other countries have been trying for years to deal with cluster munitions. These inhuman weapons make no distinction between soldiers and civilians in times of war or times of peace. They kill and mangle civilians when they are used in conflict, and they continue to injure innocents when conflict ends. Mexico believes that the only treatment for these inhuman weapons is a comprehensive ban.

Mexico was part of the process that led to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which banned not only the production, use and storage of these weapons, but also created mechanisms to remedy the damage caused by cluster munitions and, above all, focused

on the victims and on preventing the human suffering caused by these weapons.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is an historic landmark whose strength lies in the banning of the production, storage, use and transfer of cluster munitions in any circumstance. Three years after its conclusion, the Convention has been signed by 111 countries. I welcome the recent convening of the second Meeting of States Parties in Beirut, at which reports of progress on the destruction of arsenals and care of victims, among other things, bore witness to the Convention's effectiveness.

Mexico invites States that produce, store and use cluster munitions to halt such activity and comply with international humanitarian law, which prohibits the use of weapons of indiscriminate effect. We have encouraged those countries to continue to ensure that all stocks of cluster munitions are destroyed, contaminated areas cleaned up, and any surplus removed. We know that only the universalization of the ban will guarantee the consolidation of this legal regime, and we therefore reaffirm our commitment to promoting the Convention so that more States become party to it.

We appreciate the intention of those countries that are not yet party to the Convention to take further measures to address the humanitarian impact of these weapons, including by amending their national standards. However, it would be unfortunate to create new norms to justify lower standards for a ban in which 111 countries have already invested human and political resources, or worse yet, to preserve an outdated loophole allowing the use of cluster munitions in some circumstances.

We hope that, at the Fourth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which will take place in Geneva in a few weeks' time, the parties will make a sensible decision to put humanitarian above military interests. To this end, Mexico, Norway and Austria have submitted a proposal that we hope will contribute to a result that will not undermine the achievements of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and will represent progress in the stigmatization and delegitimization of these inhuman weapons.

Finally, I cannot fail to mention the essential work being undertaken by civil society organizations on the subjects I have referred to. We cannot imagine a Programme of Action or an arms trade treaty,

much less a Convention on Cluster Munitions or a landmine ban, without the intense work and impetus of non-governmental organizations. Mexico thanks them for their efforts and will continue to work with them in current and future processes. Their participation will always be welcome.

Mr. Moktefi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): In this thematic debate on conventional weapons, the delegation of Algeria takes this opportunity to present its position on certain relevant questions that are so important for international peace and security.

The illicit trade and transfer of light weapons is a serious threat to peace and stability in some areas of the world. That is indeed the case in Africa. These illegal activities are an ongoing source of concern for the international community. Algeria, being directly affected by these criminal activities, is tirelessly striving to stem the traffic in light weapons across its borders organized by cross-border smuggling networks that contribute to fuelling terrorism in the Sahelo-Saharan region. In addition to adapting legislation and existing regulations with significant sanctions and fines for smugglers, in recent years Algeria has strengthened its operational efforts to counter criminals and terrorist networks.

The Algerian delegation reiterates its attachment to the implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This important instrument has unquestionably contributed to a real awareness of the negative humanitarian and political consequences of this scourge, which are a source of supply for terrorist groups and organized criminals.

As noted in the United Nations Programme of Action, regional and subregional cooperation is essential to guaranteeing effective control of borders and to eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Algeria is engaged with the Sahel countries in cooperative action, including training programmes for security agents and agents to allow our countries to develop their administrative, technical and operational capacities in the matter. The worrisome situation in the Sahelo-Saharan region also requires the significant assistance of developed countries and international organizations to build the capacities of the countries of the subregion to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

My delegation notes with interest the report of the Secretary-General (A/66/177) on action undertaken by Member States and the United Nations system within the framework of the implementation of resolution 65/64. Algeria has been fully committed to 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 since its adoption in 2005. The actions undertaken are indicated in our 2010 national report. The national regulation now covers the three aspects of the Instrument: marking, registration and cooperation in tracing.

In August 2012, the Second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action will take place. That will be a new opportunity to evaluate the progress made towards the Programme's implementation. We recall that the Conference is being held in follow-up to the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States of June 2010 and the Meeting of Governmental Experts of May 2011. Apart from the biennial meetings and the review conferences, it is important to stress that national reports are also key elements in assessing progress. The 2012 Review Conference will be a further opportunity to consider ways and means to improve the implementation and to make the Programme of Action more effective, and to discuss the links between the different instruments in force in order to make the most of their complementarity.

The year 2012 will also see the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. Algeria has been committed since the beginning in a determined and constructive way in the preparatory process. Our position is based on the belief that a legally binding international agreement regulating the arms trade, under United Nations auspices, will contribute to strengthening international peace and security. To that end, we need common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons within the framework, of course, of respect for the sovereignty and security of States.

As with any international convention, there is room to define the principles and field of application of the draft treaty. In terms of principles, Algeria believes that the instrument should be based on the principles of the United Nations Charter, including the sovereign equality of States, the right of peoples to self-determination and the right of States to legitimate self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter. The

provisions of the treaty should also be in line with the principles of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States and the prohibition of acquiring territories by force, the occupation of the territories of others and the use of force in international relations. This respect for the consecrated principles of international law is essential to guaranteeing not only the full legality and legitimacy of the treaty, but also its credibility and universal nature.

The Chair of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, presented his report yesterday on the preparatory process as of the third session, which took place in July. He indicated that the Chair's document of 13 July 2011 is a reflection of his interpretation of the discussions and could serve as a reference regarding the elements to be considered and negotiated at the 2012 Conference. My delegation congratulates Ambassador García Moritán for the praiseworthy efforts and perspicacity with which he assumed the heavy duties of Chair of the Preparatory Committee.

I should point out, however, that according to the mandate of the Preparatory Committee, its third session should have ended with the adoption of recommendations for the Conference on the elements of the future arms trade treaty. Resolution 64/48 allows for only one more session of the Preparatory Committee, in February 2012, on questions of procedure. My delegation hopes that this last opportunity will be used to come up with consensus recommendations regarding the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty.

It should be understood that our commitment to the treaty has no relevance to the priority that Algeria accords the aim of disarmament in general, and nuclear disarmament in particular.

Ms. Čubrilo (Serbia): Although we have witnessed important developments in conventional arms control, much remains to be done if we are to address, in a comprehensive and effective way, the challenges we face in this field. Strongly convinced that international cooperation is the key to progress in resolving the issues on the agenda of conventional arms control, my country has joined a large number of international instruments in this area and taken extensive legislative, regulatory and practical measures at the national level for the implementation of the obligations that it has assumed.

Serbia continues to attach great importance to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and remains strongly committed to its full implementation as a matter of high priority. In this context, Serbia welcomes the successful conclusion of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action in June 2010, and believes that its results provide an important stimulus to fostering the effective implementation of the Programme. Serbia also welcomes the beneficial exchange of views and experiences at the Meeting of Governmental Experts in May 2011 and looks forward to the 2012 Review Conference.

Serbia reports on a regular basis to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, including submission of information on international transfers of small arms. In accordance with its determination actively to support international initiatives in the area of conventional arms control, Serbia also has its representative in the expert group for international small arms control standards formed by the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms.

In May 2010, the Government of Serbia adopted a national strategy on small arms and light weapons control for the period 2010-2015. The strategy provides the framework for the activities of relevant governmental and non-governmental actors to prevent and combat unlawful production, possession and trade in small arms and light weapons. The strategy also provides for setting up a council for small arms and light weapons as an ad hoc working body comprised of the representatives of the competent State institutions with the relevant professional knowledge in the field. It is expected that the council will be established soon.

The national arms export control system, corresponding with the relevant European Union and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) standards and accompanied by the enhanced border and customs control measures, plays a pivotal role in strengthening surveillance and combating the illicit arms trade. It is based on a 2005 law on foreign trade in arms, military equipment and dual-use goods, which defines the means and conditions under which foreign trade, transport and transit of these goods can be conducted. The new law is being drafted and is intended to modernize existing solutions and readjust to new developments in the regulatory frameworks of

the European Union and other relevant international organizations.

Serbia also attaches great importance to the elaboration of a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms, and is committed to continuing constructive work, in coordination with other United Nations Member States, in the process towards the arms trade treaty defined by General Assembly resolution 64/48. Serbia welcomes the comprehensive discussions carried out at the three sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference scheduled for 2012, which, in our view, made a crucial contribution to examining the possible structure and elements of the future treaty aimed at putting into place a compact international framework for conventional arms transfers and eradicating illicit trafficking. However, it is necessary that we all make additional efforts to move the negotiations forward towards a strong, effective and balanced arms trade treaty.

My country continues to work on the fulfilment of the remaining obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. It regularly submits its annual reports to the United Nations and the OSCE, and replies to the questionnaires on national measures for the implementation of the Convention. In accordance with the decisions of the Second Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention, held in 2009, Serbia has also submitted its first report on the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan. The Mine Action Centre of Serbia, founded in 2002 as a national coordinating body for demining, has established diversified cooperation with numerous international and regional partners, including the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance and the South-Eastern Europe Mine Action Coordination Council.

Mr. Hauge (Norway): The Norwegian Government is strongly committed to humanitarian disarmament. Weapons and the irresponsible use of weapons that cause unnecessary human suffering and unacceptable harm should have no place in today's international security environment. Norway believes that this should be a guiding principle in our approach towards conventional disarmament and related processes. Strengthened efforts in the area of humanitarian disarmament will contribute to the reduction and prevention of armed violence, and

thereby human suffering. Having said this, we are well aware that, in addition to the humanitarian perspective, the reduction and prevention of armed violence have important security and development aspects.

The successes we have seen through the adoption and implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) must inspire all of us. We should be proud that, by working in multilateral forums with a determined focus and a common strategic objective, we have been able to achieve concrete results of great consequence to ordinary people. The Mine Ban Convention has led to thousands of hectares of land being cleared of landmines, huge stockpiles being destroyed, and thousands of survivors having claimed and received their rights. In this connection, Norway urges all States to support the annual draft resolution on the implementation of the Mine Ban Convention (A/C.1/66/L.4), introduced by Albania, Cambodia and Norway.

As for the Convention on Cluster Munitions, a total of 111 States have so far either signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention. The second Meeting of States Parties, held in Lebanon in September, was an important milestone. The Meeting was very well organized and a great success that met all our expectations. It confirmed that implementation of the Convention is well under way, with destruction and clearance being undertaken in many countries. Progress is undisputable.

What is disputable is the effort of some States to go against progress. What is disputable is the effort of some States to abuse existing instruments of international humanitarian law to move backwards and to undermine existing standards. What is disputable is to attempt to take steps that would diminish the protection already afforded to civilians through another established international instrument.

For us, it is unacceptable to adopt a new protocol on cluster munitions to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) that does not provide an added humanitarian value that States and significant humanitarian organizations can vouch for. We find it unacceptable to adopt a new protocol on cluster munitions in the CCW that the International Committee of the Red Cross, the guardian of international humanitarian law, has stated may perpetuate rather

than prevent the civilian suffering caused by cluster munitions.

The current draft protocol, as presented by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts, is not an acceptable response to address the humanitarian impact on cluster munitions. We recognize and value the wish of States not party to the CCM to take intermediate steps with respect to the humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions. We urge them to continue to take national steps to address the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions. However, we would not find it acceptable to adopt new norms that would contradict and attempt to undermine the Convention on Cluster Munitions and core principles of international humanitarian law.

Norway attaches great importance to the ongoing negotiations on an arms trade treaty (ATT). Our goal is to reach a strong and robust ATT that contributes to preventing an illicit or irresponsible arms trade through responsible and effective regulation of all international trade in conventional arms. By achieving this, we will establish an instrument that contributes to reducing and preventing armed violence and human suffering. That should, in our opinion, be the overall objective of the ATT.

Norway is a country that exports most of its production of conventional arms and ammunitions, and also relies on imports both for defence and civilian use. We see no contradiction between that fact and the importance we attach to humanitarian disarmament and the prevention and reduction of armed violence. The Chair of the ATT process, Ambassador García Moritán, at the July session of the Preparatory Committee, presented us with a comprehensive ATT draft paper. We would, in this connection, like to commend his efforts as Chair of the negotiations.

Norway's views on important questions such as ammunition and explosives, human rights and international humanitarian law, on including language on victims and being firm on the principle that the ATT represents a threshold, not a ceiling, and so on, should be well known. We still think that the text needs further strengthening and improvement, but we are satisfied that the draft paper contains many of the elements that are vital to reaching a strong and robust ATT. Norway therefore views the Chair's text as the platform for further work in the ATT negotiations.

The year 2012 will be an important year for the United Nations in the area of conventional weapons. In addition to the Conference on the ATT, there will be a Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Norway views the Programme of Action as an important instrument. However, the implementation of the Programme needs to be strengthened. Norway stands ready to contribute to this process in order to revitalize the Programme of Action for the years to come.

In any effort of States to address humanitarian concerns, we must acknowledge and respect the knowledge and competence of humanitarian actors. The United Nations field-based organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the numerous non-governmental organizations that work every day to alleviate human suffering, have built up a high level of expertise. In our work, we must build on the facts and realities on the ground — facts and realities that no one is better placed to communicate than those who actually work on the ground.

Mr. Motanyane (Lesotho): I must congratulate you, Sir, on the excellent manner in which you continue to guide our deliberations.

The subject of conventional weapons is one of the top agenda items for Lesotho because these weapons are easily accessible and are responsible for the daily loss of lives in many countries. They also contribute to political instability, and indeed are used in the commission of many crimes, including drug trafficking and terrorism.

The international community has spared no effort in the search for a solution to the problems caused by these weapons. Progress has been made in addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Preparations for the negotiations on the arms trade treaty (ATT) are at an advanced stage. There are encouraging developments in the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, as well as on the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). Nevertheless, much still remains to be done.

Small arms and light weapons continue to pose a major security threat to many developing countries, including Lesotho. Most of these weapons easily find

their way into the illicit market. 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 critical framework for addressing the proliferation of these weapons and their illicit trade. The 2012 Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action should give us an opportunity to explore all possible ways of strengthening the Programme. Lesotho will constructively participate in the Conference and we hope that it will be a success.

Cooperation and assistance are of vital importance in implementing the Programme of Action and building the capacity of States. Hence, we reiterate the request to States in a position to do so to render technical and financial assistance in building national capacity in record-keeping, border control, marking and tracing. We must add that it is in this context that Lesotho continues to co-sponsor the resolution entitled “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them”.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is another instrument that must be fully utilized. It is within that Register that the vast majority of official transfers of conventional weapons is captured. The Register provides transparency, and reporting must be seen as a confidence-building measure and not in any way as a way of diminishing the security of States. We encourage more States to consider submitting annual reports under this mechanism.

It is well known that the Register does not cover all categories of conventional weapons, such as small arms and light weapons. However, we note with appreciation that some States include small arms and light weapons in their reports submitted to the Register. That is a welcome move and we encourage others to follow suit.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/89, recognized that the absence of common international standards on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms is a contributory factor to conflict, the displacement of people, organized crime and terrorism. In order to address this concern, we engaged in substantive discussions at the United Nations on the elements and scope of a comprehensive, robust and legally binding arms trade treaty. That was done in the context of the Preparatory Committee meetings. Our efforts are nearing fruition as the United Nations Conference on the ATT will be held in 2012. Let us use

the Conference as a platform for translating our words into actions.

The non-paper produced by the Chair-designate of the Conference in our view provides a good basis for our negotiations in that Conference. We must ensure that the Conference produces a legally binding instrument, based on the highest possible common international standards, for the global transfer of conventional weapons.

We realize, however, that the ATT may not be a panacea for the illicit trade in conventional weapons, but it is important also to take note of the fact that we live in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world where supply chains have become global. An instrument that regulates the global trade of conventional weapons is essential for collaboration in the arms industry. This will obviously lead to huge reductions in the diversion of conventional weapons to the illicit market.

I now turn to anti-personnel landmines, which are the most dangerous conventional weapons. Their use results in dire humanitarian consequences. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction has extensively addressed the impact of these weapons on civilians. We call on States parties to the Convention to fully discharge their obligations under the treaty. We recognize that the universalization of the Mine Ban Convention is of paramount importance, and we appeal therefore to States not party to the treaty to consider ratifying it as soon as possible.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) is also a significant instrument in the field of conventional weapons. Though the CCM entered into force in August 2010, fewer than 70 States have ratified it so far. It will be recalled that the Convention was negotiated, *inter alia*, to address unexploded ordnance such as cluster bombs, which the Mine Ban Convention does not cover. These types of weapons have indiscriminate effects. They remain a hazard for civilians long after the conflict has ended. To that extent, States have both a moral and a legal duty to clear all mined areas, destroy stockpiles and commit not to use these weapons. We urge States not party to the CCM to ratify it without further delay.

Allow me to conclude by pointing out that our resolve as the international community to address the proliferation of conventional weapons and their

misuse must not waver. We will be able effectively to discharge our primary duty to provide security for humankind if there is adequate and balanced regulation of conventional weapons.

Mr. Danon (France) (*spoke in French*): Once again this year, there are many draft resolutions on conventional weapons, including that submitted by Germany and France on surplus ammunition stockpiles (A/C.1/66/L.36). We hope that it will enjoy consensus.

Among all the weapons discussed here in the First Committee — nuclear, chemical and biological and so on — it is conventional weapons that claim the greatest number of victims. Those that have the most unacceptable humanitarian impact are fortunately subject to progressive interdiction. Thanks to the ongoing mobilization of civil society and non-governmental organizations, which deserve our thanks, the international community has become aware, in particular since the end of the conflicts in South-East Asia, of the unacceptable nature of weapons that affect innocent people, including many children, in a particularly cruel manner even decades after the conflict.

It is in this spirit that the past 20 years have seen the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW); and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), which France was among the first 30 countries to ratify.

However, the conclusion of these agreements is not enough, since they have not been adopted by the entire international community. Their universalization, which remains and will always remain a priority for us, has been met with reticence by many key countries. We therefore regret that the countries that possess the largest stockpiles of anti-personnel mines or cluster munitions feel unable to ratify the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions in the near future. We note this situation without however resigning ourselves to it. While we wait for them to join these Conventions, we will try to achieve tangible results on the ground. We therefore support the idea of developing an effective regulatory

framework that, while less restrictive, would constitute a step towards a comprehensive ban.

This norm already exists for anti-personnel mines, and in November we will resume negotiations on a sixth protocol to the CCW related to cluster munitions. For our part, this pragmatic and conscious choice in support of a sixth protocol will be valid only if two essential criteria are met — its compatibility with the Oslo Convention and its immediate and critical humanitarian impact.

The latest version of the text from the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts stipulates a strict ban on all of the deadliest weapons produced before 1980. That could represent more than 40 per cent of the world's stockpile of these weapons. But we still need to make progress on a key point — the immediate humanitarian impact of the protocol. France will make proposals to that end. We will work with all the parties concerned to achieve a protocol that will undoubtedly make a major contribution to international humanitarian law.

France is also deeply concerned by the catastrophic spread and use of small arms and light weapons. The illegal trafficking and excessive stockpiling of these weapons contributes to the phenomenon of armed violence, which, besides the human suffering it causes, impedes the development of many countries. The European Union has already taken practical steps. Since the end of 2008, at the initiative of the French presidency, it has systematically proposed the insertion of a clause on small arms and light weapons in its association agreements with third countries.

In December 2010, it also adopted a decision defining projects for combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons by air, in follow-up to an initiative launched by France in 2006. We will support with the same determination the strengthening of the United Nations Programme of Action at the Review Conference in August. This is a crucial text with respect to mobilizing the international community in support of this issue.

I take this opportunity to express France's support for the Nigerian presidency. We fully support its announced intention to engage in informal consultations as soon as possible to identify areas where progress is needed. We

believe, as indicated during the informal consultations at the margins of our session, that we must make the best possible use of the two weeks that we will have at the end of the year. To that end, it will be important to limit the time devoted to the general debate, which we hope will be forward-looking and more focused on ways and means to improve the Programme of Action rather than leading to a succession of presentations of past achievements.

In this very forum, we launched a process in 2009 aimed at negotiating an arms trade treaty. Our aim — regulating the legal trade and preventing illegal trafficking in conventional weapons — is ambitious. We welcome the smooth holding and positive atmosphere at the Preparatory Committee sessions for the 2012 Conference. Our debates addressed the future treaty's general principles and objectives, its possible structure, its terms of reference, its parameters and implementation mechanisms at the national and international levels, as well as the treaty's final provisions.

The latest text distributed by the Chair of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, is a first attempt to reflect the most diverse views expressed at the Preparatory Committee sessions and to establish consistency between the various pillars of the future treaty. We applaud the text because it omits none of the key concepts of the future treaty, including the regulation of the legal trade with the establishment of national monitoring systems that operate on the basis of shared criteria; prevention of the illegal trade through the criminalization of unacceptable behaviour; and, finally, a system of cooperation and extended assistance.

These elements will help make the treaty a useful tool in the collective improvement of global governance with respect to weapons transfers. They lay out the three pillars of the treaty. We fully approve the methods chosen by Chair García Moritán thus far and his talent for listening to the concerns of all the delegations — a quality that will be valuable at the 2012 Conference, which we hope he will chair. We express our full confidence in Chair García Moritán, and want the 2012 conference to be a complete success.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.