



General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

First Committee

18th meeting

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New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Paulauskas (Lithuania)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 90 to 106 (continued)

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

The Chair: Before proceeding, I would like to inform the delegations that we have a long list of speakers for the four remaining thematic discussions, including under the cluster “Conventional weapons”. We now have a total of 205 speakers.

While the Committee has been vigilant in respecting the time limit for statements, and I truly appreciate the efforts of all members, the high number of statements in exercise of the right of reply this year means that fewer statements are heard per meeting in the Committee. It does not help that the Committee will begin its action phase on Friday, 27 October. In fact, it means that we need to hear the 205 speakers over the next four days.

As a Bureau, we will look at all options to ensure that the deadline for the action phase is met. This includes perhaps reducing the speaking time for the panellists, reducing speaking time for representatives this week and even holding additional meetings if the large conference room and interpretation services are available. I also count on representatives to share the burden by considering the amount of time dedicated to statements made in the exercise of the right of reply. I will be counting fully on members’ support. We

will come up with some concrete proposals in today’s afternoon meeting or perhaps tomorrow.

In accordance with its programme of work, the Committee will first hear a briefing by the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management. I will urge him to keep to the time limit.

The Committee will then change to an informal mode to afford delegations the opportunity to ask questions. Immediately thereafter, the formal plenary will resume to allow the Committee to continue its thematic discussion, under the cluster “Conventional weapons”.

The Committee will now hear a briefing by the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management.

Mr. Von Wittke (Germany): It is an honour for me to brief the Committee in my capacity as Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition, established pursuant to resolution 76/233.

Once considered the orphan of conventional arms control, conventional ammunition has been the focus of dedicated deliberations in the Open-Ended Working Group over the past two years. Discussions held throughout four substantive sessions of work in Geneva and New York, complemented by a series of intense intersessional informal consultations, have culminated in the adoption of the final report (see A/78/111), without

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a vote, on 9 June. The Group agreed to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption, at its seventy-eighth session, of the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, contained in the annex of its final report.

After more than three decades of on-and-off deliberations on the issue of conventional ammunition management, that successful outcome of the Open-Ended Working Group, in my eyes, is a tremendous achievement in our collective efforts to reduce the risks and human costs of the illicit trafficking and diversion of conventional ammunition, as well as to prevent and mitigate unplanned explosions at munition sites. I commend all delegations for their remarkable dedication and collaboration and the true spirit of multilateralism and compromise, as well as their flexibility, which all had prevailed throughout our deliberations, allowing us to reach such a remarkable milestone without a vote. That should remind us that, even against the background of a challenging political environment, progress, compromise, good will and multilateral collaboration are possible when there is political will to succeed.

At the same time, that outcome of the Open-Ended Working Group would not have been possible without the remarkable and dedicated work of my Vice-Chair, Ambassador Maritza Chan Valverde of Costa Rica, on key aspects of the Framework and my outstanding Chair's team, which provided me and the Group with sound expertise and excellent advice. I wish to thank them from the bottom of my heart for all their tireless hard work. It has been a joy working with them and with all of the delegations.

We also need to thank those who created the momentum and paved the way for the Open-Ended Working Group's work. Building upon the work of previous expert groups and in particular the important observations and recommendations of the 2020-2021 Group of Governmental Experts on Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus, the Open-Ended Working Group has taken a comprehensive approach to the issue of conventional ammunition. The scope of the Global Framework covers all types of conventional ammunition, from small-calibre ammunition to the largest conventional ammunition, and adopts a through-life management approach to ammunition safety and security. It provides a means to comprehensively

address the dual risks associated with conventional ammunition at every stage of its life cycle.

The Global Framework comprises five sections and an annex — a preamble, a section on guiding principles, a section entitled “Our cooperative framework”, a section on international cooperation and assistance, and, finally, a follow-up and review section, as well as an annex with rationales. Under “Our cooperative framework”, member States identified 15 objectives and 85 related measures, covering a range of aspects to promote the safety, security and sustainability of through-life conventional ammunition management. That includes, *inter alia*, the application and enhancement of relevant standards and guidelines, the adoption of needs-driven approaches to international cooperation and assistance, support to regional and subregional mechanisms and the prioritization of sustainability of national capabilities.

The Global Framework also sets out a number of important safety and security measures at the technical level to prevent and mitigate the diversion of ammunition and unplanned explosions at munition sites. Safety-related objectives include measures related to ammunition surveillance, inventory management, risk reduction processes and explosive limit licensing.

Security-related objectives contain measures related to diversion risk minimization and mitigation, the use of end-user documentation, the marking and tracing of ammunition, diversion data collection and investigation, the management of seized and recovered ammunition, and information-sharing on diversion, among other things. In addition, member States are committed to strengthening gender mainstreaming and the full, equal, meaningful and effective participation of women in through-life conventional ammunition management and to encouraging multi-stakeholder cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

In this context, let me highlight the significant contributions made by international and regional organizations, as well as civil society and non-governmental organizations. Their expertise and experiences in the field of conventional ammunition management has been of pivotal importance for the work of the Group and their contributions will be equally crucial in the implementation of the future Global Framework.

The Global Framework integrates an innovative two-tier approach that recognizes the diversity in

national and regional circumstances. Each of the 15 objectives identifies: first, a number of common enabling measures to which all States commit; and secondly, a number of possible additional enabling measures that could contribute to achieving each objective in specific national, subregional or regional contexts.

The Global Framework also recognizes the central role of international cooperation and assistance. States commit to cooperate and coordinate with each other and to establish and strengthen partnerships, including with relevant international, regional and subregional organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations, academia, research institutions and the private sector, including industry.

The Global Framework also promotes the exchange of experiences and lessons learned and recognizes the need for seeking and providing assistance — including technology transfers; technical, material, financial and legal assistance; gender mainstreaming; and the expertise for capacity-building and knowledge management — while maintaining strong national ownership.

The Global Framework contains a number of mandates for the Secretariat, in particular in relation to international cooperation and assistance. That includes the establishment of a global mechanism for assistance; the maintenance of a roster of ammunition management experts; the further development of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines to respond to through-life security risks, in addition to the currently prevailing safety focus; the collection of information on subregional, regional and global initiatives; and the establishment of a standing fellowship training programme on conventional ammunition management.

To ensure effective implementation of the Global Framework, it lays out a dedicated but light-touch follow-up and review process. It consists of a preparatory meeting of States in 2025; the submission of voluntary initial overviews over its national implementation in 2026, followed later by voluntary national reports and updates; and a meeting of States in 2027 to review the implementation of the Global Framework, which will determine the convening of subsequent meetings of States, as well as of governmental technical experts' meetings.

Finally, the Global Framework contains an annex with rationales underpinning the 15 objectives, describing their relevance and linking them to

the individual measures, thereby assisting in the understanding of the Global Framework.

The Global Framework is a collective step forward in solidifying through-life conventional ammunition management as an issue of standalone concern and responses that requires dedicated and sustained attention from the international community. It closes the gap of a dedicated regulatory instrument on conventional ammunition at the international level. It is intended to be one layer of a comprehensive framework to support safe, secure and sustainable through-life conventional ammunition management at the national, subregional, regional and global levels.

Those global-level commitments could therefore allow for regions and subregions to voluntarily translate the global-level political commitments and the measures into legally binding instruments or tailored commitments determined by each region or subregion.

The implementation of the Global Framework will make an essential contribution to countering the diversion of conventional ammunition, which continues to instigate and fuel armed violence, conflict and instability across the world. It will also promote efforts to prevent unplanned explosions at munition sites, which have caused devastating damage and destruction to communities, lives and the environment. With the successful outcome of the Open-ended Working Group, States Members of the United Nations have made a collective contribution to reducing the human costs of weapons and ammunition, saving lives and sparing the suffering of future generations.

Before concluding, I would like to welcome the explicit support to the Global Framework that many States have expressed during the general debate of the First Committee and call on all delegations to support the adoption of the Global Framework by the General Assembly through the First Committee draft resolution entitled "Through-life conventional ammunition management" (A/C.1/78/L.41). The draft resolution was submitted by Germany and France and is currently co-sponsored by 45 delegations.

Collectively, together and in the spirit of cooperation laid out by the Global Framework and shown by States in its elaboration, we must take the necessary steps to implement our commitments. Let us collectively ensure that the elaboration and adoption of the Global Framework is not the end goal, but a crucial step towards achieving through-life conventional

ammunition security and safety for lasting peace and security and sustainable development.

I wish the Chair and all delegations successful deliberations in the First Committee.

The Chair: I thank Mr. Von Wittke for his briefing.

In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion on the briefing we have just heard through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 10.15 a.m. and resumed at 10.20 a.m.

The Chair: The Committee will now continue its thematic discussion under the cluster “Conventional weapons”.

Delegations wishing to exercise the right of reply will be able to do so once the Committee exhausts the list of speakers for the cluster at the end of the day.

Before I open the floor, I would like to remind all delegations that the time limit for statements during the thematic segment is five minutes when speaking in a national capacity, and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of several delegations.

Mr. Karczmarz (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU), as well as on behalf of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, the Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, San Marino and Ukraine, which align themselves with this statement.

With regard to the crisis in the Middle East, allow me at the outset to emphasize that the EU’s position, as set out by EU leaders, is well known. At this time, our thoughts are with all innocent victims — Israelis, Palestinians and citizens from many other countries.

The EU reiterates its firm commitment to the humanitarian imperatives that underscore many international conventions on conventional weapons. However, that architecture is under unprecedented strain owing to ongoing armed conflicts, in particular Russia’s illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. Not only is that war a blatant violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, but it is also a humanitarian catastrophe for Ukraine and its people, brought about by the Russian Federation with flagrant disrespect for international humanitarian law

and human rights law and backed by Russia’s massive disinformation campaign.

The EU actively supports the work of the International Criminal Court and measures to ensure accountability for, inter alia, war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide. There can be no impunity for those crimes.

The EU recalls that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols are an essential and integral part of international humanitarian law, and strongly encourages all States to join those important instruments without further delay.

We also encourage further international dialogue and cooperation to address the opportunities and challenges presented by artificial intelligence in the military domain, to exchange best practices and to build a common understanding of the legal and ethical implications.

The EU welcomes the work and substantial contribution over the past years by the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. It is important that the GGE continue its efforts based on a solid mandate. The CCW is the relevant forum, and we expect it to deliver results. The outcome should reflect the necessity of compliance with international law, in particular international humanitarian law, taking into account the relevant ethical considerations. Human beings must exert control over lethal autonomous weapons systems and remain accountable for decisions over the use of force. The EU supports the so-called two-tier approach to such systems and will remain committed to strengthening the mandate of the GGE in that regard.

The EU remains deeply concerned about the continued severe global impact of improvised explosive devices and their indiscriminate use and effects, in particular in terrorist acts and their use by non-State actors. Furthermore, the EU highlights the humanitarian, social and economic impact of the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of mines other than anti-personnel mines. They are legitimate weapons, but parties must ensure that they are used in accordance with international humanitarian law, including by taking all feasible precautions to protect civilians. We welcome the adoption of the Ireland-led Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising

from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, which has so far been endorsed by 83 States, with its goal to reduce harm and strengthen the protection of civilians. We welcome the opportunity to continue that effort at the first international follow-up conference to review implementation of the Political Declaration, to be held in Oslo next year.

The EU stands united in its support for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. While the Convention is a success story of multilateral diplomacy, with 164 States parties, we are deeply concerned about the ongoing use of those weapons, including in Ukraine. The EU calls on all actors to refrain from the production, stockpiling, trade and transfer of anti-personnel mines and strongly condemns their use anywhere, anytime and by any actor, whether States or non-State actors. We call on all States that have not yet done so to join the Convention without further delay, and we encourage all parties to accelerate progress towards achieving a world free of anti-personnel mines by 2025.

The EU and its member States have a long history of support for mine action, including the Oslo Action Plan, which benefits heavily mine-affected countries and regions. EU assistance in 2022 amounted to €90 million for 20 countries. Additional funds of up to €25 million will support Ukraine in demining territories liberated from Russia's occupation. We hope that our continued support will promote the accession of all supported States to the Ottawa Convention.

The EU and its member States also reaffirm their strong support for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We call on all States that have yet to do so to ratify or accede to the Treaty without further delay and on its parties to comply with their obligations, including in reporting. We welcome the successful outcome of the ninth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. Given Russia's many blatant breaches of the Geneva Conventions, we would like to highlight that arms transfers to Russia are not permitted under the ATT. The EU has an arms embargo in place against Russia, following its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. On the contrary, transfers of conventional weapons to Ukraine are a legitimate measure to support that country in exercising its inherent right to self-defence under the Charter of the United Nations against Russia's aggression.

The EU remains committed to preventing and curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons

and their ammunition worldwide. We see the upcoming fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as an opportunity to continue the success of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The ineffective conventional ammunition management continues to be of growing concern to the international community. Therefore, the EU welcomes the Global Framework and outcome document (see A/78/111) resulting from the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management and attaches great importance to a follow-up process to focus on implementation challenges, the exchange of good practices and international cooperation and assistance.

The EU recognizes the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as a central instrument of the United Nations to build transparency and trust and promote dialogue in military matters. We encourage all States to report to the Register in a timely, complete and transparent manner. We also support the humanitarian goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We are deeply concerned about the impact on civilian populations resulting from the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions, including in Ukraine, Syria, Yemen, Libya and in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The EU calls on all actors to refrain from such use and fully comply with international humanitarian law.

The full version of this abridged statement will be made available to the secretariat of the First Committee.

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

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (A/C.1/78/PV.17).

Combating the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons and their associated ammunition remains a high priority for CARICOM member States. We are challenged daily by its devastating effects.

That is reflected in the majority of homicides in the region being committed using illegal firearms. The unfortunate reality is that those weapons are not manufactured in or exported from the region, nor are they imported in large quantities. New technologies and proliferation trends, including ghost guns, 3D-printed firearms and accessories and conversion devices intensify the situation and deter efforts to trace and control conventional weapons. The use of all modes of transport, concealment methods and smuggling techniques also contribute to the illegal transfers of those weapons.

In his July 2023 Policy brief 9 on A New Agenda for Peace, Secretary-General António Guterres noted that,

“Small arms and light weapons and their ammunition are the leading cause of violent deaths globally, in conflict and non-conflict settings alike”. (A/77/CRP.1/Add.8, *para.66*)

He further referenced the Agenda for Disarmament, which recognizes that,

“[The] proliferation, diversion and misuse [of these weapons] undermine the rule of law, hinder conflict prevention and peacebuilding, enable criminal acts [...] drive displacement and migration and stunt development” (*ibid.*, *para.66*).

Through the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap, CARICOM member States are actively working towards promoting peace and stability and ensuring a safer region. The goals of the Roadmap are pursued focus on the reinforcement of regulatory frameworks, reducing the illicit flow of firearms and ammunition, bolstering law enforcement capacity and systematically decreasing the risk of diversion of firearms and ammunition. In that regard, we take this opportunity to recognize the crucial role of partnerships with key regional and international organizations and advocacy groups in helping us achieve those goals, including the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS); INTERPOL; the World Customs Organization; the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean; the Small Arms Survey (SAS) and the Mines Advisory Group.

A recent testimony to these partnerships has been the publication of the first regional *Caribbean Firearms Study* in April by CARICOM IMPACS in collaboration

with SAS. The *Study* will help close critical information gaps surrounding firearm-related crimes by providing a detailed regional picture of firearms holdings and trafficking, the criminal use of ammunition, emerging firearm-related threats and the socioeconomic costs of gun violence. CARICOM member States also reaffirm their commitment to the fulfilment of their obligations under the key international instruments that address the trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons, namely, the Arms Trade Treaty; the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; its International Tracing Instrument; and the Firearms Protocol, since they are critical to reducing armed violence. We would like to highlight that the effective and successful implementation of those instruments cannot be achieved without global commitment and action.

In that regard, CARICOM looks forward to the convening of the fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in 2024, which will provide an opportunity to strengthen the implementation of the Programme. CARICOM also welcomes the June 2023 adoption of the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management (see A/78/111), aimed at addressing existing gaps in through-life conventional ammunition management.

Empowering women in decision-making processes related to arms control initiatives not only promotes gender equality, but also leads to more inclusive, effective and sustainable outcomes. We emphasize today the importance of achieving the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in efforts to curb the illegal use and transfer of ammunition. Women should be actively involved in all stages of efforts to address the proliferation and misuse of conventional weapons, including prevention, disarmament, control and regulation. Their diverse perspectives, experiences and insights can contribute significantly to shaping policies and strategies that will ultimately lead to more comprehensive and lasting solutions. Moreover, women's involvement in those efforts is crucial to ensuring the recognition and protection of their rights, both as victims and as agents of change. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by armed violence, and their empowerment is essential for creating safe and

secure environments, reducing gender-based violence and promoting sustainable peace.

In conclusion, let us all be reminded that the strength of our commitment towards positive change today determines the peace of our world tomorrow. For the sake of future generations, let us strive for a world in which peace prevails.

Mr. Lagardien (South Africa): South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

Conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, continue to be the weapons of choice in destabilizing communities by fuelling conflict and crime, often with catastrophic effects on civilian populations, including women and children.

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

In terms of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, South Africa announced, during the eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held in Geneva, that it had completed the destruction of its cluster munitions stockpile on 7 September, meeting its eight-year stockpile destruction deadline of 1 November.

Our delegation was actively involved in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management. We are pleased that those negotiations resulted in the adoption of a comprehensive and concrete set of political commitments (see A/78/111) as a new Global Framework on the issue. South Africa wishes to congratulate the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group, Mr. Albrecht von Wittke, on his successful conclusion of the process. South Africa played a role as facilitator on one of the key objectives, related to supply chain transparency and reducing the risk of diversion.

We believe that the follow-up mechanism on the Global Framework, as envisaged in the draft resolution on through-life conventional ammunition management

(A/C.1/78/L.41), is imperative in the effective implementation of the Global Framework.

South Africa participated in the recently held ninth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). One of the stated purposes of the ATT is to contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability. Those objectives remain that of setting the highest possible common international standards for regulating or improving the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, as well as preventing and eradicating the illicit trade in conventional arms and precluding their diversion. In that regard, South Africa had the privilege, over the past three years, of facilitating the discussions in the Sub-Working Group on article 9 of the ATT, on transit and trans-shipment, which culminated in the development of a voluntary guide to implementing that article. We hope that the voluntary guide will be of value to States parties in the implementation of their obligations under the Treaty.

South Africa looks forward to the convening of the fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. And we trust that substantive progress will be made to further advance its full and effective implementation.

South Africa is one of the co-authors, along with Colombia and Japan, of the annual draft resolution entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”, to be introduced by Japan during this session as A/C.1/78/L.40. We thank Japan for its leadership role. The co-authors regard the draft resolution as the implementation road map for future substantive work in furthering the goals of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the International Tracing Instrument.

In conclusion, we should all continue to promote the implementation and universalization goals of all the conventions and consensus political agreements on conventional weapons. All the instruments and their related action plans that we have mentioned contain commitments, some legally binding, relating to international cooperation and assistance. However, without converting those commitments into the provision of concrete and sustained assistance to States that face many very real implementation challenges, especially

developing countries, the full universalization of those instruments will remain elusive.

The Chair: I thank the representative of South Africa for the excellent work he is doing as Vice-Chair of this Committee.

Mr. Sirie (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

Continued armed conflicts around the world remind us of the devastating consequences of the unchecked proliferation and use of conventional weapons. Civilians continue to bear the brunt of those conflicts, and their suffering is a stark reminder of the need for concrete action.

With regard to the ongoing situation in Gaza, Indonesia reiterates its position that it is time to put an end to the onslaught against civilians, civilian facilities such as hospitals and places of worship, and to focus on providing humanitarian assistance and addressing the root causes of the conflict.

All States have sovereign rights to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain small arms and light weapons and their relevant parts, components and ammunition for self-defence and security needs. However, we recognize that challenges from illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, landmines and other conventional weapons continue to exist.

Therefore, there are three important points that I would like to highlight.

First, strengthening the regulation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition should be a key priority. Indonesia welcomes the adoption of the final report of the Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management (see A/78/111), with its annex on the Global Framework for Through-life Ammunition Management, which sets out a voluntary political commitment on the management of surplus of ammunition. Its consensus adoption reflects our collective commitment to addressing that issue. Indonesia also looks forward to the establishment of a new fellowship programme in that field.

On another note, the balanced, full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument is also crucial. A standing, dedicated fellowship training programme on that particular subject matter would greatly contribute to achieving such goals and to addressing any gaps in implementation. Indonesia looks forward to contributing to the fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its Preparatory Committee sessions.

Secondly, strong regional cooperation to curb illicit arms transfers should also be at the forefront of our efforts. Strengthening measures on border controls are necessary to reach that goal. Investing in capacity-building and technical assistance to the countries in need in the region would greatly contribute to strengthening that cooperation. In our region, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Mine Action Centre has played an important role in promoting efforts to address the issue of explosive remnants of war.

Thirdly, conventional weapons that are capable of inflicting indiscriminate damage should never be used. Indonesia welcomes inclusive, multilateral efforts in addressing the new types of conventional weapons, such as the ongoing discussion on a legally binding instrument on lethal autonomous weapons systems. It is our responsibility to ensure that any use of those systems adheres to the principles of international law, including international humanitarian law. We also would like to express our concern about the humanitarian harm arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Moreover, Indonesia also condemns the use of anti-personnel mines in conflict. We therefore need to make sure that our peacekeepers are also well-equipped with demining capabilities when they are on duty.

Illicit flows and transfers of small arms and light weapons is a cross-border matter. Therefore, stronger international cooperation and greater transparency would be beneficial in addressing global control of conventional weapons. Greater commitment from all of us to address that issue would bring us closer to peace and prosperity.

Mr. Hegazy (Egypt): At the outset, Egypt stresses that the ongoing dangerous escalation in Gaza

requires urgent action, including an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, ensuring unhindered access to humanitarian assistance, addressing the root causes of the conflict and halting the indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure in Gaza, which has resulted in a serious human cost of the use of weapons, including thousands of innocent fallen souls. We express our condemnation of such attacks. In that vein, we highlight Action 7 of the Secretary-General's policy brief on the New Agenda For Peace on reducing the human cost of weapons and the recommendation included therein to strengthen the protection of civilians in populated areas in conflict zones.

Egypt aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States, the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.17) and wishes to make the following remarks.

We continue to fully support the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as an essential multilateral instrument that contributes to the eradication of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Egypt has regularly submitted its national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action, including for the year 2022. We also reiterate the importance of the International Tracing Instrument as a valuable tool in that regard. We look forward to convening the fourth Review Conference on the Programme of Action in 2024 to further elaborate on issues related to the diversion of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized recipients and to implement the consensual conclusions of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms.

Moreover, while recognizing the legitimate right of States to manage their conventional ammunitions in line with their defence and security needs, Egypt recalls the adoption without a vote of the final report (see A/78/111) of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management, established pursuant to resolution 76/233, to be implemented in a voluntary and independent manner. Furthermore, with regard to the future discussions of the Framework, we encourage all delegations to focus on strengthening the points of agreement and to avoid the inclusion of

non-consensual or controversial issues to allow the effective implementation of the Framework, taking into consideration its voluntary nature.

The Middle East and Africa face severe threats owing to the increasing illicit flows and intentional transfers of small arms and light weapons to terrorists and illegal armed groups with the direct support of a few States that resort to arming terrorists as a tool in their foreign policies, in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international norms and several Security Council resolutions. It is a phenomenon that requires the immediate attention of, and more tangible measures by, the United Nations. In addition, some argued that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was going to be the solution that would stop all illegal flows of conventional arms. In that regard, we reiterate that the ATT's various shortcomings, especially its lack of clear definitions and criteria, largely undermines its possible effectiveness and makes it possible to abuse it as a tool to manipulate and monopolize the legitimate trade in conventional weapons in a politicized manner, while ignoring the prevention of the intentional supply of weapons to unauthorized recipients such as terrorists and illegal armed groups. We reiterate our call on the States parties to the ATT to ensure that its implementation is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, without any infringement on the rights of States to meet their national security and self-defence needs.

Egypt attaches great importance to the discussions of lethal autonomous weapons in the light of the risks they pose to international peace and security. We stress the centrality of human responsibility for such weapons and the authorization of lethal weapons, regardless of the type of weapon systems that delivers the force.

Finally, Egypt remains fully committed to engaging in any balanced multilateral endeavour that is aimed at tackling the multiple challenges and threats arising from the conventional illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

The full version of our statement will be submitted to the Secretariat.

Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka): It has been said that the world is over armed and peace is underfunded. It is well known that conventional weapons are still the principal means of armed violence and conflict worldwide. Small arms and light weapons, in particular, are used to commit a significant share of homicides every year.

They are often readily available, cheap to purchase and simple to handle, even for children. Easy to conceal, easy to traffic and exceptionally durable, they cast a long shadow in many world regions long after armed conflict has subsided. Ironically, the Charter of the United Nations does not forbid its members from owning and using conventional arms in so far as they are in conformity with international law. It is therefore not difficult to discern why the terms “arms control” or “arms limitations” are more often used than “disarmament” when referring to conventional weapons.

We have, however, endeavoured to mitigate the situation by following the 2015 adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes Target 16.4 on the significant reduction of illicit flows of arms by 2030. In that regard, Sri Lanka wishes to reiterate the urgent need to strike a balance between the legitimate needs of self-defence and the imperative to prevent the misuse of conventional weapons. We also wish to underline at this juncture the need for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, which provides a framework for weapons tracing and is a vital tool in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

We remain deeply concerned about the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons. Their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread to many unauthorized recipients in different parts of the globe continue to fuel conflicts. We welcome the consensus achieved during the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms in July 2022.

Furthermore, Sri Lanka appreciates any measures aimed at strengthening coordination with national focal points for the implementation of the Programme of Action. We also underscore the need for building the national capacity for weapons marking, identification and tracing, which can help regional and international bodies to enhance measures to identify cross-border trafficking, strengthen concerted initiatives to regulate international trade and ensure the effective control of illicit small arms and light weapons. We recommend strengthening border control, encouraging international cooperation, implementing effective marking and tracing systems, targeting and disrupting financial networks that support illicit trafficking,

strengthening the legal frameworks and criminalizing illicit trafficking with serious sanctions. In that context, Sri Lanka supports the proposal to establish a standing dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons, particularly for developing countries, and encourages the early implementation of such programme.

Sri Lanka recognizes the need to fill the global gaps in through-life ammunition management, to emphasize the maintenance of effective control and also to provide the necessary financial and technical assistance and capacity-building to States to enable effective global action to address the challenges posed by conventional weapons throughout their life cycle. We note the successful deliberations at the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management and its recommendation for the General Assembly to adopt a set of voluntary political commitments as a Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management (see A/78/111).

Sri Lanka became a State party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects in 2004. We recognize the unique platform that it provides for deliberation and negotiation.

Let us commit to the responsible use, trade and regulation of conventional weapons. By doing so, we not only safeguard our collective security, but also honour our shared commitment to peace, human dignity and international cooperation, concertedly, as a community of nations.

Ms. Liu (Singapore): Singapore aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

I would like to add three points in our national capacity.

First, Singapore recognizes that the widespread availability and illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition has exacerbated armed conflicts and lethal violence worldwide. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to efforts by the

United Nations to curb the illicit production, trafficking and trade in small arms and light weapons, including the full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We look forward to the fourth Review Conference of the Programme of Action in 2024 and support efforts to overcome challenges in operationalizing the International Tracing Instrument, while considering the potential implications of the emergence of new technologies.

We also commend the success of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management in adopting a Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management (see A/78/111) that is safe, secure and sustainable. Singapore was glad to have contributed by co-convening, with Brazil, Ghana, Jamaica and Switzerland, a series of informal dialogues on international cooperation on and assistance with through-life ammunition management. We look forward to the implementation of the Global Framework.

Secondly, Singapore shares the international community's concern about the humanitarian impact that the indiscriminate use of conventional weapons can have on innocent civilians and reaffirms its full commitment to their responsible use. In line with that, Singapore deposited its instrument of accession to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in September and looks forward to formally becoming a high contracting party in early 2024.

Singapore also supports initiatives against the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions and has traditionally voted in favour of the relevant resolutions on the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Singapore continues to maintain its indefinite moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions.

Thirdly, Singapore is committed to promoting transparency and establishing common international standards in the conventional arms trade. We have regularly submitted national reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms since 1993 and effectively engaged in the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional

Arms in 2019 and 2022. Singapore strongly encourages the implementation of the recommendations of the 2022 Group of Governmental Experts to ensure the continued relevance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as an important transparency and confidence-building instrument.

As one of the world's busiest transit and trans-shipment hubs, Singapore adopts a rigorous approach to curbing the illicit flow of arms through a robust export control regime, which it reviews regularly to ensure that Singapore remains fully compliant with its international obligations on arms transfers.

It is vital that all States fulfil their obligations to eradicate the illicit trade in and indiscriminate use of conventional arms. At the same time, that must be balanced with the sovereign right of States to acquire arms for legitimate self-defence and responsible law enforcement. Singapore reaffirms its commitment to working with the international community on curbing the unauthorized diversion, illicit trade and indiscriminate use of conventional weapons in order to safeguard international peace and security.

Ms. Reyes (Philippines): The Philippines aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

Conventional weapons and the proliferation thereof continue to endanger our populace. Their use has brought insurmountable damage and unnecessary suffering to numerous victims. Against that backdrop, the Philippines affirms its commitment to conventional weapons disarmament, as anchored in our constitutional renunciation of war as an instrument of policy and our fervent commitment to and enforcement of international humanitarian law. The Philippines' disarmament outlook is driven not merely by strategic or security exigencies but by a humanitarian imperative.

We are committed to enhancing national security by addressing the scourge of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and improvised explosive devices. In the same manner, we pursue actions that uphold the centrality of the victims and the need for affected States to build independent national capacities. As a concrete testament to our position, last year the Philippines ratified Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

and the Arms Trade Treaty. That makes us one of the very few countries that are party to all humanitarian disarmament conventions. We urge all Member States to likewise accede to all those conventions.

Consistent with our promotion of the humanitarian norms enshrined in those conventions, we condemn the use of landmines, cluster munitions and incendiary weapons by any actor under any circumstances. The experience of South-East Asia demonstrates that cluster munitions cause superfluous injury, and their remnants have posed a grave threat to peoples and communities for decades, thus hampering development. The use of cluster munitions is never justifiable. Therefore, the Philippines calls on all States to accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and supports all efforts to universalize that Convention.

The Philippines welcomes the successful conclusion of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management with the recommendation of establishing a Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management (see A/78/111). Ammunition diverted to unauthorized users fuels conflicts not only in the Philippines but also on a global scale. We therefore welcome draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.41 on the adoption of that Global Framework.

The Philippines looks forward to the convening next year of the fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We also welcome the decision to establish a dedicated fellowship programme on small arms and light weapons. The Philippines also continues to call for collaborative action to counter the threat posed by the use of improvised explosive devices, particularly by armed non-State actors. We support efforts to improve the implementation of international humanitarian law in the context of explosive weapons in populated areas. The Philippines therefore looks forward to the convening of the first follow-up conference to review the implementation of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, in Oslo next year, which is a manifestation of the solid commitment of more than 80 countries to the affirmations made in the Political Declaration.

The Philippines acknowledges emerging technologies as an equalizing factor that help countries achieve economic development. However, their use in the development and deployment of weapons pose challenges, especially in the humanitarian dimension of war. We therefore reiterate the call of President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. to develop governance structures to prevent the weaponization of emerging technologies. The Philippines supports the enhancement of international legal and normative frameworks, with a view to increasing their moderating influence on the behaviour of States that have the capability to use emerging and advanced technologies in the development of autonomous weapons systems, as well as the retention of meaningful human control over their development and use.

Mr. Nordin (Malaysia): Malaysia associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the statement delivered by the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

Sustained efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are vital, particularly in times of heightened tension in the global security environment. As noted by the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Disarmament, massive conventional arms build-ups are continuing unabated, especially in certain conflict-prone regions.

The full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument remains critical. In that regard, Malaysia welcomes the adoption of the final report of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July 2022, and looks forward to the convening in June 2024 of the fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action. Although the Programme of Action is not legally binding, it provides the international community with important guidelines and parameters in that field.

Further, my delegation welcomes the agreement reached by the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New

Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management in June 2023 to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of a Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management (see A/78/111). We look forward to the adoption and implementation of that Global Framework, which is voluntary and contains relevant political commitments.

As a signatory State to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Malaysia firmly believes that the ATT will provide additional impetus in strengthening national policies and regulations on conventional weapons, while recognizing the legal right of States to use such weapons judiciously for security, self-defence, research and trade. Malaysia has participated in the annual Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty since 2015, including most recently the ninth Conference, held in Geneva in August. Moreover, at the national level, Malaysia has laws such as the Strategic Trade Act, the Customs Act and the Arms Act, which are in place, inter alia, to prevent illicit arms trade and irresponsible arms transfer. There are ongoing efforts aimed at harmonizing existing national mechanisms and legislation with the provisions of the ATT.

My delegation is also pleased to have endorsed the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas in November 2022. That is an issue that requires concerted international action.

In conclusion, Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to the effective control and reduction of conventional weapons to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of their use and advance international peace and security.

Mr. Ganou (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Burkina Faso aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States and the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

I would like to make some remarks in my national capacity.

Burkina Faso is very concerned about the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are fuelling armed conflict and crime in several regions around the world, including Africa and, in particular, the Sahel. The spread of

terrorism, fuelled primarily by the illicit trade, transfer, production, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons, is having disastrous consequences for stability, development and human rights.

My country is directly affected by this scourge. Terrorist groups, which are running rampant in the Sahel, are equipped with arms that, for the most part, come from illicit trafficking. Those arms encourage violence, worsen intercommunal tensions and hinder socioeconomic development in Burkina Faso and neighbouring countries. Terrorist attacks throughout most of Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso cause considerable human suffering among the population, leading to a serious and unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Today Burkina Faso has more than 2 million internally displaced people, thousands of closed schools and destroyed road, administrative and production infrastructure. That is why my country supports initiatives that improve transparency, accountability and cooperation among States in order to effectively fight against this phenomenon.

Increasingly, we are witnessing the use of improvised explosive devices, which indiscriminately cause civilian and military casualties. Peaceful populations are thus forced to leave their villages and can no longer access their farmland. If those groups are unable to make it to camps for internally displaced persons, they rush to urban centres to scrape together a living through begging, prostitution and so forth. That sobering picture demonstrates the need for disarmament and the importance of combating arms trafficking and ensuring respect for the norms set out in the Arms Trade Treaty.

At the same time, we insist on the right to self-defence and the acquisition of weapons for that purpose, as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations. All disarmament efforts must strike a balance between States' legitimate need for defence and the goal of limiting weapons. That is why Burkina Faso calls for greater controls on the legal trade in and traceability of light weapons. We invite the States that produce and export such weapons to strengthen their mechanisms for verifying end recipients, at the risk of them also being held responsible for the crimes committed using their weapons. We must shut off the flow of weapons to criminal and terrorist groups.

Furthermore, the use of anti-personnel mines incurs numerous and varied consequences. My

country, like many other delegations, calls for the universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and urges all States and institutions involved to increase their efforts in order to provide support to the countries affected by such devices. As with anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions continue to prevent access to, and the farming of, vast swathes of land that could be utilized in many parts of the world, thus delaying the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals concerning, for example, food security, education and women's independence. In that regard, my country calls for the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Burkina Faso is fully committed to the fight against the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms. We call on all countries to prioritize dialogue and cooperation to resolve conflicts peacefully. The resources allocated to military expenditure should be redirected to economic and social development.

In conclusion, Burkina Faso reiterates its dedication to effective multilateralism to address the challenges surrounding arms controls and build a safer world.

Mr. In Den Bosch (Kingdom of the Netherlands): We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union (see A/78/C.1/PV.16). I would also like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

The rapid development of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), continues unabated and affects our world in profound ways. Such technologies not only change our day-to-day lives but redefine conflict as we know it. The Netherlands believes that it is our collective responsibility to bring those new technologies into frameworks of both existing and new disarmament treaties and agreements. Against that background, the Netherlands hosted the Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain, or REAIM, event earlier this year to collectively address the key opportunities, challenges and risks associated with the military applications of AI. We see it as the start of a fundamental and inclusive discussion on the development of norms in the domain, and we are pleased that the Republic of Korea will organize a follow-up meeting in 2024.

Of equal importance is the process of establishing rules and principles for the development and use of

autonomous weapons systems within the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. To further advance the work on a legally binding instrument to regulate those weapons, the Netherlands is committed to the two-tier approach: autonomous weapons systems that cannot be used in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, must be explicitly prohibited, while those that can be used in accordance with international humanitarian law must be regulated. The objective of that approach is to ensure that sufficient human judgement and control is maintained when such systems are developed and used. Within that context, the Netherlands is also co-sponsoring the draft resolution submitted by Austria (A/C.1/78/L.56), which calls for the Secretary-General to seek the views of States on autonomous weapons systems.

While we stress the importance of regulating new technologies, we must continue to strengthen existing agreements on conventional weaponry. Instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) facilitate crucial dialogues on disarmament, especially given the fraught political times and various ongoing armed conflicts throughout the world. For that dialogue to succeed, we must collectively uphold the norm of transparency. Therefore, we urge all States — especially major arms exporters, which bear a special responsibility — to make arms exports publicly available, either through the ATT or the Register for Conventional Arms.

Regrettably, we are witnessing a rise in the use of cluster munitions, which have a lasting humanitarian impact all around the world. The Netherlands therefore welcomes the final report of the recent Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which rightly condemns the use of cluster munitions by any actor, at anytime and anywhere in the world. Nevertheless, we would like to underline that the use of cluster munitions in Ukraine is a result of the illegal war that Russia started against Ukraine, and the Netherlands is particularly concerned about the use of cluster munitions by Russia against civilians and civilian objects.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction is of major humanitarian importance. As the Convention enters its twenty-fifth year, it has built a strong track record of reducing civilian suffering caused by mines. However,

it is imperative that we continue to increase the pace of mine clearance and work towards universalizing the Convention so we can accomplish the goal of a world free from landmines.

Finally, I want to conclude by stressing the importance of structurally including a gender perspective in our work. On the one hand, men and boys represent the vast majority of users of small arms and the majority of direct casualties caused by such arms. On the other hand, women, girls and persons with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities face different impacts of armed violence, and we must document, recognize and work to mitigate those differentiated gendered impacts. For that reason, it is necessary that we ensure the full, equitable and meaningful participation of women and people of diverse sexual orientations, including in leadership positions, so that all relevant experiences and perspectives are included in disarmament diplomacy.

Mrs. Petit (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, France aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/78/PV.16). I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Conventional weapons continue to represent a major security challenge for all regions of the world, whether they are affected by conflict or not. As in many other areas, there is no one-size-fits-all response. Instead, there is a need to take a series of specific, adapted and concrete measures whose primary objective must be to strengthen international peace and security, taking into account the security concerns of each party, and to the benefit of all.

This year, in support of Germany, France is submitting draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.41 on through-life ammunition management. That draft resolution is intended to implement the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, as formulated, in June, by the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management. We call on all States parties to vote in favour of the draft resolution. Poor management of conventional ammunition stocks is a major problem because of the risk of explosion or diversion to illicit markets. The Global Framework therefore proposes recommendations for voluntary political commitments

to enhance the safety and security of conventional ammunition stockpiles and encourages international cooperation and assistance. We also note that the diversion of ammunition to armed groups facilitates the manufacture of improvised explosive devices, a danger to which civilian populations are particularly vulnerable. France will therefore continue to lead the fight against the threat posed by those devices.

We welcome the adoption in 2022 of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, and we call on all States to endorse it.

This year, progress was also made at the ninth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, under the Korean presidency. We are committed to the implementation and universalization of that Treaty, and we would like to emphasize the role that private actors, including the industrial sector, can play in supporting States parties in their implementation of the Treaty.

Combating the illicit trade in and diversion of conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, must be a priority for everyone. France welcomes the efforts of Japan, South Africa and Colombia to submit the new draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.40 this year, which France has co-sponsored. The fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will be an opportunity to pursue and intensify our efforts to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in those weapons.

France condemns Russia's violation of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and its ongoing and serious breaches of international humanitarian law on the territory of Ukraine. France recalls that respect for the cardinal principles of international humanitarian law in situations of armed conflict is essential for protecting civilians, who are the first to be affected by the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of conventional weapons. France is a party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We recall that those weapons pose an unacceptable threat to civilian populations and to future generations. Once again this year, France

is supporting the demining programme in Ukraine financed by the European Union.

Finally, France supports the work of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. In this forum, France, along with other States, is proposing a two-tier approach aimed at renouncing fully autonomous weapons systems, which would make it impossible to comply with international humanitarian law, and at agreeing on a series of principles to guide the development of national measures in support of the development and use of partially autonomous lethal weapons systems. Strengthening the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems could prove decisive in making progress towards those objectives. It is in that spirit that we will support draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.56, submitted this year on Austria's initiative, regarding lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Mr. Sánchez Kiesslich (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The trafficking and diversion of conventional arms and ammunition have dire humanitarian, social and economic consequences. That is especially evident when it comes to small arms and light weapons, which fuel conflicts and armed violence around the world. Unfortunately, the existing legally binding instruments and political commitments to prevent and eradicate trafficking and diversion will continue to be limited without the collaboration of all actors involved in the life cycle of arms and ammunition.

From a State perspective, we emphatically call on the private sector, particularly companies that manufacture and trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition, to act from a vantage point of shared responsibility in order to establish self-regulatory schemes and responsible business practices. It is particularly relevant that the ninth Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty emphasized the role of industry and that the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management was able to agree on the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management. We reiterate that arms and ammunition are indivisible, and we call for strengthening the compatibility and complementarity of various related processes in that regard.

The fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in June 2024, is an opportunity to advance decisive measures. We call for collaboration between all Member States and industry.

Mexico has worked tirelessly to undertake efforts and create synergies to promote humanitarian disarmament. It is imperative to always prioritize the protection of individuals, support for victims and accountability in the development and use of conventional weaponry. It is alarming that cluster munitions and other arms prohibited by international law are being used in current conflicts. We unequivocally condemn their use and recognize that the Convention on Cluster Munitions has proven to be a robust, effective and innovative international instrument aimed at their prohibition and elimination.

Next year, Mexico will preside over the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and will continue working to achieve its universalization, with the aim of enhancing the protection of civilians. With regard to lethal autonomous weapons systems, Mexico calls for the First Committee to be a forum for in-depth consideration of the relationship between emerging technologies and international law, particularly international human rights law and international humanitarian law. That is why my country is proud to be part of a cross-regional core group submitting this year's draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/78/L.56. We cannot allow for technological advances to result in the possible loss of human control over the instruments of war.

Lastly, we reiterate the significance of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. The devastating immediate and long-lasting impacts resulting from the use of explosive weapons on individuals and their communities make it incumbent upon us to continue international efforts to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure from the use of such weapons and their indiscriminate effects.

Mr. Kmentt (Austria): Technological breakthroughs in the field of artificial intelligence are leading to far-reaching changes, including in the military sector. Autonomous weapons systems raise specific concerns

and challenges from a humanitarian, legal, security, technological and ethical perspective.

At last year's session of the First Committee, 70 States from all regions expressed in a joint statement the urgent need to address the risks and challenges related to those weapons systems. While the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), has done important work related to the regulation of autonomous weapons systems, that has yet to be reflected in an outcome document. Austria supports the so-called two-tier approach, according to which certain systems that are legally or morally unacceptable should be prohibited, while other systems should be subject to international regulations. We emphasize that there is an urgency to act on the many profound questions that those weapons systems raise. The window for preventative international action is rapidly closing. Austria therefore welcomes the urgency expressed by the Secretary-General in addressing autonomous weapons systems in A New Agenda for Peace, as well as his joint call with the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross of 5 October.

On behalf of the 28 sponsors to date, I therefore have the pleasure today to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.56, entitled "Lethal autonomous weapons systems". This first-ever draft resolution on autonomous weapons systems was developed by a cross-regional group of sponsors and intends to bring that important issue to the attention of all United Nations Member States. It promotes the further understanding of the challenges related to autonomous weapons systems and underlines the urgency to address them. The draft resolution requests a report by the Secretary-General reflecting the views of States. In addition, industry, academia and civil society are invited to also present their views. That responds to the growing interest and concern related to lethal autonomous weapons systems expressed by the broader public in many countries. The draft resolution is aimed at giving renewed impetus to the ongoing work in the CCW Group of Governmental Experts, and we hope that it will enjoy the broadest possible support of the United Nations membership. The draft resolution is open for co-sponsorship, and we invite all States to sponsor it.

As we speak about rapid technological challenges, at the same time, we must be aware of how every day civilians bear the brunt of conflicts. Such conflicts are

fought with conventional weapons, which are often used in densely populated areas and many of which should forever be consigned to history. Civilians are exposed to both unacceptable risks and harm when the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international humanitarian law are violated.

For Austria, the rule of law and respect for it are the foundation of our collective security. As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Austria is concerned about the risk of the erosion of those key regimes to outlaw inherently indiscriminate weapons that have unacceptable humanitarian consequences for civilians. We call on all States, as well as non-State actors, to refrain from any use of those weapons and abide by those legal norms. We also call on all States that have not yet done so to sign the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. That landmark instrument can contribute significantly to reducing harm to civilians in armed conflict. Austria will host a workshop for the militaries of signatory States on the implementation of the Declaration in Vienna, in January 2024.

High-contracting parties to the CCW should also step up joint efforts to review compliance with the Convention and its Protocols and ensure that related humanitarian concerns are addressed, such as regarding the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Incendiary Weapons (Protocol III).

Countering the trafficking and diversion of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition contributes significantly to curbing civilian harm. As a party to all export control regimes, Austria continues to apply the highest multilateral, regional and national standards. We are staunch supporters of the Arms Trade Treaty and support all efforts to enhance its universalization and implementation. The Firearms Protocol and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects are further important components to regulate conventional arms transfers. Austria welcomes the conclusion of the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, the aim of which is to counter the diversion of conventional ammunition and thereby reduce harm.

An unabridged version of this statement will be available online.

Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/78/PV.16).

Mr. Göbel (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/78/PV.16).

Germany remains deeply concerned about the serious threats to international peace and security posed by the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world. Tackling the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons needs to remain a core priority of the international community. Given the transnational nature of the threat and the challenges posed by small arms and light weapons proliferation, Germany welcomes and supports regional approaches to complement national efforts to contain the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, such as the road map for a sustainable solution to arms control in the Western Balkans by 2024 and the Road Map for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030, politically, financially and with expertise. Germany supported their establishment, continues to support their comprehensive implementation and encourages their replication.

As Chair of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Conventional Ammunition, together with numerous dedicated delegations from all regions, Germany worked towards ensuring that the new Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management will be a milestone for the benefit of people in all regions by firmly addressing gaps in through-life ammunition management, including by enhancing international cooperation and assistance in the area. The cooperative Global Framework will finally close the gap of a dedicated regulatory instrument on conventional ammunition at the international level. We thank delegations for their flexibility, constructive and dedicated engagement and true spirit of compromise that has enabled us to adopt the final report (see A/78/111), with a draft Global Framework, without a vote. We now ask for members' broad support for the draft resolution (A/C.1/78/L.41) on through-life conventional ammunition management, submitted by France and Germany, whose sole aim is to ensure the

adoption of the Global Framework as recommended by the OEWG and to operationalize it. I am encouraged by the absence of comments following the presentation by the Chair of the OEWG this morning, as I take it as another expression of broad support for the Global Framework and the respective draft resolution.

Mines and other explosive remnants of war continue to pose a serious threat to civilians. Germany assumed the presidency of the twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction for the year 2022-2023. We strongly emphasize the need to reflect urgent issues in the next action plan of the Convention to ensure its continuing relevance, address the ongoing challenges of contamination with landmines of an improvised nature, integrate environmental considerations and gender perspectives and enhance more effective cooperation between mine-affected and supporting States parties. In its twenty-fifth year of existence, Germany would like to invite all delegations not only to support the annual resolution on the Ottawa Convention, but also to co-sponsor the draft resolution (A/C.1/78/L.39) this year. Germany welcomes the adoption of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. We remain committed to actively engaging in the follow-up process. We hope to see many more supporters during the first meeting of States to review the implementation of the Political Declaration in Oslo next year.

Germany welcomes the successful outcome of the ninth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, under the Republic of Korea's presidency. As the Treaty enters its second decade of existence, the ninth Conference of States Parties has laid important foundations for restructuring the ATT's programme of work and working methods. Germany is committed to further supporting that important process for the development of the Treaty.

Turning to the field of emerging technologies, Germany greatly appreciated the high quality of the discussions held by the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in the last cycle, under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We see the need to further intensify our efforts in order to achieve tangible results and hope that this year's draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.56, on lethal autonomous

weapons systems, which Germany has supported from the very beginning, will succeed in revitalizing the GGE process.

In conclusion, Germany calls for equal, full, meaningful and effective participation on a gender-inclusive basis in all policy-planning, decision-making and implementation processes to help achieve effective and sustainable outcomes.

Ms. Udom (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union (see A/C.1/78/PV.16) and adds the following remarks in its national capacity.

Sadly, we meet today against the backdrop of global conflict. We reiterate that any use of military force must comply with international humanitarian law, and we stress, in particular, the obligation to comply with the international humanitarian law principles of distinction and proportionality. We urge all actors to ensure their weapons, means and methods of warfare are international humanitarian law compliant.

The use and misuse of conventional weapons fuel and facilitate armed conflict. Ireland is gravely concerned about continued attacks on civilians and civilian objects. We strongly condemn those attacks and stress that civilians and civilian objects are not legitimate military objects and must be protected. We note with deep concern the widespread use of explosive weapons, which pose unacceptable and long-lasting threats to civilians and civilian infrastructure. We are proud that, last November in Dublin, 83 States adopted the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. We look forward to next year's Oslo conference and call on all States that have not yet done so to endorse the Declaration.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is a key international humanitarian instrument. We are encouraged by growing consensus within the CCW Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems on a two-tier system of prohibition and regulation. We emphasize that human beings must make and remain accountable for decisions on lethal force and must exert full control over lethal weapons systems. Affording machines the right to make decisions on human lives is inconsistent with international law, in particular international humanitarian law, as well as with

norms, values and ethics. Ireland welcomes the various complementary State-led initiatives on autonomous weapons. We thank Austria for its leadership on a new draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/78/L.56, on that issue, which Ireland is pleased to support.

Ireland attaches high priority to the full and effective implementation of Amended Protocol II. And we view the issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines as one of humanitarian urgency. Expert discussions on that subject and Protocol III would benefit all States. Urgent efforts are also required to universalize Protocol V.

Ireland reiterates its support for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We welcome the adoption, at the ninth Conference of State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, of some of the recommendations in our joint working paper on the ATT and responsible business conduct, in particular by welcoming the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and calling on the relevant chairs and presidents of the Conference of States parties to facilitate further discussion on the subject.

Ineffective conventional ammunition management also fuels insecurity and armed violence. Ireland therefore welcomes the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management and outcome document (see A/78/111), resulting from the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management, and attaches great importance to a meaningful and substantive follow-up process.

Ireland is deeply concerned that, 15 years on from the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), those inherently indiscriminate weapons continue to be used. It is unacceptable that, even as we gather here today, those weapons are creating new victims. Ireland condemns any and all use of those weapons by any actor. Furthermore, we strongly oppose the development, production, stockpiling or transfer of cluster munitions, and call upon those who continue to do so to cease immediately.

Amid the ongoing devastation caused by those weapons, we welcome Nigeria and South Sudan's ratification of the CCM. Their voices strengthen the

unambiguous message that the use of cluster munitions, or facilitation of such use, must never be normalized.

Anti-personnel landmines continue to inflict devastating humanitarian harm and undermine longer-term stability and development. We condemn their use in all instances and by all actors, and we call on all actors to refrain from using those indiscriminate weapons. We reiterate the essential contribution of humanitarian demining programmes, which Ireland proudly supports. We call upon all States parties to uphold and reinforce the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and reiterate the necessity of universalization in order to eliminate those atrocious weapons.

Ireland emphasizes the importance of gender equality and consideration for the gendered impacts of conventional weapons. Conventional weapons have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, and gender-responsive arms control approaches, in which women participate at all levels of decision-making, have proven more successful and sustainable. Ireland also emphasizes civil society's critical role in increasing accountability and transparency in conventional arms control, providing due recognition to international humanitarian law and contributing to the First Committee. It is vital that civil society expertise inform all levels of decision-making.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): During the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the seventh and eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, States agreed on progressive, constructive and relatively inclusive language to address the relationship between gender and small arms and light weapons and the intersections with other agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the women and peace and security agenda, the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament and the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. As a result of those efforts, for Costa Rica, it is clear that the ultimate goal of arms control instruments, including a significant reduction in armed violence, will not be achieved without the full and equal contribution of women and men and a better understanding of the gender dimensions of violence and insecurity.

We also recognized that when we adopted the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, as all phases of through-life ammunition management have gender dimensions. However, for Costa Rica, it is clear that we must continue to work to break down silos, improve synergies and complementarity among all those instruments and acknowledge that firearms-related violence is inherently gendered. In the same vein, we must not falter in our ambition or let down our guard against the threats associated with the use of emerging technologies, in particular autonomous weapons, which can perpetuate or, indeed, amplify existing societal biases, including gender biases, which we must counter and mitigate. Costa Rica finds itself on the front line of this debate.

In February, my country hosted a regional meeting on autonomous weapons systems, at which the Belén communiqué was adopted. We carried the spirit of Belén to Trinidad and Tobago in September, where we participated in the process that resulted in adopting the Port of Spain declaration. That declaration links autonomous weapons systems to intersectionality, gender equality, racism, prejudice, proliferation and other concerns of particular relevance to our region.

For Costa Rica, those issues must be included in international debates to strengthen our collective response to autonomous weapons and contribute to dismantling global structures of oppression and inequality. We must also not forget that autonomous weapons systems threaten to violate not only international humanitarian law in times of war, but also international human rights law in times of peace and that national and international criminal law is not ready for weapons of that kind. Costa Rica calls on all States to vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.56, which was prepared by a group of States. We urge all States to heed the joint call of the Secretary-General and the International Committee of the Red Cross to adopt a legally binding instrument in that regard by 2026.

Mr. Vidal (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

As we noted in the general debate (see A/78/PV.5), my country attaches great importance to the role that the States Members of the United Nations play in curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, eliminating the threat of improvised explosive devices

and promoting transparency measures on armaments. There is no doubt that the illicit trafficking of firearms and their parts, components and ammunition constitutes a threat to peace and security at the national, regional and international levels. That is why we must combat the criminal networks and transnational crime organizations, which encourage the trafficking of those weapons and profit from it. We would like the prevention, combat and eradication of the illicit trafficking of those weapons to be regulated. We support the continuation of multilateral work within the frameworks of various protocols, laws and conventions in force aimed at eradicating the illicit manufacture and trafficking of arms and ammunition. In that regard, we highlight the consensus reached during the fourth substantive session of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management in June on a Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management.

In order to achieve peace, we must cut the flow of arms to criminal networks, and a reduction in the volume of arms in the legal market can transform private demand, limiting diversion and illicit trafficking. The continuous flow of illegal weapons to countries in conflict continues to fuel armed violence and perpetuates the violation of civilian rights, with especially harmful effects on minors and women.

We believe that it is important to continue to achieve progress in improving the traceability of arms, components and especially, ammunition. Traceability is part of the entire system of global exchange of goods, and arms and ammunition must not be excluded from registration and tracking mechanisms. Weapons and ammunition producers have an essential role to play in the traceability process.

We condemn any use of cluster munitions by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. We also reiterate that any use of anti-personnel mines is unacceptable. We call on Member States to support draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.20, on the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.39, on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We stress that both cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines cause serious harm and must be avoided.

Chile supports the firm and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. In that regard, specific transfers of weapons that violate the Treaty are unacceptable. We support the universalization of the Treaty. Precisely because of the recognized risks posed by conventional weapons, States must act quickly and cooperate with one another to address the challenges in that area, including those posed by rapid technological advances.

We stress that the automation of machines is a clear threat to the safety and security of civilians. For that reason, we support the functioning and work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. In that regard, we believe that the creation of a legally binding mechanism to regulate that issue in a realistic, efficient and effective manner would be a step in the right direction.

Finally, we commend the authors of the draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.56, entitled "Lethal autonomous weapons systems", and we call on all members to vote in favour of it.

Mr. Moniz Alves (Timor-Leste): Timor-Leste aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

The misuse and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons continues to be a major cause of armed conflicts and violence. The lack of adequate control of firearms has been shown to contribute to the challenges for many developing States. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is highly interlinked with a variety of other areas, such as international security and peace, transnational organized crime and socioeconomic development, among others.

The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has demonstrated its function of improving coordination and cooperation among States at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. For a small and developing State such as Timor-Leste, the Programme of Action has served as an international mechanism that provides means to address the illicit trade of the small arms and light weapons. In that regard, we wish to commend the work of the

Philippines as the Chair of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, held last year, in steering the meeting and ensuring the successful adoption of its outcome document. While we look forward to the upcoming fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, we also welcome the forthcoming establishment of a fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons, particularly for developing countries.

The prevention of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, must be prioritized in order to sustain peace. That can be achieved by incorporating women's perspectives into early warning systems and public education and by prosecuting those who violate women's rights. In that vein, we affirm our commitment to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security through our national action plan on the resolution. That national action plan was developed based on the lessons learned by and experiences of women and men during war and armed conflict starting as far back as 1975.

While we observe that the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons is strongly associated with various socioeconomic problems, it is also pertinent to note that nationally Member States reserve the right to use conventional weapons to defend their national territory and integrity. In that connection, Timor-Leste recognizes that peace and security and sustainable development are closely intertwined with the achievement of peaceful societies. And we believe that there can be no development without peace and there can be no peace without development. Timor-Leste is therefore of the view that the effective implementation of the Programme of Action can contribute significantly to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically Sustainable Development Goal 16.

It is important for the efforts of this Committee and others to be reflected nationally and regionally, and for the illegal transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors and other groups supporting terrorist activities to be prevented. With more development of new technologies, we wish to express our concern about the illegal use of arms and weapons, which is a violation of and crime against national, regional and international peace and security. The need to

control and regulate all transfers of weapons and new technologies is important, as they may pose threats to the humanitarian rights to peace and development.

We wish to convey our appreciation for the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, as it has assisted Timor-Leste in strengthening the capacity of its national institutions to control the transfer of small arms and light weapons, including other conventional arms, and to prevent their illicit trade and diversion. In that connection, we wish to convey our support for draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.22, submitted by the delegation of Nepal, on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and the work of the Centre.

Lastly, my delegation encourages all parties to work together towards the effective implementation of our obligations under the relevant legal instruments and frameworks and highlights the need for a collective effort to combat the illegal transfer of small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Al-Sadar (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Iraq condemns in the strongest terms the crime perpetrated by the Israeli occupation authorities of the bombing of Al-Ahli Baptist hospital in the Gaza Strip, which led to killing and injuring hundreds of innocent people. That constitutes a grave violation of the provisions of international law and international humanitarian law and demonstrates a lack of even the most basic human values. In that regard, we emphasize the full solidarity of the people and Government of Iraq with the people of occupied Palestine. We demand a cessation of hostile attacks on the civilians there, the need for prompt entry of humanitarian aid and a cessation of the systematic forcible displacement.

The delegation of Iraq aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

The catastrophic consequences of the illicit trade of conventional weapons are known to all. Iraq therefore reaffirms the importance of redoubling efforts to establish an integrated system to combat that phenomenon. In that context, Iraq welcomes the success of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management in its work. Iraq also calls for

bridging the technological gap among developing and developed countries and the prompt implementation of the relevant fellowship programme to build the national capacities of developing countries.

My country's delegation calls for the formulation of legally binding provisions to address the challenges related to emerging technologies in the field of lethal autonomous weapon systems. We must take into account the risks of the proliferation of such weapons, as well as the risk of their acquisition by terrorist groups.

The problem of the proliferation of anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war constitutes a major threat to the lives of innocent people. Iraq is at the top of the list of the countries most affected by those weapons. In that regard, the Government of Iraq continues its efforts to address the issue by affording due importance to sustainable solutions to the issues of displaced persons and the reconstruction of destroyed cities liberated from Da'esh terrorist gangs.

Iraq will implement a number of projects in accordance with the national strategy issued by the Supreme National Committee for Mine Action for the period 2023–2028. That strategy has four main objectives, the most important of which are the rehabilitation of land after demining, increased awareness of the risks of munitions and explosive materials and supporting the victims of mines. In that context, Iraq expresses its thanks to all countries and entities that have provided it with help and support in that field.

During its presidency of the eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Iraq achieved great success by facilitating of the work of the Convention in accordance with the Lausanne Action Plan. A number of side events and regional workshops were also organized, including a workshop held in Baghdad and a side event held in New York to promote the universalization of the Convention in the Arab region, as well as a workshop held in Cameroon on promoting the universalization of the Convention in francophone African countries. Those efforts resulted in an increase in the number of States parties to the Convention, which now stands at 124. With the help of the Coordinator on Transparency Measures of Gambia, Iraq managed to adapt the reporting template on transparency, which was adopted at the eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention as a key tool for measuring implementation.

In conclusion, I would like to remind members that Iraq has submitted draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.20, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions", and hopes it will be broadly supported.

The Chair: The representative of Iraq has exceeded the time allocated for his statement.

Ms. Khundee (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

The challenges posed by conventional weapons are complex and critical. Although those weapons are limited in terms of destruction, their proliferation, diversion and misuse are not limited, as they continue to take the lives of men, women and children in different parts of the world. Moreover, they can also fuel conflict, destabilize peace, intensify criminal acts, undermine the rule of law and contribute to human rights abuses and gender-based violence, as well as hinder development. Adding to that already complicated situation are the technological advancements and geopolitical divides leading to militarization and increased military spending in many countries.

Thailand wishes to share its thoughts on the matter as follows.

First, Thailand attaches great importance to the legitimate right to self-defence, as enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time, we must establish and maintain an effective, safe and secure environment for the management of conventional weapons in order to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands, thereby averting unnecessary suffering. In that regard, Thailand has strengthened its support to ensure proper control of weapons with the ultimate aim of fulfilling its mine clearance obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Thailand has relentlessly cleared more than 99 per cent of the remaining mines and returned those now safe lands to its people. Furthermore, Thailand welcomes the new Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, which was adopted in June by the Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management.

Secondly, transparency and trust constitute pivotal elements of effective arms control among nations. Thailand considers reporting on military spending and arms transfers under the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures to be an important confidence-building measure. For our part, we are committed to submitting annual reports under that mechanism to demonstrate our transparency.

Thirdly, Thailand underscores the importance of capacity-building, closing technological gaps and international cooperation for effective arms control. We urge Member States with the capacity to do so to provide technical and financial assistance to those in need in order to ensure that international instruments can be effectively implemented at the global level without placing an excessive burden on developing countries.

Fourthly, we would like to reiterate the nexus between peace and sustainable development. The existence of weapons such as landmines and the uncontrolled spread of firearms, which cause violence against women and children, are among the barriers to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 4 on education, Goal 5 on gender equality, Goal 11 on sustainable communities and Goal 16 on peace and justice. Therefore, by working towards their effective implementation under international instruments and frameworks, we are not only saving lives but also promoting sustainable development.

In conclusion, Thailand wishes to reiterate its unwavering support for the work of the First Committee related to conventional weapons. We firmly believe that, by fostering robust and constructive cooperation, we can forge a safer and more peaceful world and thereby allow development to prosper.

Mr. Çetin (Türkiye): In the realm of conventional weapons, responsible and transparent arms trade is paramount for promoting international and regional peace, security and stability. Uncontrolled flows of conventional weapons continue to fuel armed conflicts, terrorism and organized crime while undermining stability and development efforts in many parts of the world. Considering the enormous humanitarian toll they cause, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) deserves no less attention than the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction.

Türkiye is particularly concerned with the linkage between the illicit trade in SALW and terrorism and

organized crime. Terrorist groups engage in illicit trafficking and diversion of small arms and light weapons and have access to the latest technology, as well as acquired weapons from poorly secured stockpiles and transfers from the illicit market or States themselves. We wish to take this opportunity to reiterate our call to States to refrain from selling or granting weapons and their means of delivery to any terrorist organization. The proliferation in terrorist groups' access to technological advancements, including arms, constitutes a threat to global security and should be taken into consideration in our future work. Türkiye is committed to the effective implementation and strengthening of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. We will continue to spare no effort to counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and to contribute to international cooperation in this field. My country, which has been targeted by the Kurdistan Workers' Party/People's Protection Units terrorist organization, including with drones and paramotors, is ready to take active part in any initiative to address this challenge in this platform.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), to which my country is a signatory, is a significant achievement and fills a vital gap concerning transparency and the code of conduct for the global conventional arms trade, as it defines the highest common international standards governing conventional arms exports. Information-sharing and transparency in armaments is a crucial confidence-building measure and one of the best ways to prevent diversion. Türkiye has been submitting reports about its transfers of major conventional arms and SALW annually to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We encourage all States, particularly ATT States parties, to make their annual reports publicly available.

Obviously, we cannot separate the risk of proliferation of conventional weapons from the safety and security of their ammunition. Türkiye welcomes the work and the final report of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management (see A/78/111). As part of its commitments under export control regimes, Türkiye diligently implements a robust export control mechanism, including through the Wassenaar Arrangement.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction continues to play a key role in ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. Türkiye takes its commitments under the Convention seriously and calls for its universalization. In addition, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is an indispensable part of international law on conventional weapons with indiscriminate effects. Türkiye fully implements the Convention and its annexed Protocols, to which it is a party, and encourages adherence to this fundamental international regime.

Furthermore, issues such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and lethal autonomous weapons systems continue to be important. Türkiye is concerned about the increasing impact of IED attacks worldwide, in particular through the perpetration of terrorist acts. We believe that the United Nations has an important role to play in dealing with the IED threats. On lethal autonomous weapons systems, we believe that the development and use of autonomous weapons systems that do not have meaningful human control are undesirable and conflict with international humanitarian law. Ensuring human involvement is crucial for accountability, especially in decision-making and execution processes. Lastly, we also believe that the framework of the CCW, given its extensive technical, military and diplomatic expertise, is the right forum to address matters related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Ms. Mai (Viet Nam): My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

Given the increasing geopolitical tension in today's world, the urgency of achieving goals on disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destructions cannot be overemphasized. But we must not lose sight of the daily sufferings of civilians in conflicts and conflict-affected situations, for a great part stem from the illicit proliferation and misuse of conventional weapons.

In many parts of the world, the use of conventional weapons by terrorists and transnational organized criminal groups can cause untold suffering and damage

to vast populations. Not only that, the proliferation and use of conventional weapons for criminal purposes fuels, intensifies and prolongs intra-State and inter-State conflicts, further generating poverty and instability and hindering prospects for sustainable peace and development in post-conflict societies. Thus, it is not only the direct and immediate effects of this situation, but also its negative humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts that we must address, through effective control and regulation of conventional weapons, in order to maintain stability, order and peace.

In that regard, we are of the view that States play the primary, leading role in addressing those issues. The right of each State to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and relevant parts, components and ammunition for their self-defence and security needs should be fully respected. But international cooperation is indispensable to tackle this problem. Therefore, Viet Nam has consistently supported the work of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We have also duly submitted our national report to the Register in a timely manner, as called for in resolution 77/69. We look forward to the fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action in 2024.

We welcome the conclusion of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management and take note of the adoption of a new Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management that will address existing gaps in through-life ammunition regulation. We emphasize that the Framework is not legally binding and voluntary in nature and needs to be implemented with great care and balance, taking into account the capacity and particularly the defence and security needs of Member States, without overburdening developing countries.

We stress the importance of mine action and the need to enhance international efforts in this field, particularly in situations of armed conflict. Insecurity exacerbated by landmines and explosive remnants of war threatens the peace, security and stability of Member States and impedes sustainable economic

development. Member States, in particular those that have the capacity to do so, as well as the United Nations system and other relevant organizations and institutions involved in mine action, should enhance, upon request and as appropriate, support for mine-affected Member States, including through the sharing of best practices and the provision of technological and financial assistance to affected countries. For our part, as a war-affected nation, we are committed to making every effort to address issues related to explosive remnants of war to ensure safe livelihoods and development for the people, including in the implementation of our national mine action plan for the period 2010–2025. In that journey, we are particularly grateful to all partners for their valuable contributions and assistance to mine action in Viet Nam, including demining efforts and supporting affected victims.

In conclusion, Viet Nam stands ready to cooperate and contribute constructively to international efforts to deal with the issue of conventional weapons, working towards peace, stability and development across regions.

Mr. Moriko (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/78/PV.17) and wishes to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

In addressing the issue of security threats, the ravages caused by conventional weapons are an unbelievable reality, but one that has become, paradoxically, commonplace, given their reach and prevalence. They are among the factors that are known to consistently prolong conflict, exacerbate violence, fuel terrorism and facilitate transnational organized crime. Those weapons have disastrous humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts. Their unregulated trade, illicit circulation, excessive accumulation and uncontrolled circulation across the various regions of the globe constitute one of the biggest challenges to peace, stability and sustainable development. We must therefore do everything in our power to stop it and to achieve disarmament and conventional arms control. It is urgent to prevent and eliminate the illicit trade in those weapons, including small arms and light weapons, and to prevent their diversion towards illicit markets or unauthorized recipients. One of the keys to achieving that will be strengthening the tools that ensure better regulation and control of their transfer,

namely, the Arms Trade Treaty and the Register of Conventional Arms.

We also need to ensure the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to stem their dissemination. To that end, my delegation welcomes the improvement of the modalities and procedures of international cooperation and assistance, in particular at the regional and subregional levels, notably through the support of organizations such as INTERPOL and the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament to cross-border cooperation efforts.

The fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons, which Côte d'Ivoire fully supports, can also make a decisive contribution. We welcome the progress made in its implementation.

With regard to conventional ammunition, we welcome the successful completion of the mandate of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management and the adoption by consensus of a political commitment aimed at improving its management. The implementation of those measures will certainly determine whether we are able to meet the shared challenges of ensuring the security of ammunition, but also the growing trend of their use in the design of improvised explosive devices for terrorist purposes.

The success of conventional disarmament tools depends to a large extent on our efforts to prohibit and limit particular types of weapons that cause inhuman suffering. There is no alternative to facilitating the effectiveness and efficiency of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its annexes, in particular Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices as Amended on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II as amended on 3 May 1996) and the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (Protocol V). The same actions are needed to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel

Mines and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

In view of its rejection of the very existence of those weapons and their use, Côte d'Ivoire is a party to all the aforementioned legal instruments and calls on those States that have not yet done so, in particular the main producers and possessors, to do so. We must also urgently mobilize to prevent the development and possible use of weapons systems capable of using lethal force without any human intervention and respond promptly to the humanitarian, legal, security-related, technological and ethical challenges posed by those lethal autonomous weapons systems.

The contribution of women and youth to peace and security is crucial and must be encouraged. Convinced of that, my country is particularly focused on promoting their participation in that area. Accordingly, since 2019, the Ivorian Government has been implementing its second five-year action plan for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda to strengthen the role and position of women in the national peace and security architecture. With regard to youth, this year, 2023, has been declared the Year of Youth in Côte d'Ivoire. In that framework, in addition to policies targeting education and employment for young people, specific actions to facilitate their participation in the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda are being carried out.

In conclusion, my delegation calls for renewed attention to the regulation and control of conventional weapons that will lay sustainable groundwork for regional and global peace, security and stability.

Mr. Rodríguez Acosta (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Armed violence is a scourge that continues to claim the lives of innocent victims. As stated in the New Agenda for Peace, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition are the primary cause of violent deaths worldwide in conflict and non-conflict settings, and their misuse undermines, among other issues, efforts to build peace and security. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, as well as other instruments to which we are a State party such as the Arms Trade Treaty.

The upcoming United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the

Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will be an opportunity for Member States to work together constructively to define elements that will strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action based on the recommendations of the eighth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms held in 2022. In that connection, my country welcomes the successful fulfilment of the mandate entrusted to the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management, which, in June, was able to establish the first Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, which we hope to endorse by consensus in the First Committee. El Salvador worked actively in that process and is pleased to see the priorities and interests of countries of our region reflected therein.

Mines, cluster munitions and other explosive devices used in densely populated areas continue to cause death, injury and suffering, despite the many international instruments we have to prevent their trafficking, eradicate their use and, in certain cases, advocate their control and strict prohibition.

With regard to autonomous weapons systems, El Salvador will support, with a vote in favour, draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.56, which was submitted to the First Committee by a transregional group of countries with a view to promoting efforts to counter the threat posed by that type of weapon. It is imperative to stress that, for El Salvador, the use of the term "lethal" limits the scope for addressing those systems, since an autonomous weapon does not necessarily have to be lethal to cause serious harm to civilians, representing serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We call on all members to consider that point and to work on a more progressive approach to regulations and prohibitions regarding autonomous weapons systems, with the objective of preserving human life and integrity as a whole. El Salvador is open to discussing aspects related to the use of new technologies in the area of autonomous weapons in other spaces or forums to create greater awareness, in order to strengthen multilateralism and avoid duplication of efforts. However, we believe that the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is the appropriate specialized

forum to continue with the discussions towards a legally binding instrument.

In addition, it is urgent that Member States consider the challenges of emerging technologies with regard security issues, such as 3D printing for the manufacture of weapons, the use of robotics for the development of robots with autonomous capabilities in the military field, and some uses and applications of artificial intelligence, which, owing to their dual nature, can replicate biases in command functions in armed conflict, thereby representing an increased risk for civilians. Consequently, such technologies should be addressed in a cross-cutting manner in the discussions of the First Committee. We also consider it crucial to mainstream the gender perspective when collecting data to make it possible to formulate public policy that translates our approach to security issues, taking an effective approach to the differentiated effects that the use of conventional weapons and their ammunition have on women, men, boys and girls.

Finally, I take this opportunity to highlight the crucial role of the multiple stakeholders in our work. Their input and contributions are highly valued.

Mr. Shatil (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

Allow me to share our national position.

We join others in expressing our grave concern about the increasing loss of innocent lives due to the unauthorized use of various conventional weapons worldwide. The use of small arms in conflict situations results in a staggering toll of more than 200,000 civilian deaths annually.

Bangladesh is profoundly concerned about the multifaceted security, humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences arising from the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW). We emphasize the pressing need for all countries to restrict the distribution of SALW exclusively to Governments or entities duly authorized by them.

Bangladesh remains committed to fulfilling its obligations under various international instruments, including the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its Protocols, to which

we are party. We call upon all States to fulfil their international legal obligations to curb the illicit trade and indiscriminate use of conventional weapons. We welcome and support the consensus outcomes achieved at the eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We also welcome the decision to establish a standing dedicated fellowship training programme on SALWs to strengthen technical knowledge and expertise for the implementation of the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument, particularly in developing countries. We look forward to the convening of the fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action in 2024. Further, we appreciate the adoption of the final report of the Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework That Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management (see A/78/111) in June.

Bangladesh remains concerned about casualties suffered among our peacekeepers owing to the indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices by non-State actors in certain United Nations peacekeeping missions. We deeply condemn such attacks, which are tantamount to the commission of the gravest crimes under international law. We call upon the international community to spare no effort in identifying the perpetrators of those attacks, so that they can be brought to justice without any delay. We stress the critical need for further attention to be given to United Nations peacekeeping intelligence and for adequate resources and equipment to be provided to address challenges posed by improvised explosive devices.

As a signatory of the Arms Trade Treaty, we reiterate that States have the sovereign right to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their components for security requirements and self-defence. We also emphasize that no unilateral coercive measures are to be imposed on the transfer of such arms. We are committed to the Treaty's objective of preventing the illicit trade in conventional arms.

Bangladesh supports international initiatives against the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions and conventional weapons. We are deeply concerned about the humanitarian consequences of the continued use of anti-personnel mines, including by our neighbour Myanmar. Such use

of landmines is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. We urge Myanmar to immediately stop its use of landmines and join the Treaty. As a State party of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Bangladesh calls for the full implementation of the Oslo Action Plan with firm determination in order to achieve a mine-free world by 2025. Bangladesh remains concerned about lethal autonomous weapons systems and calls for a comprehensive assessment of their compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Bangladesh's commitment to working constructively with the international community to foster greater collaboration and open dialogue on conventional weapons, with a view to achieving a safer and better future for all.

Mr. Diack (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/78/PV.17).

My delegation is pleased to participate in this thematic debate on conventional arms at a time when there are hotbeds of tension throughout the world that recall the imperative of increasing the control of these weapons. Today more than ever, weapons continue to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. The situation is even more alarming in the Sahel-Saharan region, which is facing an increasingly complex security environment. Indeed, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in that region remains fertile ground for the continuation of sociopolitical and intercommunal conflicts and the persistent threat of terrorism and transnational organized crime. My delegation therefore recalls the urgency of supporting the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT); the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument; the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition; and the various relevant regional and subregional instruments.

For my delegation, confidence-building measures, including transparency in the military domain, are

vital for arms control and disarmament and thus for maintaining international peace and security and strengthening international cooperation. In that regard, my country welcomes the consensus-based adoption of a Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management that will address existing gaps for the safe, secure and sustainable management of such ammunition at the regional, national and international levels. In a context of resurging high-intensity conflicts and with multilateralism running out of steam, the adoption of the Framework is a glimmer of hope and a victory over the inaction of disarmament bodies in the past few years.

In pursuit of those efforts, my delegation supports the revival of the Register of Conventional Arms. In that regard, my delegation would like to make two proposals to address the numerous weaknesses that hinder the Register's relevance and credibility.

First, alongside the seven traditional categories, there is a need to work towards creating an eighth category of the Register for small arms and light weapons. There are three arguments in favour of this proposal. First among them is the need to take into account all types of conventional weapons in the Register. As the only universal mechanism for strengthening transparency and confidence in the area of conventional weapons, the Register should be a registry of all conventional weapons and not of certain categories of conventional weapons. It is therefore logical to include small arms and light weapons, which are generally classed as weapons of mass destruction in certain parts of the world owing to their widespread distribution, thus making them the main threat to security in many countries, including in the Sahel. Moreover, many States are already used to reporting their international transfers of small arms and light weapons to other instruments, including the ATT. Therefore, moving from the 7+1 formula to this new configuration should be a simple administrative task, particularly if countries are given the opportunity to use the information they have already provided to the ATT. Lastly, this inclusion could encourage States to submit their reports, thus increasing the rate of participation in the Register, which has been falling steadily for the past few years.

Secondly, we must work to ensure that the Register takes account of the weapons acquired through domestic arms production. Currently, the Register focuses more on international transfers of weapons, asking States to provide only general supplementary information about

their domestic arms supplies. This situation renders the Register discriminatory against those countries that depend on arms imports. The level of transparency required of those States with regard to their acquisitions is much higher than for those States that produce arms domestically. This shortcoming must be addressed to allow the Register to cover the two ways of acquiring weapons on an equal footing.

Ms. Nam (New Zealand), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that addressing these two measures requires us, above all, to allocate the requisite resources to the Register's secretariat. My delegation would like to draw the international community's attention to the worrisome state of the Register — a question that the 2022 Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms considered at length. We should also work collectively to implement the Group's recommendations. Only then will the Register be able to carry out its primary function, which is to identify and prevent the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons.

Mr. Eustathiou de los Santos (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Latin America and the Caribbean are the victims of violence that the use of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, inflict on civilian populations, above all women and children. In recent years, there has been an increase in crime, including homicides and femicides, linked to the illegal possession of those types of weapons. Although men are more likely to be the perpetrators and victims of armed violence, many more women than men are intimidated, injured or killed by firearms in cases of domestic violence, which represents an additional threat to their lives.

The illicit trafficking, destabilizing storage and incorrect use of small arms and light weapons erode peace and security at the international level. Consequently, a strengthening of national regulations, administrative procedures — including the management of ammunition — and border and customs controls should be reinforced now more than ever.

Let us not forget that developing countries need to receive technical and financial assistance in this fight, which is why we promote the strengthening of dialogue, cooperation in all its forms, technology transfers, capacity-building and, of course, coordination at the

bilateral, subregional and regional levels. At the regional and subregional levels, Uruguay has been a party to the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions since 2001 and is also an active member of the Working Group on Firearms and Ammunition of the South American Common Market and associated States.

Uruguay believes that the consequences of the illicit trade, diversion, excessive accumulation and uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons ammunition exacerbate and sustain armed violence, leading to a wide range of negative humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences, undermining the rule of law and jeopardizing peace. As mentioned earlier, through-life ammunition management is a vitally important issue in preventing the trafficking and diversion of ammunition from conflict zones. In that regard, Uruguay reaffirms its support for the work of the Open-ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management, in accordance with which we hope to adopt by consensus the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management in draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.41, submitted for consideration by this Committee.

Ms. Quintero Correa (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, excessive accumulation and diversion to unauthorized recipients continue to be of concern and a threat to peace, security, sustainable development and global stability, owing to its contribution to the intensity and prolongation of conflicts, its humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences and its link to violence — including gender-based violence — organized crime and other crimes. No country is unaware of or immune to this phenomenon, which takes its toll of pain, destruction and death on a daily basis. Therefore, we stress the importance of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, along with other relevant instruments at the global, regional, subregional and bilateral levels. We must make every effort to do all we can to mitigate this global tragedy.

There are many long-standing and new challenges. Rapid technological developments and the adaptability of criminal organizations require States to act swiftly,

both to ensure the implementation and effectiveness of existing voluntary and binding instruments and to expand and update them. Coordinated action must be strengthened, in particular with regard to border and customs control, stockpile management, marking, record-keeping and tracing. The fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made on the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, to be held next year, provides an opportunity to strengthen its implementation, international assistance and cooperation and to deepen dialogue and action on the persistent and new challenges that are faced. Colombia, as one of the sponsors, along with Japan and South Africa, of draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.40, entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”, thanks Japan for the submission thereof and for its leadership. We call on all States to continue their support for the annual draft resolution and to co-sponsor it.

Colombia has pointed out on multiple occasions that ammunition is a fundamental and inherent aspect of small arms and light weapons, and as such of the problem posed by their illicit trade, diversion and excessive accumulation. For more than 20 years we have insisted on the need to control and regulate transfers of conventional ammunition, particularly those of small arms and light weapons. We therefore welcome the adoption, without a vote, of the Global Framework on Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management. We hope that this set of political commitments, which comprehensively covers all types of conventional ammunition, from the smallest to the largest calibres, will help us to control conventional ammunition and manage it safely and sustainably in order to prevent its illicit trade and diversion, as well as unplanned explosions. We appreciate Germany’s leadership and its chairing of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management. We support draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.41 on that topic, submitted by Germany and France, and invite all to adopt it by consensus, stressing that the ultimate objective of the Global Framework is to save lives.

Colombia is aware of the impact of anti-personnel mines on the lives of people and communities and on sustainable development. The national policy of comprehensive action against anti-personnel mines is aligned with our national development plan “Colombia,

World Power of Life”, is considered a tool of total peace and is centred on people, especially victims and survivors. Colombia currently has seven accredited humanitarian demining organizations, two of them State-run and five of them civilian, including one made up of former combatants. Today Colombia can say that 80 per cent of its national territory is free of mines.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction continues to face challenges. We must continue to unite our efforts to achieve our shared objective of a world free of anti-personnel mines. As one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.39, entitled “Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction”, we encourage all States to continue to support the implementation of the Convention and to sponsor the draft resolution.

The fast-paced development of technology and the broad access to it contrasts with the lag in the necessary regulation thereof, as is the case of artificial intelligence and other sophisticated new and emerging technologies applied to the design and development of new types of weapons. We reiterate that international law exists and that there is a need to regulate how such new technologies are applied by using it as a foundation. No technical or strategic consideration may contravene human rights or international humanitarian law. It is therefore urgent to continue the discussion on autonomous weapons systems. They must be regulated by a binding international instrument.

Ms. Rodríguez Mancia (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Small arms and light weapons and their proliferation and illicit trafficking cause the deaths of hundreds of people around the world each year, fuelling conflict and exacerbating violence. In a world where armed violence has become pervasive, it is critical that we join our voices and efforts to address the issue, which robs innocent people of their lives and tears communities apart. The production of those weapons and their ammunition continues to increase, and their diversion from legal to illegal channels and unauthorized recipients market remains an increasingly complex problem. The diversion of weapons contributes to the empowerment of criminal organizations in areas such as drug activity and to the existence of organized crime itself, thereby threatening the protection of people and hindering the creation of

an environment for the promotion of human, economic and sustainable development.

Guatemala considers it extremely important to move towards stricter measures and to promote them. In that connection, the Arms Trade Treaty is a milestone in the regulation of the international trade in conventional weapons. We welcomed its adoption nine years ago, in the belief that it would have a significant impact on the security of our inhabitants. We reiterate our conviction that the success of that Treaty depends on the good faith of States, including the producer, exporter and importer States, in effectively implementing each and every provision of the Treaty. We insist that the obligations of States parties to that instrument go beyond mere financial contributions.

We are optimistic about the establishment of a fellowship training programme to strengthen technical knowledge and build the capacity of countries, in particular developing countries, in areas relating to small arms and light weapons.

In turn, Guatemala attached particular interest to the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management. It welcomes the adoption of its final report (see A/78/111), pursuant to which the Global Framework on Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management was established — an extremely important step, particularly owing to the need to explicitly incorporate small arms and light weapons ammunition.

In addition, we endorse the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in A New Agenda for Peace, aimed at strengthening, developing and implementing regional, subregional and national instruments and road maps to overcome the challenges related to the diversion, proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. We recall the importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and call on all non-signatory States to sign and ratify it. Furthermore, Guatemala strongly condemns the use of cluster munitions by any actor and under any circumstances, as it constitutes a violation of the principles enshrined in international law and international humanitarian law.

The Chair returned to the chair.

We would also like to express our concern about the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas. As recent events have shown, the consequences of their use are devastating, and their appalling effects are often indiscriminate. We recall the importance of respecting international humanitarian law and States' responsibility to protect their civilian populations. Guatemala condemns the use of any weapon with indiscriminate effects, which constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law. Scientific and commercial advances in artificial intelligence and the use of technology for the development of new weapons must therefore be prohibited by means of a legally binding instrument. So-called killer robots or lethal autonomous weapons pose a grave danger to humankind if not controlled by a human being. The current situation poses major challenges in our search for international peace and security. It is time to act and end the suffering and loss of human life. We reiterate the importance of living up to the commitment to achieving a world in which dialogue leads to building peace to overcome fear and death.

Ms. Seong-mee Yoon (Republic of Korea): As the Secretary-General points out in his New Agenda for Peace, we are now at an inflection point from the post-cold war order to a new global order. In the new order, the conflict in the environment has been growing complex at a rapid pace, with scientific advancements and emerging disruptive technologies, and conventional weapons pose new and multidimensional challenges in their technical evolution and destabilizing accumulation. Our response should evolve to address those challenges.

As the first legally binding instrument regulating the conventional arms trade, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has succeeded in promoting transparency and accountability in the international transfer of conventional arms. During its presidency of the ninth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty from 2022 to 2023, the Republic of Korea focused on three areas for the full and effective implementation of the ATT: reinforcing each State's domestic export control system, promoting greater engagement by all stakeholders and expanding the membership of the ATT. In that regard, the ninth Conference of State Parties to the ATT reached a consensus decision to carry out industry engagement based on the President's working paper. The Conference also emphasized the importance

of universalizing the ATT. The Republic of Korea will continue to work on achieving those goals.

The Republic of Korea recognizes the detrimental effects that the diversion and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons can have for international peace and security. In that regard, the Republic of Korea places great importance on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument (ITI) and reaffirms its commitment to the Programme of Action and the ITI. My delegation also welcomes the fact that the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management adopted its final report (see A/78/111) by consensus in June.

The Republic of Korea places great value not only on preventing the illegal arms trade, but also on minimizing the humanitarian consequences arising from the use of conventional weapons. To that end, the Republic of Korea aligns itself with the objectives and purposes of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and has been actively participating in the international efforts to help those affected by landmines through bilateral and multilateral channels. For example, the Republic of Korea has provided financial contributions to the International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security (ITF) in supporting the removal of landmines. The Republic of Korea was elected as the Chair of the ITF Board of Advisers in April and will remain devoted to alleviating the harm caused by landmines.

The Republic of Korea has been a strong advocate for the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which strikes a balance between States parties' security concerns and humanitarian considerations. In particular, we welcome the steady progress made in the CCW Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. The GGE adopted the 2023 session report (CCW/GGE.1/2023/CRP.2), which reflected the two-tier approach in clarifying the prohibition and regulation of such weapons, based on compliance with international humanitarian law. The Republic of Korea concurs that the GGE should continue its efforts to reach a consensus on normative and operative frameworks on emerging technologies in that area. We therefore look forward to the next

mandate of the GGE at the upcoming Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW in November.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been transforming every aspect of our lives in the world. The military domain is no exception. There is a growing interest in discussing the military use of AI. Against that backdrop, the Republic of Korea will take up the torch carried by the Netherlands, as the host of the second summit on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (REAIM) in 2024. We hope that the second REAIM summit brings a wide group of stakeholders together and facilitates focused discussions on the governance of AI in the military domain. The Republic of Korea looks forward to sharing more detailed information in due course.

The Republic of Korea expresses its deep concern about how military cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is undermining the global non-proliferation regime, threatening the stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region, Europe and around the world. We reiterate our firm position that all arms transfers to and from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and technical cooperation concerning its conventional weapons programmes, all weapons of mass destruction programmes and space-launch vehicles directly violate multiple Security Council resolutions. We urge Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately stop such illicit activities.

Mr. Guerra (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina remains committed to civilian disarmament, the destruction of materials, awareness-raising, the prevention of violence with the use of weapons and the promotion of research and development aimed at criminal policies related to the control and non-proliferation of conventional weapons. In that regard, we reiterate the importance of international mechanisms and instruments in the area — the Arms Trade Treaty, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, its International Tracing Instrument and the Firearms Protocol — and we call for continuing to explore synergies and various means of cooperation among them.

As one of its co-authors, Argentina attributes a central role to the Arms Trade Treaty and continues to work towards its universalization. The Treaty is a core instrument, which identifies three central dimensions of

the arms trade: production, responsible trade and human rights. In that regard, its effective implementation and universalization are vitally important steps towards creating a transparent and responsible trade system in order to prevent the proliferation of conventional weapons and their use against civilians by establishing common criteria, parameters and standards for all States in the authorization of a transfer. Accordingly, we encourage strengthening information-sharing forums on diversion, which we advocated during our presidency of the sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, in 2020. We also underscore the participation this year of our National Agency for Controlled Materials. Argentina's commitment to the Treaty also entails policies and measures for the prevention of gender-based violence. In that context, we underscore our proposal to prepare a guide to good practices in arms control for the prevention of gender-based violence in order to promote tools to effectively assess risks related to conventional arms transfers.

We highlight Argentina's long-standing support for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the importance of continuing to strengthen the gender perspective and recent developments in small arms and light weapons, manufacturing, technology and design, in particular polymeric and modular weapons and firearms produced by 3D printing.

Moreover, we welcome the adoption by consensus of the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, within the context of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management, and thank its Chair, Albrecht Von Wittke of Germany, for transparency in the conduct of its work. We would like to highlight, in that Global Framework, measures that are important to our delegation, such as the inclusion of a preventive approach to gender-based violence in diversion risk assessments prior to conventional ammunition transfers and of destruction as the preferred method of disposing of obsolete ammunition, which is a policy promoted domestically by our national authority, on the understanding that the disposal of obsolete ammunition helps to prevent its circulation in illegal markets.

Argentina reaffirms its commitment and acknowledges the emerging challenges of technologies

in the area of autonomous systems. In that regard, we would like to recall that Argentina, together with other countries, has submitted a proposal for a legally binding instrument in the form of an additional protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, aimed at establishing prohibitions and regulations for emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons.

The Convention and its Protocols are key tools in the context of disarmament, arms regulation and international humanitarian law. Our country hopes that the universalization of legal instruments will be achieved, taking into account the need to respect the humanitarian principles and objectives outlined, while eschewing any reservations that may be contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention and its Protocols.

The Chair: Before proceeding further, I would like to address several organizational matters related to the Committee's work. As announced at the start of this meeting, we still have a long list of speakers for the remaining clusters in the thematic discussions. The high number of statements in the exercise of the right of reply this year also means that fewer statements are heard per meeting in the Committee.

Given the limited time remaining to exhaust the list of speakers for the thematic discussion segment, first, I would like to propose that the First Committee convene an additional plenary meeting tomorrow, Tuesday, 24 October at 10 a.m. This meeting will take place in Conference Room 2 and will be announced in *The Journal of the United Nations*.

Secondly, in order to further facilitate time management, I will also ask our upcoming panellists to reduce the duration of their statements to five minutes. Based on the progress made by Wednesday this week, I will consider the possibility of the Committee convening a second additional plenary meeting on Thursday morning, if needed.

Finally, in the light of the emerging schedule of meetings all day for most of this week, it is proposed that the Committee hear requests for statements in the exercise of the right of reply at the end of each day, as opposed to at the end of each thematic cluster.

We believe that these measures will allow the Committee to exhaust the list of speakers for the thematic discussions in a timely manner and keep to its schedule of beginning the action phase on Friday, 27 October.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly, namely, to convene an additional meeting on Tuesday, 24 October; to make arrangements for additional meetings on Thursday, 26 October, based on the progress made in exhausting the list of speakers for the thematic discussions this week; to reduce the time limit to five minutes for briefers and panellists this week and, finally, to hear statements in the exercise of the right of reply at the end of the day this week?

It was so decided.

The Chair: We still have five minutes left. We can hear one more statement.

Mr. Ogasawara (Japan): Today the international community is in an even more precarious situation with disproportionate civilian casualties, caused by the use of conventional weapons, requiring immediate action. To that end, it is necessary for all States to recall the spirit of the international frameworks of conventional weapons and to ensure their robust implementation. In that regard, Japan welcomes the human-centred approach to disarmament, which is outlined in Action 7 of the Secretary-General's A New Agenda for Peace.

The need for universalization and effective implementation of relevant frameworks is more imminent than ever before. In that respect, Japan warmly welcomes Andorra to the Arms Trade Treaty, and Nigeria and South Sudan to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). Taking this opportunity, Japan would like to encourage all States Members of the United Nations to join, if they have not yet done so, and to implement the instruments on conventional arms control and disarmament.

Japan firmly believes that we should renew our commitment to preventing the illicit trade in and diversion of small arms and light weapons. Those weapons have a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts and remain a source of regional insecurity. Japan, together with Colombia and South Africa, has submitted draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.40, entitled "The Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects". The resolution has been adopted by consensus since 2001, and Japan sincerely hopes it will be adopted this year, with broad support from the international community.

Japan also welcomes the successful conclusion of the Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate a Set of Political Commitments as a New Global Framework

that Will Address Existing Gaps in Through-life Ammunition Management and its final report (see A/78/111) outlining a new Global Framework for Through-Life Conventional Ammunition Management.

The year 2025 is an important milestone for all of us in achieving a mine-free world. Japan has decided to seek the presidency of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 2025.

In the 2022 fiscal year, Japan's contribution to the clearance of mines, cluster munitions and unexploded ordnance surpassed \$52 million across 22 countries. Japan has been a staunch supporter of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the CCM since its acceptance of those Conventions and remains committed to playing an active role, making use of its expertise and experiences.

In the current challenging security environment, Japan recognizes the increasing value of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) as a multilateral regulatory framework for conventional weapons and of international humanitarian law. Japan welcomes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems this year (CCW/GGE.1/2023/CRP.2) and the Group's substantial progress. It is meaningful that we reached consensus on the fact that lethal autonomous weapons systems must not be used if they are incapable of being used in compliance with international humanitarian law. While that may involve some sensitivities, it is important to build on common recognition among stakeholders, under the CCW framework.

As a relevant initiative, Japan welcomes the new draft resolution A/C.1/78/L.56 on lethal autonomous weapons systems, led by Austria, to give renewed impetus for the ongoing GGE. Japan believes that the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, under the CCW, will continue to be the most appropriate venue for international rulemaking on those systems. Japan will constructively participate in the discussions of the Group to clarify the normative and operational framework on lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Last but not least, there is also an urgent need to advance the discussion on the military use of artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomy. AI and autonomy offer greater opportunities for social and economic

development. However, given the potential risks the technology could pose, we should keep up with the velocity at which they are evolving in order to ensure that the military use of AI is responsible, transparent and based on international law.

In conclusion, the international frameworks of conventional arms remain of primordial importance to enhance human security and realize a safer world for

all. Japan remains committed and stands ready to work with all relevant stakeholders to move things forward.

The Chair: We have exhausted the time available for this meeting. The Committee will reconvene this afternoon in this conference room to continue the thematic discussion under the cluster “Conventional weapons”.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.