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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Dabbashi (Libya)

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

Agenda items 89 to 107 (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 (*spoke in Arabic*): We will begin by hearing from the remaining speakers on the conventional weapons cluster. In accordance with the programme of work, and in keeping with the established practice of the Committee, we will also hear from 10 representatives of non-governmental organizations at approximately 4.30 p.m.

Before I open the floor for statements, I would like to remind all delegations that the lists of speakers for all the remaining clusters are now closed, and I urge all those taking the floor once more to kindly keep their interventions brief and within the allotted time limit of four minutes.

Mr. Farghal (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to emphasize once again Egypt's confidence in your wise leadership in steering our Committee towards success.

We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and with the statements delivered by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States and by

the representative of Bahrain on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/68/PV.18).

Egypt looks forward to the convening of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider 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, and will provide all its support to Mr. Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan and candidate to chair the conference. The convening of the conference is the result of the success of the Second Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, headed by Ambassador Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria, in a transparent, open and independent manner. Egypt stresses its respect for the Programme of Action and reiterates that the obligations of Member States are based on the Programme's text and on additional issues and concepts that are definitely considered to be proposals pending agreement.

The delegation of Egypt would like to thank Germany for its efforts at the conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Egypt eagerly and actively participated in the conference proceedings and took advantage of all opportunities to ensure its success. However, now that the General Assembly has voted to adopt the ATT, we call on all States that have decided to accede to the Treaty to implement it in good faith, objectively and in a balanced and fair manner, and to avoid any manipulation of the Treaty's terms for narrow political or economic interests. We will closely follow developments on its entry into force and its

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implementation on the ground in order to develop our definitive position regarding the Treaty.

We take this opportunity to say that Egypt is fully aware of the grave consequences of the illicit trade in conventional weapons and truly suffers from its consequences. However, we stress the legitimate right of all sovereign States to use such weapons for self-defence and security reasons; they do not need to resort to unjustified pretexts for deploying such weapons.

The international community must pursue its efforts to address the excess use and stockpiling of conventional weapons. Egypt stresses the importance of exerting all efforts to subject the production and stockpiling of these weapons by the major countries to international accountability, which is the only safeguard to limit the potential negative impact of their production or use. That imbalance is exacerbated by the continued development of conventional weapons, and we stress that technological advancements should not override humanitarian considerations. This issue also raises many questions about the compliance of parties with the relevant conventions under international humanitarian law, over and above the issue of the ethics of war. Such issues must be addressed and specific standards set before these weapons are used.

Egypt has carefully reviewed the 2013 report of the Group of Governmental Experts on conventional weapons (see A/68/140). On this occasion, we stress the importance of enhancing African representation at the next meeting of the Group in 2016 and increasing the number of experts to at least 20. We are willing to provide experts to ensure representation at this level. We are concerned about the remaining explosives and mines on our territories after the Second World War, which continue to cause humanitarian and material problems that impede development in Egypt and in sisterly Libya.

Allow me, in conclusion, to stress the importance of continuing our collective efforts to combat the stockpiling, use and development of conventional weapons in order to save lives, which can be achieved if we follow a sincere attitude that eschews all hegemony, partisanship or exclusiveness of political interests.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): Norway believes that improved security can be achieved with considerably lower levels of armaments than is the case today. Arms control, conventional disarmament and

non-proliferation are therefore integral elements of Norway's security and foreign policy.

The efforts to reduce armed violence and human suffering, caused by both conventional weapons and other weapons, are essential for improving the national and global security environment and for development. The humanitarian dimension in disarmament and arms control must be a key element of our discussions and efforts, because at the end of the day it is the consequences for the people on the ground that our policies will be measured against. We need global and regional instruments that will help us achieve good results.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has the potential to become such an instrument. The adoption of the ATT by the General Assembly this year was historic, not only because it is the first legally binding instrument that regulates trade in conventional arms, but also because the international community demonstrated that it is possible to achieve results without being tied to a restrictive consensus framework in decision-making. The Treaty is not perfect, but it has the potential to become a powerful instrument provided that it is implemented effectively and thoroughly and with the best intentions. The ATT should, when it enters into force, be a dynamic and living instrument open to future improvements and changes.

Concerning the scope of the Treaty, let me reiterate Norway's view. The ATT should, in principle, cover all conventional weapons. We therefore urge all States parties to apply the Treaty's provisions to the broadest range possible of conventional arms, as paragraph 3 of article 5 of the Treaty encourages us to do. We also have argued that the Treaty's provisions should apply to all kinds of transfers, not only commercial, as the mode of transfer has no bearing on a weapon's capabilities or potential to do harm.

We are pleased that the ATT prohibits conventional arms transfers when they would violate relevant international treaty obligations, including those set out in human rights treaties. The Treaty also prohibits all transfers of arms that would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes in all types of armed conflict. Norway also attaches importance to the provision in article 7 on export and export assessment, which requires that a transfer that has the potential to lead to any of the negative consequences listed in that article for serious violations

of human rights or international humanitarian law shall not be authorized. We are also pleased that the risk of gender-based violence and violence against women and children is among the criteria that have to be assessed before authorizing an export of arms and that the risk of diversion has to be assessed.

Norway will work towards making the ATT universal. To achieve that and to ensure effective and thorough implementation, those States that are in a position to do so should provide assistance to States that need support to establish well-functioning systems with adequate institutions, resources and expertise. That will be crucial for the success of the Treaty.

The most important task ahead is to ensure rapid entry into force and to lay the ground for a thorough and effective implementation of the ATT. Let us all join forces to achieve those goals, and let us work together with civil society in the process. Civil society and multilateral and international organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, have been valuable partners throughout the ATT process, and we should continue to make good use of their expertise and commitment in the future.

The Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions are examples that demonstrate that it is possible to negotiate multilateral instruments in the field of disarmament that strengthen the protection of civilians and have an immediate humanitarian effect on the ground. The Third Review Conference of the Mine Ban Convention in Maputo in 2014 will be a good opportunity to take stock, look ahead and ensure that we are working in the best possible way to fulfil the objective of the Convention, which is a world free of landmines, and to provide the necessary support to victims.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Japan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.4.

Mr. Sano (Japan): The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was undoubtedly an epoch-making achievement in the history of conventional arms control. We are delighted that the Treaty became a reality due to our collective and unwavering efforts. Since we have a strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty, the global arms trade is now no longer restricted or hidden, and we are committed to preventing these arms from being transferred into the wrong hands.

To ensure our dedication, the arms trade must operate in a transparent manner that is subject to scrutiny. To that end, the Treaty needs to enter into force as soon as possible, and Japan will do its best to conclude the Treaty as early as possible. Japan will continue its role in promoting an early entry into force of the Treaty, the establishment of an effective secretariat and, above all, international efforts to better regulate the global arms trade and to combat the illicit transfer of conventional weapons.

We also call on all States to extend their support to draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.4 on the ATT, which has been submitted to the Committee by its seven authors: Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Japan, Kenya and the United Kingdom.

Japan views the adoption of the ATT as providing a positive impetus to the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Although the political commitments in the Programme of Action regarding small-arms transfers have now evolved into a legal commitment, the Programme of Action remains an important tool to address the illicit trade because, together with the International Tracing Instrument, it covers a wider range of issues, including marking, tracing and stockpile management. They require our continued attention, and it is crucial for the United Nations to remain fully engaged on those issues.

Since 12 years have passed since the adoption of the Programme of Action, we need to thoroughly review the activities of the past years not only to identify issues to be addressed, but also to further develop concrete measures to curb small arms-related problems. Japan is keen to discharge its responsibility in the future Programme of Action process, including the forthcoming Biennial Meeting of States to be held in June 2014. We welcome the appointment of Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan as the Chair of the Fifth Biennial Meeting. We call on all Member States to extend their support to the annual draft resolution on small arms and light weapons drafted by Colombia, Japan and South Africa, so that it will be adopted again by consensus.

Anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions cause serious humanitarian harm. It is vital that we persist in our efforts to tackle the problems associated with those weapons. Their use by any actor is totally unacceptable, since they not only pose grave dangers and harm civilians during and after conflicts, but

can also have a socioeconomic impact lasting many years or even decades. The recent report of the use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions is of deep concern to us. Japan is convinced that it is essential that the two conventions become universal. The implementation of treaty obligations, such as stockpile destruction, ensures that anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions will never be used in the future. I would like to reiterate Japan's call on all States that are not parties to these two conventions to accede to them as soon as possible and join our collective efforts to end the suffering caused by those weapons.

Finally, Japan recognizes the international community's growing interest in fully autonomous weapons. We think it would be useful to start a discussion about basic issues related to these weapons, including their definition. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, where military, legal and other arms control experts are involved, could be an appropriate venue to address such issues.

Mr. Yennimatas (Greece): At the outset, I would like to state that Greece fully aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.18).

While we follow with great interest developments in the disarmament forums, the past year has been a landmark for the field of conventional disarmament. The successful culmination of a seven-year negotiating process for the adoption of the legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) established the necessary criteria that will, inter alia, prevent arms from being transferred irresponsibly and illegally. Once ratified by 50 States and brought into force, the ATT will provide a concrete platform for the legal trade in conventional weapons, and will subsequently serve as a tool in curtailing the unregulated arms trade.

Greece has supported the effort from the outset. It was among the first States to sign the ATT on 3 June, when it was officially opened for signature. We are currently taking the necessary legal steps to ratify the Treaty. If the Treaty is to be implemented effectively, it has to receive universal adherence. We would therefore encourage States to take the necessary steps towards this effort, as the real strength of the Treaty is based on its universal implementation.

The adoption of the ATT marks the most recent success in the ongoing effort to bolster conventional disarmament. The politically binding United Nations

Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is yet another tool in the conventional disarmament armoury. Since 2001, the Programme of Action has steadily taken concrete steps in battling the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. From the outset, Greece, has been a supporter of the Programme of Action, and was encouraged by the outcome document of the 2012 Review Conference, as well as by Security Council resolution 2117 (2013). Looking ahead, we need to explore existing convergences so that the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States can offer the opportunity to further improve the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Greece remains firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols. We continue to believe that the CCW remains the most appropriate forum for discussing a cluster munitions protocol, as it includes both the most significant producers and users. It will therefore be in a position to strike a delicate balance between military utility and humanitarian concerns. We believe that the topic of lethal autonomous robotics should be discussed in that same forum, since the CCW is in a unique position to bring together the diplomatic, legal and military expertise to address this emerging issue.

As a State party to the Ottawa Convention, we attach great importance to fulfilling our obligations in accordance with articles 4 and 5. In that regard, Greece completed its article 5 obligations in mine clearance four years ahead of schedule, while it is sparing no effort to complete stockpile destruction, despite the challenging financial circumstances. We look forward to the annual meeting of States parties in December, and stand ready to participate constructively in the Third Review Conference scheduled to be held in Maputo in 2014.

While we are once again encouraged by the First Committee's deliberations and the progress achieved in the past year, we remain strong proponents of a pragmatic and practical approach in our efforts to narrow the gaps in our search for common ground on disarmament-related issues.

Mr. Motanyane (Lesotho): Lesotho aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/68/PV.18).

The subject of conventional weapons is a priority for Lesotho, as it is for many developing countries. These weapons are easily accessible and account for the loss of many lives on a daily basis. Women and children are often the primary victims. Peace, security and development are always negatively affected by the use of illicit small arms and light weapons. Yet, the path towards regulating these weapons has always been fraught with difficulties.

It was in that context that we welcomed the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by the General Assembly in April. The long negotiations that led to the adoption of the ATT were certainly not easy. However, a strong desire on the part of us all to put humanity first ultimately prevailed; this was a clear manifestation of what the international community can achieve through effective and people-centred multilateralism. It is important to note that the adoption of the ATT was not an end in itself. We still have to pass the real test of our resolve to save humankind from suffering as a result of the irresponsible international trade in conventional weapons. Thus, the ratification, entry into force and implementation of the ATT are the next critical steps to be taken.

We call on all Member States to consider signing and ratifying the Treaty at the earliest opportunity. Our efforts to fully implement the ATT in a balanced and effective manner should be propelled by a powerful vision to enhance international, regional and national security. For its part, Lesotho has signed the Treaty as a testimony of our resolve to contribute to a safer world. National efforts towards ratification of the ATT will be undertaken in the fullness of time.

The ATT may not be a panacea for all the problems associated with the illicit trade in conventional weapons. However, my delegation is convinced that a global instrument, such as the ATT, that regulates the international trade in conventional weapons is essential for collaboration in the arms industry. The Treaty will undoubtedly lead to huge reductions in the diversion of conventional weapons to the illicit market.

Despite the fact that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects remains the only universally agreed instrument to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, its implementation continues to be a challenge. The urgent need for the implementation of the Programme of Action at the international, regional

and national levels cannot be overemphasized. We call for renewed political will in the implementation of the Programme.

By the same token, we view increased regional and international cooperation as vital for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action. It is equally important to come up with new ways of strengthening this mechanism. Allow me to assure the Committee at this juncture that my country is committed to fully implementing the Programme of Action.

Mrs. Ledesma Hernández (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Up to now, our delegation has been able to comply with the time limit for making our statement, but we crave your indulgence on this occasion, as we may need a little more than four minutes and we kindly ask you Sir, not to interrupt us.

We note with concern the priority that the international community has attached to specific categories of conventional weapons such as small arms and light weapons, to the detriment of other weapons such as sophisticated conventional weapons with a particularly destructive effect. In recent decades, the development of conventional weapons throughout the world has made their destructive power increasingly sophisticated and lethal.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has, on a number of occasions, drawn attention to the existence of an imbalance between the industrialized and developing countries in terms of the production and possession of and trade in conventional weapons. NAM has underscored the need for the industrialized countries to significantly reduce their production of and trade in such weapons with a view to promoting regional and international peace and security. Much remains to be done in order to find effective solutions for ensuring international peace and security through strict respect for the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. That is why we must all strive to achieve general and complete disarmament.

We welcome the adoption by consensus of the outcome documents of the Second 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. These documents reaffirm the full relevance and validity of the Programme as the best instrument for combating the scourge. We hope that the documents will prove to be useful and make an effective contribution to the

prevention and eradication of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

Cuba believes that in the short and medium terms, the eradication of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons will require addressing the root causes of that phenomenon. We are concerned that international efforts are essentially focused on addressing the manifestations of the phenomenon in developing countries and not on tackling its deepest and most determinant causes, such as growing poverty, underdevelopment and the lack of opportunity for all. More tangible progress needs to be made in promoting and strengthening international cooperation and assistance in that area. We believe that these elements are indispensable to allowing States to advance towards full compliance with the United Nations Programme of Action.

In March, the international community noted the lack of agreement and consensus within the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. The Conference provided an historic opportunity to find a solution to the grave consequences of the illicit, unregulated trade in arms for many individuals and States worldwide. But that historic opportunity was not duly seized.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself fully with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.18).

This has been a momentous year for those of us who work to counter the irresponsible and illicit spread of conventional arms. After seven years of hard work, we have agreed on the Arms Trade Treaty. However, our task is far from over. We said in April that the biggest challenge still lies ahead. We now have a Treaty that has the power to save lives, support development and protect the legitimate defence industry, but it will not achieve its aims unless it is globally and effectively implemented.

Earlier this week, the United Kingdom supported a side event on gender-based violence and the Arms Trade Treaty. By requiring States parties to assess, prior to the authorization of arms exports, the risk of those arms being used to commit serious acts of gender-based violence, the Arms Trade Treaty is taking important steps towards making the world a safer place. More still needs to be done. That is why during the ministerial week at the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly in September, our Foreign Secretary

launched a declaration of commitment to ending sexual violence in conflict, which has now been endorsed by 136 countries.

The Arms Trade Treaty is not the only achievement of the past year. A few weeks ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 2117 (2013) on small arms and light weapons. This important resolution reminds us all of the need to act on the illicit and poorly regulated trade in arms that destabilize regions, fuel conflict and ruin futures.

We were disappointed that this year's Group of Governmental Experts on the Register of Conventional Arms could not reach consensus on a proposal to include small arms as a mandatory category, but that was not our only opportunity to act. Next year's Fifth Biennial Meeting of States Parties 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 will be an important opportunity to take stock and redouble our efforts.

We do not have to look far to see the harm caused by illicit or poorly regulated conventional arms. On 22 October, the United Kingdom hosted a meeting of the London 11, the core group of friends on Syria. The Foreign Ministers called on the Syrian regime to end the siege on urban areas and indiscriminate attacks against civilians, in particular through air bombardments and the use of ballistic missiles, cluster bombs and explosive barrels.

The people of Libya also live with this threat every day due to the continued presence in Libya of unsecured arms and ammunition left by four decades of excessive and uncontrolled stockpiling during the Al-Qadhafi regime. Recognizing that the Libyan Government made arms and ammunition control a priority at the Paris Ministerial Conference, the United Kingdom urges the international community to work with Libya and the United Nations to find a lasting solution to this issue. The United Kingdom is ready to provide expertise, funds and support to this process.

We welcome the successful conclusion of the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions in Lusaka last month. The United Kingdom is on track to destroying the last of our stocks of cluster munitions before the end of this year — five years ahead of our target date. For over 20 years, the United Kingdom has supported some of the poorest countries around the world to clear landmines and the

explosive remnants of war. Over the past three years alone, through the United Kingdom's £30-million global mine action programme, the United Kingdom has removed over 70,000 landmines and released over 10,000 hectares contaminated by or suspected of hazardous landmines.

Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands): Increasing international regulation of the use of and trade in conventional arms shows that progress can and is actually being made. International law is strengthened through small steps or even big leaps. The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by the General Assembly in April will make the world a safer place and reduce the irresponsible transfer of arms where there is the clear risk that these arms could be used to commit international humanitarian or human rights violations. We call on all States that have not done so to sign and ratify the ATT.

Transparency is key for gaining oversight on the implementation of treaties. We will continue to support the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the Database on National Legislation on Arms Transfers by introducing two draft resolutions on those matters. Until the ATT enters into force and is universally adopted, those two instruments will remain valuable for the international community. In the draft resolutions on transparency in armaments (A/C.1/68/L.30) and on national legislation on transfer of arms (A/C.1/68/L.31), we call upon all States to provide the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs with the required information.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions remain very important. With regard to landmines, great progress has been made in clearing mined areas, with 25 States parties having completed their demining programmes, and in stockpile destruction, with over 44.5 million mines destroyed. Most important, however, is the dramatic decrease in the numbers of new victims. The killing of civilians through indiscriminate munitions cannot be defended in any circumstances. The use of cluster munitions by States not parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, such as Syria, deserves the strongest condemnation. The Conventions have placed anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions under a widely accepted and respected ban.

With regard to lethal autonomous robot systems, their possible development raises many legal, ethical and policy questions. In the Netherlands, a discussion

has begun on that issue, with the involvement of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, relevant partners in civil society and academia with the aim of obtaining a better understanding of the developments in that field and its related problems.

In answering the question on the legality of weapon systems, we are guided by international law, in particular by international humanitarian law. While developing new weapons systems, States should remain within the boundaries of international law. We will participate actively in the discussion on lethal autonomous robotics. In that regard, we support the proposal of the Chair of the Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) for an informal discussion on lethal autonomous robotics in the framework of the CCW.

We look forward to the upcoming Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms. We hope to build further on the results that have achieved made so far. We also stress the need for further research into the issue of the proliferation small arms in Africa. To that end, the Netherlands is financing a research project with the Small Arms Survey.

Mr. Louis (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia is well aware of the negative consequences arising from the absence of international regulation in the trade in conventional weapons. Accordingly, my country welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We will strive constructively to ensure the prompt entry into force of that international instrument, which is necessary to ensure that it has a genuine and positive impact on the lives of millions of people. In that regard, we welcome the fact that 113 States have signed the Treaty and that seven have ratified it. Of the latter, five belong to the Latin America and Caribbean region.

As regards the content and scope of the Treaty, I wish to stress the importance of the inclusion of small arms and light weapons, and not only the seven categories contained in the Register of Conventional Arms. Given their size and portability, those weapons are impacting global security. The ATT also establishes measures aimed at ensuring that arms transfers do not reach unauthorized users and are not used in crimes against humanity, war or genocide.

The process proves that, within the framework of the United Nations, one can advance the negotiation and adoption of disarmament and non-proliferation

treaties. It only requires the participation and will of Member States. We believe that that is an example that could give impetus to the disarmament negotiations and machinery.

Colombia has first-hand knowledge of the impact of illegal weapons transfers in armed conflict. In that regard, a comprehensive, stringent and balanced analysis of the impact of arms transfers in situations of armed conflict must take the following elements into account. First, it must recognize the right of States to defend themselves and to the legitimate use of force. Every State is entitled to acquire conventional weapons under international law to guarantee the safety of its citizens. Secondly, distinctions must be made between the legal arms trade and the illicit trafficking in arms and munitions. Thirdly, the difference between States and non-State armed actors must be made clear.

As is traditional, at this year's session Colombia will introduce a draft resolution on the trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, together with South Africa and Japan. It will underscore, inter alia, the need for States to intensify their efforts to strengthen their national capacities to ensure the effective implementation of the Programme of Action. Once again, we hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

My country is addressing the problem posed by anti-personnel mines, which has led to wholesale contamination due to the involvement of non-State armed actors. Between January and August this year, 285 Colombians were killed by anti-personnel mines, a significant and growing number of whom are children. That presents a challenge to my country as a State party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. My Government has launched a presidential programme for comprehensive action against anti-personnel mines and is working through its various components against this scourge.

As regards the victims assistance component, we underscore the efforts made by Colombia, working with Austria, as co-Chairs of the Convention's Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration. We are also held an expert workshop in Geneva on the assistance to child victims alongside the intersessional meeting of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 2013, which served to establish a guide for assistance and attention in that area, to be presented officially in the near future to the States parties to the Convention.

Mr. Moktefi (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): Algeria aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States and of Bahrain on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/68/PV.18).

Today, the illicit trade in small arms and their transfer constitute a dangerous threat to peace and stability in some regions of the world. That is a reality, especially in Africa. Such illicit activities are a source of constant concern for the international community. In that context, Algeria, which is directly harmed by those criminal activities, continues to intensify its efforts to prevent the illicit trade in weapons and their smuggling across its borders. Those activities are committed by networks that primarily work illicitly, stoking the fires of terrorism in the Sahel.

In line with existing regulations, Algeria has recently stepped up its practical efforts to combat criminal and terrorist networks. We welcomed the Member States' renewed commitment 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, as exemplified at the Second Review Conference, and the progress made in implementing the Programme of Action.

Creating mechanisms to increase the effectiveness of international cooperation and assistance remains an important component in implementing the Programme of Action. The delegation of Algeria reiterates its support for the implementation of the Programme of Action. It is worth noting that national reports, which Algeria submits on a regular basis, are an important part of implementing and increasing the effectiveness of the Programme of Action. Moreover, Algeria has been fully committed to implementing the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons since it was adopted in 2005.

Algeria reaffirms the importance of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. The Firearms Protocol complements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. As a country that is affected directly by landmines, Algeria attaches particular importance to that topic, especially as in December it will take over the chairmanship of the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Algeria, in cooperation with Slovenia and Cambodia, has submitted draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.3, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction”. With some technical updates, this text is based on the previous text, which was adopted as resolution 67/32 on 3 December 2012. We call on all Member States to support the draft resolution.

Ms. Svetasreni (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

This year, the combined efforts of nations accomplished a major breakthrough in the multilateral negotiations on disarmament in conventional arms. Thailand welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and looks forward to its entry into force. We will proceed with internal processes to sign the Treaty at the earliest opportunity. We welcome the draft resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty to be introduced to the First Committee, which will provide assistance to States that intend to become parties to the ATT. The illicit trade, proliferation, and trafficking in small arms and light weapons remain a threat to the maintenance of international peace and security, stability and development. We note with appreciation the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the scope of the ATT and the adoption of the Security Council resolution 2117 (2013).

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument provide countries with guidelines and technical instruments to support domestic controls. However, their full implementation remains a challenge. Close cooperation and shared responsibility between importing and exporting countries are needed, especially in marking and tracing. It is also essential that each country be given resources and assistance to ensure capacity-building. Thailand would like again to recognize the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific in supporting the workshop entitled “Building capacity and overcoming language barriers in small arms and light weapons control”, held in 2012 in Thailand, with the support of the German Government.

Thailand fully supports the humanitarian principles that lie at the core of international efforts to tackle

inhumane weapons, such as landmines and cluster munitions. As a State party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, we remain committed to fulfilling our obligations, especially in mine clearance and victim assistance. In our capacity as co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance, Thailand hosted a symposium in Bangkok on enhancing cooperation and assistance. We acknowledge the integral role of the Implementation Support Unit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Australian Government, which made that event a success.

Thailand notes that the finalized terms of reference of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Mine Action Centre have been adopted. That regional centre will provide ASEAN countries with a network of cooperation to support each country’s efforts in addressing the humanitarian effects of the explosive remnants of war, as appropriate. Thailand looks forward to the successful outcome of the 13th Meeting Of States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention, to be held in Switzerland later this year. We will actively participate in the Third Review Conference of the Mine Ban Convention in Mozambique.

Thailand welcomes progress made in the area of conventional weapons and disarmament negotiations. We believe that the international community should continue its momentum. Thailand remains committed to the full realization of our obligations.

Mr. O’Reilly (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself fully with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.18).

At any given moment, the international community is debating issues relating to a significant number of weapon types and systems. This reflects the importance of addressing the problems caused by the weapons that are most commonly used in armed conflict and which cause the greatest number of casualties. However, so dynamic and active is the field that it is simply not practical to speak in detail about all of the issues that we are debating within the time allotted for statements, so I will comment only on a few specific topics of particular importance.

The illicit and irresponsible trade in conventional weapons can have devastating consequences. We share a responsibility to ensure that the trade in arms does not endanger stability or facilitate breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights law, or contribute

to gender-based violence. For this reason, Ireland joins others in signaling a profound welcome for the conclusion of the Arms Trade Treaty. We encourage all States to sign and ratify the Treaty as quickly as possible, and I congratulate those States that have already ratified it.

Ireland's domestic ratification procedures are at an advanced stage, and we remain committed to completing them rapidly. Over the next year, our attention will undoubtedly turn to ensuring the most effective implementation of the Treaty. I am confident that if the same spirit of constructive engagement among States, and between States and civil society is demonstrated in implementing the Treaty as was evident in negotiating it, then we can hope for a successful period ahead.

I would also like to give a particular welcome to Security Council resolution 2117 (2013) on small arms and light weapons. It will help not only to keep attention on a vital issue, but also to focus thoughts in the lead-up to next year's Biennial Meeting of States under 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 same principles that provide the foundation for the Arms Trade Treaty must also be applied to all topics of debate in relation to conventional weapons. Whether it be with regard to anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions, transparency measures, the environmental impact of weapons, or the use of incendiary weapons, to name a few, our focus must always be to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and human rights, including the rights of women. These same principles must also apply to weapons that will be developed in the future, such as fully autonomous weapons systems. Constructive engagement and debate are essential to ensure that our actions comply with the principles that underlie the United Nations and international law.

Ireland is committed to taking the conventional weapons agenda forward on that basis, and we look forward to engaging with States and with civil society in all relevant forums.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of Slovenia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.3.

Mr. Jerman (Slovenia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Algeria, Cambodia and Slovenia. I would like to introduce to the First Committee a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Convention

on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", contained in document A/C.1/68/L.3.

Slovenia introduces this draft resolution in its capacity as the Chair of the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, which took place from 3 to 7 December 2012 in Geneva. Today, we present this draft resolution together with the delegations of Cambodia, which chaired the previous Meeting, and of Algeria, which will chair the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties, which will take place from 2 to 5 December in Geneva.

This is the traditional draft resolution on the Convention on Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines, which has been introduced every year since 1997. The main purpose of the resolution is to continue to gather political support for a universal ban on anti-personnel mines and to pave the way for a world free of anti-personnel-mines.

The text of the draft resolution that we introduce today is based on previous texts. However, there is one issue that we would like to underline. The draft resolution is paving the way to the Third Review Conference, which will take place next autumn in Maputo, Mozambique. There, the States parties will take stock and review implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014 that we adopted in 2009 in Cartagena, Colombia. Slovenia sees the Conference as a new opportunity to steer our joint efforts and define guidance for our work for the next five years. Slovenia invites all Member States to support and vote in favour of the draft resolution, thereby supporting our joint vision of a world free of anti-personnel mines.

Allow me now to continue to speak in my national capacity. At the outset, Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.18).

First of all, I would now like to say a few words about the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Slovenia is pleased that the ATT was finally adopted by the General Assembly on 2 April and opened for signature. Slovenia was among the first countries to sign the Treaty, and we are doing our utmost to complete the ratification process by the end of the year.

Secondly, transparency in armament matters is of great importance to us. From the very beginning, we have supported the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the relevant First Committee draft resolution

submitted by the Netherlands. We regret the fact that the number of national reports is decreasing, as the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (see A/68/140) circulated today shows, and we believe that Member States should do better in the future. We would also reiterate our long-standing position that the scope of the Register should be expanded to include new categories of conventional arms, such as small arms and light weapons.

Thirdly, and in conclusion, Slovenia is a strong supporter of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We welcomed the successful Fourth Meeting of States Parties that took place in September. Slovenia is pleased that the number of States parties has now reached 84, and we believe that we should not stop there. We hope and believe that the process of universalization will continue and pave the way towards a world free of cluster munitions.

Mr. Guerber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The conclusion and adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was an important victory for the United Nations. Switzerland was among the first Member States to sign the Treaty. Since then, it has begun the ratification process. We would like to take this opportunity to encourage other States to do the same in order to ensure that the Treaty can enter into force as quickly as possible. Switzerland hopes to contribute to the future success of the Treaty, which will depend on the willingness and capacity of States parties to guarantee its full implementation. We intend to meet in every respect the standards set by ATT and wish to help other States do so as well. In that context, Switzerland has prepared a model interpretative declaration on particular provisions of the Treaty that we hope to share with interested Member States.

Moreover, we support various projects to improve understanding and accelerate implementation of the ATT. Under article 18 of the Treaty, the secretariat will play a key role in the effective implementation of the ATT. The Conference of States Parties must establish the secretariat and decide where it will be headquartered. Whatever the model or structure chosen, Switzerland believes that Geneva offers significant advantages and would hope that the future ATT secretariat would be based there.

No other city has such a dense network of diplomatic missions, international and non-governmental

organizations, interagency programmes and world-class academic institutions. Were the ATT secretariat to be based in Geneva, it would benefit specifically from the presence of wide expertise in the domains of security policy, arms control and disarmament, humanitarian affairs and human rights, and international commercial and trade. In all those fields, there is a multitude of international organizations and civil society organizations that work on ATT-related issues. The recently launched ATT Network in Geneva, an initiative to coordinate activities related to the promotion of the Treaty and its implementation, is just further proof of the benefits that Geneva offers.

While we have welcomed the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms since 1991, we regret that the Group has not recommended that small arms and light weapons be included as an eighth category. We remain convinced that taking that step would reinforce the relevance of the Register for many States, in particular those affected by those weapons, and would therefore enhance participation in the mechanism. We strongly encourage Member States to so inform the Secretary-General if the absence of small arms and light weapons as a main category has limited the relevance of the Register for them and as a result has directly affected their participation.

Switzerland will be chairing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2014. In that context, we will continue to place strong emphasis on small arms activities at the regional level and support better coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the importance of conventional arms in disarmament and international security. New technologies are changing warfare, and we are going to meet new challenges, of which fully autonomous weapon systems is one, as was highlighted this year in the report of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (A/68/206). We note with interest that the Secretary-General should consider commissioning a comprehensive study in support of those efforts, with the involvement of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and other research institutes and think tanks.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.18). Let me now

elaborate on some matters of particular importance to my delegation.

The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by the General Assembly in April was a truly remarkable achievement. Lithuania signed the Treaty on 3 June and is committed to its quick ratification. We will continue to support increased transparency in the arms trade, in particular through ensuring that national reports on arms transfers are made available to the public, including academia and civil society. The United Nations Office on Disarmament Affairs' excellent website on the Global Reported Arms Trade and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's Arms Transfers Database are excellent examples. We welcome the initiatives by non-governmental organizations, in particular Control Arms, to establish a civil society-led monitoring mechanism. Lithuania strongly supported inclusion of the gender-based violence criterion in the ATT and welcomes discussions on putting that into action.

During the current session of the First Committee, Lithuania supports the adoption of a strong draft resolution on transparency in armaments (A/C.1/68/L.31), traditionally sponsored by the Netherlands, as well as the draft resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty (A/C.1/68/L.4). While the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the scope of the ATT was an important accomplishment, it is crucial to continue our efforts to implement 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 adapt it to the realities of today and tomorrow. We welcome the consensus outcome of the Review Conference in 2012 and congratulate Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan on his appointment as the Chair-designate of the forthcoming Fifth Biennial Meeting of States. We stand ready to constructively support his efforts.

Lithuania salutes the adoption of the first-ever Security Council resolution on small arms (resolution 2117 (2013)), which we co-sponsored. It contains important provisions that recognize the impact of small arms on the protection of civilians, in particular women and children, and focuses on the need to better monitor and strengthen the implementation of arms embargoes. Lithuania continues to support the universality and full implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, with a focus on assistance to States parties

in complying with their obligations, particularly in the area of stockpile destruction.

Lithuania supports the draft resolution on the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention tabled by Slovenia (A/C.1/68/L.3), as well as the draft resolution on assistance in mine action (A/C.4/68/L.9), negotiated in the Fourth Committee, with this year's strong references to rapid response and new language on victim assistance and gender issues. We remain firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols as an essential means to strengthening international humanitarian law.

As the first country in our region to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Lithuania believes in a comprehensive ban of those weapons and is deeply concerned about their use, including recent reported attacks against civilians in Syria.

The full version of my statement will be available on the website of the Lithuanian Mission.

Ms. González-Román (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain fully endorses the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.18) and would like to make the following comments in its national capacity.

Conventional weapons represent the majority of weapons of mass destruction, claiming more victims each year than any other category of arms. As a result, it is the duty of the international community to pay particular attention to this matter. Spain has underscored the urgent need to regulate the trade in conventional weapons at the global level. Since its inception, we have actively supported the process that led to the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, and we co-sponsored the General Assembly resolutions promoted it.

Spain believes that the entry into force of the Treaty is an urgent matter and that there is a need to ensure a large number of signatories. Therefore, we urge those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty. In the same vein, in order to address this urgent need, my country has decided provisionally to implement articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty, which refer to the prohibition and evaluation of arms exports based on human rights and international humanitarian law, *inter alia*.

We are aware of the challenges that the Treaty poses for many countries. Therefore, we wish to put our experiences at the disposal of other States. We

stand ready to cooperate with other States and the Office for Disarmament Affairs in order to facilitate its implementation. We have therefore decided to support the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, along with Australia, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. This project, which was launched in June, consists of establishing a credit line to support cooperation in the regulation of conventional weapons. It applies to activities that are related to the Arms Trade Treaty and 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. At its first meeting, the strategic planning group gave priority to the entry into force and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty in order to promote projects focusing on Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Asia-Pacific regions.

Spain also wishes to touch on Security Council resolution 2117 (2013) on small arms and light weapons, the first resolution of the Council dealing with this type of weapon, and of which my country was a sponsor. The resolution is the cornerstone of the fight against the illicit trafficking in arms, destabilizing stockpiling and the excessive use of light weapons and small arms.

Furthermore, Spain attaches great importance to the development and full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the instruments derived from the Plan of Action. We are equally committed to the Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components, Munitions and Ammunition, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the only legally binding instrument of universal scope dealing with such weapons.

We would also like to highlight the need to strengthen the control of trade in munitions and ammunition. This is a key issue that should be included in the United Nations Programme of Action. Only by including the control of munitions and ammunition can we ensure the effective control of the trade and illicit trafficking in arms. We also support all confidence-building, transparency and predictability measures, such as the Register of Conventional Arms.

Mr. Al-Taie (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to begin by endorsing the statement made by the

representatives of Bahrain on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/68/PV.18) and that to be made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Iraq has suffered from three wars caused by the practices of its former regime, which had disastrous consequences for our people and the environment. Iraq is one of the countries most polluted by landmines, cluster munitions and the explosive remnants of war. We have endured this problem for three decades. More than 4,000 regions of my country are contaminated by mines and unexploded devices, which threaten the lives and livelihoods of residents. These regions are also finding it difficult to develop arable land or an oil industry, which hinders the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, who are unable to earn a living there.

In 2007, Iraq became a party to the Ottawa Convention, which came into effect on 1 February 2008. Despite a lack of technical resources, we are firmly committed to ridding all of Iraq of the explosive remnants of war, in line with article 5 of the Convention. We are striving to develop and modernize Government institutions in order to make them able to demine and eliminate the explosive remnants of war from our territories. Since Iraq's accession to the Convention, the Government has done everything possible to implement its provisions on demining, dismantling stockpiles, providing aid to victims and ensuring their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Nevertheless, we still need the international community's assistance, which remains important to allow the country to carry out its tasks and to take safe measures to modernize its infrastructure.

We thank all friendly countries that have helped us in a number of different ways. Through their cooperation with Iraqi institutions, they have contributed to demining efforts. We wish to thank in particular the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Germany, Australia, Belgium, Italy, Ireland, Croatia, Austria and Greece. We would also like to thank the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, as well as non-governmental organizations. We would also certainly like to thank the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining for its humanitarian activities, including conferences and workshops.

Mr. Buck (United States of America): I have shortened my remarks, but the full statement by the United States will be made available on the website of the United States Mission to the United Nations and in the Secretariat's QuickFirst portal. In the interests of time, I will address several separate issues in this statement, starting with the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

The United States is proud to have signed the ATT on 25 September. The Treaty helps lift countries up to the highest standards of export and import control for conventional weapons. The Treaty strengthens countries' national security, builds global security, and advances important humanitarian goals without undermining the legitimate international trade in conventional arms, which allows each country to provide for its own defence. The United States looks forward to the early entry into force of the Treaty, and we call on those countries that have not signed it to consider doing so as soon as possible.

My country was pleased to have participated in the 2013 Group of Governmental Experts that reviewed the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Unfortunately, the Group was unable to bring an end to its 13-year-long discussion on small arms and light weapons by agreeing to expand the Register to include small arms and light weapons. We hope that the next Group of Governmental Experts will correct this shortcoming and reinforce the Register's role as a global transparency and confidence-building measure.

I now turn to conventional weapons destruction. The United States continues its strong support for eliminating ageing, surplus, loosely secured or otherwise at-risk conventional weapons and munitions, as well as the explosive remnants of war. Since 1993, we have provided more than \$2.1 billion in aid to over 90 countries for conventional weapons destruction programmes, including the clearance of landmines and unexploded munitions and the destruction of excess small arms, light weapons and munitions. We have assisted 15 affected States to become mine-impact free. Since 2001, we have helped to destroy more than 1.6 million excess or poorly secured weapons and over 90,000 tons of munitions around the world.

The United States welcomes the adoption by the Security Council of its first stand-alone resolution (resolution 2117 (2013)) on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and thanks Australia for its leadership on the matter. The United States provides

a wide variety of assistance to combat the illicit trafficking of conventional weapons, helping States improve their export control practices and providing technical assistance for physical security and stockpile management of at-risk conventional arms and munitions.

In the hands of terrorists, insurgents or criminals, man-portable air defence system (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 over 33,000 excess, loosely secured, illicitly held or otherwise at-risk MANPADS and thousands more launchers in 38 countries.

The United States looks forward to the annual meeting of High Contracting Parties of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and to establishing a programme of work for 2014 that will allow CCW States to continue supporting the universalization of the CCW and the implementation of all its Protocols. During the past year, questions have arisen in forums such as the Human Rights Council regarding the development and use of lethal fully autonomous weapons. As the United States delegation to the Human Rights Council stated, we welcome discussion among States of the legal, policy and technological implications associated with lethal fully autonomous weapons in an appropriate forum. We believe the CCW to be that appropriate forum.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): While nuclear weapons are maintained primarily for deterrence purposes, it is conventional weapons that are actually used on a daily basis to kill human beings. They fuel conflicts, destabilize States and cause pain and suffering to humankind worldwide.

Global military expenditure fell in 2012, for the first time since 1998. The world total is estimated to have been around \$1.75 trillion, which is 0.4 per cent lower in real terms than in 2011. However, this small decline in global military spending is no reason to celebrate. Collectively, we still spent close to 3 per cent of the world's gross domestic product on military expenditure. The past 10 years have witnessed a spike of 50 per cent in the global spending on conventional weapons. Ironically, the weapons that propel and sustain conflicts come from areas that enjoy peace. Only four countries account for two-thirds of global

arms exports, while major importers are the developing countries, mostly in the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

Further disturbing trends are the development of new types of conventional weapons, such as lethal autonomous robots, and the use of armed drones, which indiscriminately kill civilians. The use of drones, especially outside zones of conflict or battlefields, not only poses a legal challenge but also has serious human rights and humanitarian implications. It needs to be stopped immediately. The use of drones needs to be brought under international regulation before it spirals out of control.

Similarly, lethal autonomous robots — which would choose and fire on pre-programmed targets on their own, without any human intervention — pose a fundamental challenge to the protection of civilians and the notion of affixation of responsibility. They could alter traditional warfare in unimaginable ways. Their development needs to be addressed at the relevant international forums, including at the United Nations and the Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The States that currently possess and use such weapons cannot afford to be complacent that such capabilities will not proliferate over time and that they too will become vulnerable unless the production of such weapons is curtailed forthwith under an international regime.

The international community has made several efforts to regulate conventional armaments. Various United Nations bodies have adopted numerous resolutions, guidelines and decisions related to such arms. Earlier this year, the General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The lack of consensus on its final approval reflected the complex and intricate nature of conventional arms issues.

Pakistan voted in favour of the Treaty in the earnest hope that the ATT will be able to better regulate the conventional arms trade, thereby reducing human suffering, without impacting on the self-defence needs of States. We expect that the Treaty will be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner in accordance with its principles, and that the subjective criteria included in the Treaty will not be abused politically. This would be key to promoting the effectiveness and universality of the Treaty.

Pakistan is a party to the CCW and all of its five Protocols, including the Amended Protocol II. The

CCW has made significant progress towards becoming make an indispensable element of the contemporary humanitarian, disarmament and arms control machinery, as well as a forum to consider how best to protect both civilians and soldiers from the effect of such weapons.

The delicate balance of these instruments—to minimize human suffering without sacrificing the legitimate security interests of States—must be maintained. The human suffering resulting from the indiscriminate use of landmines can be minimized.

Mr. Virri (Finland): Finland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.168/PV.18).

This year has proven to be successful in the field of conventional weapons. The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by the General Assembly strengthened the United Nations credibility in delivering disarmament and arms control treaties. We would also like to warmly thank Ambassadors Woolcott of Australia and García Moritán of Argentina for their invaluable contributions as Chairs of the ATT Conferences. We would like to commend all States that have already signed or ratified the Treaty. We would urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. As Ambassador Woolcott estimated, we could be reaching the threshold of 50 ratifications by summer 2014.

The Arms Trade Treaty delivers added value only if all States — from major arms producers to smaller developing countries in all continents — sign and ratify the Treaty and start implementing the criteria set out therein. There are several donors and instruments supporting and giving technical assistance to needy States. However, duplication should be avoided through close coordination among the donors.

Human rights and international humanitarian law constitute a significant part of the Treaty. We are convinced that the ATT has the potential to reduce gender-based violence and enhance lives of those men, women and children living under the threat of conflict and violence around the world. The Treaty will also contribute to diminishing the negative consequences of irresponsible and illicit arms trade. We would again like to thank wholeheartedly the representatives of civil society who helped and encouraged us throughout the negotiations. Their work has been and continues to be

instrumental in promoting the universalization and implementation of the Treaty.

The substantive outcome document of the 2012 Conference to Review 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 provides concrete measures and steps to achieve the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

Finland considers the International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) valuable, as they provide clear, practical and comprehensive guidance to practitioners and policymakers on controls of small arms and light weapons. Finland, among others, contributed to the development by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research of tools for better implementation of the ISACS.

Finland warmly welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 2117 (2013) on small arms and light weapons. The resolution takes well into account the recommendations of the recent report of the Secretary-General and allows the dynamics initiated by the ATT to be taken forward.

Finland, as a State party to the Ottawa Convention, is looking forward to the annual Meeting of States Parties and the Review Conference preparatory meeting in December. These important meetings will pave the way to the Convention's Third Review Conference in Maputo next year. We also continue to support humanitarian mine action in several parts of the world annually, with approximately €6 million.

Ms. Chan (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty and the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in its scope. My country believes, however, that it is essential to broaden the scope of the current categories of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and to add small arms and light weapons as a new category, as recommended by the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in its report of July of this year (see A/68/140). We must also work to develop robust and obligatory stockpile management standards and to address the excessive levels of weapons production. We hope to make progress on those and other issues during the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light

Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in June 2014, and during the 2014-2018 review cycle of the Programme of Action.

Costa Rica expresses its concern about the humanitarian impact of the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas, as pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict (S/2012/376). In the report, the Secretary-General also mentions his concern about the use of unmanned aerial vehicles for targeted attacks with a highly destructive collateral impact. While Costa Rica acknowledges that unmanned aerial vehicles are not illegal weapons, we also recognize that they can facilitate the deployment of a deadly and targeted force on the territory of other States, thereby undermining protection of the right to life.

My country therefore shares the concerns of Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston and Christof Heyns, in their respective reports of 2010 (A/HRC/14/24) and 2013 (A/68/362), as well as those stated by Special Rapporteur Ben Emmerson in his recent report to the General Assembly (A/68/389). In that regard, Costa Rica urges Member States to link the issues of transparency and accountability and the risk of proliferation of drones. We believe that many of the problems that have been acknowledged with regard to the use of armed drones may be exacerbated by the increase in autonomous robotic weapons.

My delegation believes that we should soon begin international talks on the issue of lethal autonomous robotics. We call for States to consider establishing a national moratorium on the development, production and use of such weapons and to debate their possible prohibition.

Toxic remnants of war are a major threat to civilians both during and after a conflict. States have few obligations to assess the toxicity and the environmental impact of the materials used in weapons or to monitor their effect on people's health and on the environment after their use. Costa Rica therefore believes it critical that the international community work together to resolve problems related to the toxic remnants of war. We reiterate our belief that environmental considerations are essential in our efforts to improve the protection of civilians.

San José will host the fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in September 2014. For Costa Rica, that treaty is fundamental to the efforts under way to limit the suffering of civilians caused by armed conflicts and to put an end to the use of such weapons. The fact that some States continue to use cluster munitions makes it clear that we must strengthen our efforts for the Convention's broader recognition. In Costa Rica, we will continue to promote adherence to the Convention and to discourage the use of cluster munitions in order to bring us closer to a world free of such weapons.

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will deliver a shortened version of our statement, the full text of which can be found on the QuickFirst website.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Suriname on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (see A/C.1/68/PV.18).

Ecuador follows closely and is fully committed to all discussions and negotiations on conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, ammunition, explosives, anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, as my country is party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We therefore attach particular importance to the humanitarian de-mining programme that Ecuador is carrying out jointly with Peru on our common border. Ecuador is also party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and all its Protocols, including Amended Protocol II.

My country believes that the international community should have a more in-depth debate on the issue of unmanned aerial vehicles and fully autonomous robotic weapons. The high number of indiscriminate victims as a result of mistaken attacks in civilian areas and the serious ethical and legal issues that arise following the development of new military technologies that exclude human involvement or responsibility in decision-taking call for an urgent and serious discussion on such new problems in the field of conventional weapons.

Ecuador voted in favour of all resolutions related to the convening of a negotiating process on the Arms Trade Treaty, as that instrument could effectively contribute to regulating the transfer of weapons and munitions and thereby help to combat the diversion of such weapons to illicit markets.

Ecuador continues to believe that the effectiveness of the Arms Trade Treaty depends on two aspects: its universality, and the degree of balance. Universality would have been ensured as a result of the multilateral, transparent, non-discriminatory and consensus-based negotiation, wherein the concerns of all Member States were listened to and duly taken into account without conditions. Balance is derived from the sovereign equality of States, self-determination, non-interference in internal affairs, territorial and political integrity and the right to legitimate self-defence, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

A few months ago, however, the Arms Trade Treaty was adopted by a recorded vote. Given its significance and the mandate of the General Assembly convening the mechanism for its negotiation, it should have been adopted by consensus. Ecuador regrets that fact. Owing to that lack of consensus, during this session of the First Committee, we have seen a number of difficulties in negotiating draft resolutions that traditionally have been adopted without a vote.

I will conclude by saying that, as my delegation stated when explaining its vote on the occasion of the adoption of that instrument (see A/67/PV.71), despite the reservations and observations that were made with regard to the adoption process and a number of elements contained in the Arms Trade Treaty, my national authorities continue to study and to monitor its implementation in order to take a definitive decision on Ecuador signing and adhering to that instrument.

Mr. Scappini Ricciardi (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Suriname on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (see A/C.1/68/PV.18). Speaking in our national capacity, however, we would like to underscore the following two points.

First, I wish to mention that there are varied interests in the use of arms among the countries of the Union, which is clear and natural. The two extremes of those varied interests probably concern weapons of mass destruction, on the one hand, and conventional weapons, on the other. The variety of those specific interests should not allow us to lose sight of the fact that it is important to have a comprehensive vision of the consequences of using those two extremes, given that both kinds of weapons are equally harmful to our societies.

Conventional weapons — small arms and light weapons — and munitions, regardless of their specific use, are as harmful as the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, for, as well as causing physical damage to populations and individuals, both kinds of weapons contribute greatly to an insecure, unstable and unpredictable world. It is not important to Paraguay which country suffers more or less from the consequences of one or other kind of threat or which country generates that threat. What matters most to us is establishing a safer overall environment. To that end the international community's commitment is imperative.

Secondly, Paraguay is part of the overwhelming majority of countries that have signed the Arms Trade Treaty. Very shortly, we hope to join the countries that have already ratified it so that its implementation may begin as soon as possible. Many considerations were taken into account when we signed the Treaty. Ultimately, it was the lack of regulation of the arms trade and its consequent uncontrolled nature, as well as the dangers that this poses. But the possibility of having an instrument that would prevent human suffering motivated us most of all.

The Arms Trade Treaty is the first step towards the consolidation of an international legal regime that is increasingly in sync with the requirements of modern life, development and individual well-being. That is why we call on members of the international community to continue to join the Arms Trade Treaty to ensure its entry into force and, above all, that its implementation becomes a reality marking a clear before-and-after in international law.

Mr. Joković (Croatia): Croatia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/68/PV.18), but I would like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Croatia, as a dedicated State party to the existing multilateral conventions and regimes on conventional weapons control, believes that results can be achieved only through comprehensive and mutually reinforcing policies at the multilateral, regional and national levels. Croatia is also a signatory State to the historic Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and will be in a position to ratify the Treaty as soon as our national procedure is complete, most likely by the end of this year. We see the ATT as a key instrument for enhancing global safety and human security by curbing the illegal trade in and the

availability of small arms and light weapons. Croatia will do its part in assisting its effective regional and global implementation, including through the relevant European Union assistance portfolio.

From the national perspective, allow me to point to our experience in both national and regional post-conflict arms control efforts, with emphasis on small arms and light weapons. We know that the accumulation, availability and trafficking of those weapons fuel insecurity and slow down fragile peacebuilding processes. In that light, Croatia welcomes Security Council resolution 2117 (2013) on small arms and light weapons, which in our view further strengthens the Arms Trade Treaty.

Croatia has gained significant experience in implementing successful national arms control measures and in fostering regional cooperation in a challenging post-conflict environment. Our experience extends from chairing small arms and light weapons-related activities in regional forums and the interdisciplinary national commission to control small arms and light weapons, to strong regional cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme. Together with our partners in the European Union, Croatia closely follows developments in regard to the issue. Given our first-hand experience and deep understanding of the multidisciplinary nature of controlling small arms and light weapons, Croatia is in a position to offer its expertise at the global level.

To conclude, as stated before, small arms and light weapons are neither small nor light in their impact. Our response to that challenge must therefore be strong and united.

Mr. Propper (Israel): Israel welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The Treaty is an important step in the international community's fight against the illegal trade in arms, including the transfer of arms to terrorists and other non-State actors. Israel believes that the Treaty strengthens international norms and national tools for arms trade control, while taking into consideration national security concerns. In our view, the proper regulation of trade using thorough standards of assessment, monitoring and control will contribute to peace, security and stability, both in the Middle East and on the global scale. Israel played an active role in the negotiation of the ATT and voted in favour of resolution 67/234 B in April, by which the General Assembly adopted the Treaty. Currently, we are in the final stage of an internal review process with

the goal of considering favourably the signature of the Treaty.

For several years, Israel has stressed the fact that preventing terrorists and the States sponsoring them from acquiring conventional and non-conventional arms should be addressed by the international community as a matter of priority. In that context, Israel attaches 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 looks forward to the next Biennial Meeting of States, to be held in June 2014. We would also like to highlight the significance of the International Tracing Instrument, and remind delegations that we could all benefit from enhancing cooperation on tracing small arms and light weapons, as well as from meeting the challenges of marking and record-keeping.

The effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels is more relevant than ever. Turbulence in the Middle East in general, and in Syria in particular, poses great challenges that should prompt the international community to work together to prevent illicit trafficking and terrorism. In that context, Israel has emphasized its deep concern over the illicit proliferation of man-portable air defence systems and short-range rockets. Those weapons could present a serious threat to civil, commercial and military aviation if they fall into the wrong hands. The international community must allocate the resources necessary to address that grave danger effectively, and focus on concrete steps to prevent these weapons from reaching terrorists and non-State actors.

We shall submit our complete statement to the secretariat.

Mr. Wu Jianjian (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China supports continued efforts to improve international legal mechanisms on conventional arms control on the basis of addressing humanitarian concerns and the legitimate military and security needs of States in a balanced manner.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) has played an irreplaceable role in solving humanitarian problems caused by such conventional weapons as anti-person landmines. China has always fulfilled and will continue to fulfil its obligations under the Convention and its additional protocols in an earnest

manner, and remains committed to strengthening the universality and effectiveness of the Convention.

While fully complying with the CCW domestically, China is actively committed to the cause of international humanitarian assistance. Since 1998, China has provided more than 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latino-America with a total of about ¥70 million in humanitarian demining assistance. This year, China has held demining training courses in China for personnel from the Sudan, South Sudan and Laos. It will dispatch a team of experts to Cambodia to conduct on-site demining training. We will also provide assistance to landmine and cluster munition victims in Sri Lanka and Jordan.

In recent years, improvised explosive devices have increasingly become main tools used by terrorists and extremists to create chaos. This should attract the full attention of the international community. China supports and plays an active part in relevant international discussions, and is willing to further our exchanges and cooperation on the issue with all parties concerned.

China deeply understands and shares the concerns of countries and regions concerned over the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is attributable to complicated causes, and therefore calls for a holistic approach that will address both the root causes and the symptoms of the problem. The international community should take effective measures to help affected countries achieve economic development and social stability. The United Nations must be upheld as a main channel for enhancing international cooperation aimed at the comprehensive 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 and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The Chinese Government has consistently taken a prudent and responsible attitude towards arms exports. It has strictly observed the principles of not undermining peace and stability of the regions concerned, and of non-interference in the internal affairs of recipient countries. China never provides arms to countries or individuals under arms embargo imposed by the Security Council. China has established

a comprehensive and effective arms export control system, including regime of end-user and end-use certificates, and a registration system for small arms exports.

China supports the necessary measures taken by the international community to regulate behaviours of arms trade and has played an active role in the process of negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty. China has no substantive difficulties with the content of the Treaty and is seriously looking into the possibility of signing it. China will continue working closely with the international community in efforts to properly address the issue of illicit trade in conventional arms.

China attaches importance to transparency in armaments and has devoted itself to enhancing mutual trust in the military sphere among all countries in the world. In recent years, China has continued to submit annual reports on the weapon-transfer data to the United Nations Register of Conventional Weapons and has taken an active part in the work of the Register's Group of Governmental Experts. China is devoted to enhancing the universality and effectiveness of the Register and will continue its efforts to this end.

China's complete statement will be available in the area set aside by the Secretariat for that purpose.

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): We will now hear statements from non-governmental organizations. I call upon the speakers to kindly be brief and concise. In keeping with the established practice in the Committee, I will suspend the meeting in order to continue our proceedings in an informal manner.

The meeting was suspended at 4.50 p.m. and resumed at 5.50 p.m.

Programme of work

The Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me take this opportunity to inform delegations that on Tuesday, 5 November, the General Assembly will hold a plenary session in the morning on agenda item 88, on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Consequently, the First Committee meeting that day has been shifted from the morning to the afternoon to allow First Committee delegates to attend that plenary.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.