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Chair: Mr. Koterec (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda items 88 to 104 (continued)

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

The Chair: We will continue our thematic discussion on conventional weapons today by listening to an introduction by the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, Mr. Roberto García Moritán. I warmly welcome him as our guest here today. Following his statement, we will adopt an informal mode, as is customary, so as to enable delegations wishing to ask questions to do so.

I now give the floor to Mr. García Moritán.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina), Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to express my gratitude to you, Sir, in particular for allowing me to participate in this thematic meeting of the First Committee under your leadership. I should also like to congratulate you on the work achieved by the Committee.

I am participating in this meeting, as you already noted, Sir, in my capacity as the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, which was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/48. I wish to brief the First Committee on the work

undertaken by the Preparatory Committee from 12 to 23 July 2010 with a view to the promotion of an arms trade treaty establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

For those of us who are committed to disarmament and non-proliferation, this year has been a particularly important one. We witnessed the holding of the Nuclear Security Summit. The eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was a success and led to a significant outcome. Agreements were also concluded on the reduction of nuclear arsenals between the United States and the Russian Federation, and unilateral initiatives were taken in this field by a number of other countries.

In the field of conventional weapons, the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was held, and work continued on transparency and confidence-building measures, including the Register of Conventional Arms and the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, among others.

In this context, the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty was held, which, while it won less press coverage, was of crucial relevance in terms of the security of States. As all present will recall, that initiative was launched at the United Nations in 2007

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with the adoption of resolution 61/89, which recognized that the absence of common international standards on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms is a contributory factor to conflict, the displacement of people, organized crime and terrorism, thereby undermining peace, reconciliation, security, stability and development.

During the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, I had the opportunity to address the First Committee to introduce the report of the Group of Governmental Experts established by resolution 61/89. In that context, and pursuant to the recommendations of the Group of Experts, the General Assembly decided, in its resolution 63/240, to continue to build a process aimed at considering the issue gradually, without rushing to conclusions or precipitating results that might hamper a common understanding of the challenges posed by the trade in conventional weapons.

Subsequently, as all present will recall, the General Assembly, in its resolution 64/48, established a road map for addressing the issue in the immediate future. In that context, after endorsing the report of the Open-ended Working Group, and taking the principles of the United Nations Charter and other relevant international obligations as a guide, I stressed the need — underlined by consensus in the Open-ended Working Group — to address, inter alia, the problems related to the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market. Here we took into consideration the fact that the attendant dangers can fuel instability, transnational organized crime and terrorism, and that action should be taken at the international level to deal with the problem.

As a consequence, the General Assembly decided, among other important issues, to convene a United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty to meet for four consecutive weeks in 2012, in order to elaborate a legally binding instrument based on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional weapons. The Conference would be undertaken in an open and transparent manner, on the basis of consensus, to achieve a strong and robust treaty. The General Assembly also decided to consider the Open-ended Working Group's remaining 2010 and 2011 sessions as a Preparatory Committee for the Conference.

That was how we started this multilateral effort, with the purpose of providing the 2012 Conference

with the necessary substantive and procedural elements for the meeting to be held in accordance with the mandate set out in resolution 64/48. In keeping with that mandate, at this first stage the Preparatory Committee has completed the task of making recommendations on the elements necessary for the creation of a legally binding instrument. Once again, there was an open, honest and constructive exchange of views that allowed each State to express its point of view, with the understanding that such an exchange of views was very important for the process.

I should recall that from the very beginning the Chairperson's proposal was that the Preparatory Committee's work should be guided by certain principles: transparency, no prejudging of results, a step-by-step approach, an emphasis that all positions should be considered on an equal footing, and agreement that any text submitted would be the full responsibility of the Chairperson. The content would also be based on what was stated in the room, including all positions and proposals. My intent, throughout the process, was for the work to be of an evolving nature.

In this way, we arrived at a paper that identified the elements to be included; another that set out the principles on which those elements were based; and a third that reflected the objectives of the future treaty. Those three texts were incorporated into a single Chairperson's paper that, in my opinion, serves as a summary of the Committee's work, without precluding future revisions. We thus established the framework on the basis of which we must continue to work in order to build the body of the treaty. Those will be the tasks of the Preparatory Committee at its forthcoming meetings.

As part of the exercise carried out at the July meeting, I designated three facilitators to consider informally the elements identified during the first stage. Delegations thus met in informal consultations to consider the scope of the treaty, coordinated by my good friend Eden Charles, of the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago; then under the coordination of the Permanent Representative of Australia, Gary Quinlan, to consider the issue of parameters and criteria for the export, import and transfer of conventional weapons; and, finally, under the coordination of my especially good friend Hossam Aly, of the Egyptian delegation, to consider the issue of the implementation of the treaty. I should like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to

all three for their valuable work, which made it possible to deal in depth with many of the issues we will have to tackle in detail at the next session, beginning on 20 February 2011.

As has been pointed out on many occasions, the arms race in all its aspects is one of the issues that has the greatest influence on the security perceptions of States. In this regard, the issue of the acquisition of conventional weapons and, in particular, their illicit trade, requires urgent attention. The aim is to establish the arms trade treaty as an internationally legally binding instrument that can strengthen mechanisms for the control and regulation of the trade in conventional weapons by establishing common criteria, parameters and standards for all States in the area of exports. In that respect, I believe that there is a shared view that the treaty must be practicable, with clear parameters and precise definitions; be resistant to the possibility of political misuse with respect to its interpretation; and it should be objective, balanced and non-discriminatory.

I am convinced that the upcoming tasks of the Preparatory Committee will be undertaken on the basis of those elements, a view that I understand is shared by the broad majority of delegations. All of these characteristics can be achieved through multilateral negotiations. I hope that future sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2012 Conference will lead to the universal adoption of components for a strong and robust treaty in terms of both its content and of its objectives and purposes. I should point out that I have enjoyed the support of all of the delegations that participated very constructively in this endeavour, and I wish to express to all of them my particular gratitude in my official capacity as Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee.

The Chair: I thank Ambassador Moritán for his statement.

Before we continue with the cluster that is planned for today, with members' permission, I would like to give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom for an important breaking-news announcement that is not part of the conventional arms cluster, but which I think is of interest to the First Committee.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom): Yesterday, the United Kingdom Government published a new national security strategy, which is a reappraisal of Britain's role in the world and describes how, in an age of

uncertainty, we need the structures in place to allow us to react quickly and effectively to new and evolving threats to our security. As we speak, the United Kingdom Prime Minister is announcing the results of the Strategic Defence and Security Review, which describes the means by which the United Kingdom will address those risks to its security and prosperity.

Today's Strategic Defence and Security Review reaffirms the United Kingdom's commitment to a submarine-launched minimum continuous nuclear deterrent based on the Trident missile delivery system, while taking tangible steps towards the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons. In parallel with the Strategic Defence and Security Review, we conducted a review of our nuclear declaratory policy and scrutinized the Trident replacement system to ensure value for money, including the scope for further reductions in the scale of our nuclear-weapons capability. The outcomes of both reviews are announced in today's Strategic Defence and Security Review. That Review concludes that:

“No State currently has both the intent and the capability to threaten the independence or integrity of the United Kingdom. But we cannot dismiss the possibility that a major nuclear threat to the United Kingdom might re-emerge — a State's intent in relation to the use or threat of its capabilities could change relatively quickly — and while we will continue to work internationally to enhance mutual trust and security, we cannot rule out a major shift in the international security situation that would put us under grave threat.

“Despite the success of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) over the last 40 years in limiting the number of States with nuclear capabilities, large arsenals remain, and the risk of nuclear proliferation continues. We cannot discount the possibility that the number of States armed with nuclear weapons might increase. Equally, there is a risk that some countries might in future seek to sponsor nuclear terrorism. We must not allow such States to threaten our national security or to deter us and the international community from taking the action required to maintain regional and global security.

“It is also important to recognize that the United Kingdom’s nuclear deterrent supports collective security through NATO for the Euro-Atlantic area. Nuclear deterrence plays an important part in NATO’s overall strategy, and the United Kingdom’s nuclear forces make a substantial contribution.

“In May 2010, during the NPT Review Conference, the Foreign Secretary, William Hague, announced a review of our nuclear declaratory policy to ensure that it is appropriate to the political and security context in 2010 and beyond. The United Kingdom has long been clear that we would only consider using our nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances of self-defence, including the defence of our NATO allies, and we remain deliberately ambiguous about precisely when, how and at what scale we would contemplate their use.

“As a responsible nuclear-weapon State and a party to the NPT, the United Kingdom remains committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We will continue to work to control proliferation and to make progress on multilateral disarmament, to build trust and confidence between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States, and to take tangible steps towards a safer and more stable world where countries with nuclear weapons feel able to relinquish them.

“We are now able to give an assurance that the United Kingdom will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. In giving this assurance, we emphasize the need for universal adherence to and compliance with the NPT, and note that this assurance would not apply to any State in material breach of those non-proliferation obligations. We also note that while there is currently no direct threat to the United Kingdom or its vital interests from States developing capabilities in other weapons of mass destruction, for example chemical and biological, we reserve the right to review this assurance if the future threat, development and proliferation of these weapons make it necessary.

“The United Kingdom Government will maintain a continuous submarine-based deterrent

and begin the work of replacing its existing submarines. We will therefore proceed with the renewal of Trident and the submarine replacement programme, incorporating savings of £3.2 billion and the changes set out below. The first investment decision, known as Initial Gate, will be approved, and the next phase of the project commenced, by the end of this year.

“We have reviewed the scope to extend the life of our existing submarines and concluded that, with sufficient investment, we can safely operate them into the late 2020s and early 2030s. This means that we can adjust the build programme of the replacement submarines to match, reducing cost in the short term, with the aim of delivering the first new submarine in 2028.

“The United Kingdom Government has concluded that we can meet the minimum requirement of an effective and credible level of deterrence with a smaller nuclear weapons capability. As a result, we will take the following steps.

“We will reduce the number of warheads onboard each submarine from 48 to 40. That will reduce our requirement for operationally available warheads from fewer than 160 to no more than 120.

“We will also reduce, over the next few years, the number of operational missiles on the Vanguard class submarines to no more than eight and configure the next generation of submarines accordingly with only eight operational missile tubes. These changes will enable us to reduce our overall nuclear weapon stockpile to not more than 180 by the mid-2020s.

“These changes do not alter in any way the nature and credibility of the nuclear deterrent, including our ability to maintain Continuous At Sea Deterrence.”

Overall, the Strategic Defence and Security Review emphasizes that the United Kingdom remains committed to the maintenance of a credible minimum deterrent. By setting out a new security assurance and the reduction in the scale of our deterrent through the value-for-money study, we are demonstrating our resolve to contribute towards multilateral disarmament.

Those are significant disarmament measures and indicate our level of commitment to the NPT, including a successful Review Conference in 2015.

Yesterday's national security strategy also sets out the range of risks faced by the United Kingdom from hostile acts by terrorists or States, including using chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons. Today, the Strategic Defence and Security Review sets out the United Kingdom's approach to addressing those threats to national security, including through the retention of critical capabilities at the national level, and by seeking proactively to strengthen multilateral initiatives to counter proliferation and to secure fissile material and expertise from malicious use.

To implement those requirements, the Strategic Defence and Security Review introduces a number of changes to Government policy. Specifically, we will work to strengthen international commitments to non-proliferation treaties, including the NPT, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. We will continue to support the international bodies that monitor and verify compliance against those commitments, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We will refocus critical programmes for building security capacity overseas, such as the Group of Eight's Global Partnership-led Global Threat Reduction Programme, on the areas that represent the most serious risks to the United Kingdom, prioritizing the security of nuclear, biological and chemical materials and expertise. We will furthermore support international negotiations on an arms trade treaty to ensure that the defence trade is undertaken in a responsible manner and to ensure that the United Kingdom meets its obligations in its own export activity.

The Chair: I shall now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements or introduce draft resolutions on conventional weapons within the cluster we began yesterday. We have a long list of speakers this morning, so I would once again urge delegations to kindly keep their statements short and circulate longer versions in written form if necessary.

Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on the subject of conventional weapons.

The relatively low cost of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, and their portability and ease of use sometimes result in these categories of weapons posing grave threats to international peace and security in all regions of the world. Their indiscriminate use has caused severe pain and suffering, especially among innocent populations, long after conflicts have ended, and the destructive effects of their use are also felt in countries that are not in a state of conflict.

CARICOM supports the establishment of international legal instruments that are geared towards controlling the proliferation and securing the elimination of certain types of conventional weapons that inflict wide-scale injury and cause death. We therefore welcome the entry into force on 1 August of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Convention provides the international community with another vehicle dedicated to eliminating the use of one of the world's most destructive types of conventional weapons.

Our concern over the indiscriminate use of certain types of conventional weapons has led some member States to become parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and their Protocols. CARICOM therefore welcomes the recent decision taken by our sister State Antigua and Barbuda to accede to that Convention and its Protocols I, II and IV, as well to the Cluster Munitions Convention. Other member States are currently examining the Convention on Cluster Munitions with a view to acceding to it at a later stage.

Beyond our support for the efforts of the international community to reduce or eradicate the indiscriminate use of certain types of conventional weapons, for CARICOM member States the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition constitutes a clear and present threat to our long-term social and economic development. This illegal trade, which is cross-border in character, is linked to other aspects of transnational crime, including illegal drug trafficking and money-laundering. It also places an inordinate burden on our sometimes limited resources, as well as on the ability of our judicial and law enforcement authorities to confront this ever-present menace.

The fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition goes beyond a

security threat; it is a fight for the survival of our way of life in the Caribbean, a fight for our very existence. Our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals are complicated by the fact that we have to divert limited financial resources from areas such as health care, education and other social and economic development issues to combat this pernicious trade. The situation is untenable for us Caribbean States, which are neither manufacturers nor major importers of small arms and light weapons.

Our member States continue to expend maximum effort to ensure the full implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action, which for us remains the guiding international mechanism for combating the illegal trade. To that end, we participated actively in the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action and fully endorsed the contents of the report, which was adopted by consensus (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3). In our view, the activities outlined in the segment of the report entitled "The way forward" provide an important road map for future activity leading to the 2012 Review Conference.

The next two years will witness a number of important discussions relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. CARICOM is therefore fully committed to engaging in these discussions and encourages all States to participate in an effective and cooperative manner. This is imperative if we are to realize our goal of reducing the harmful effects associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition.

Another measure that is vital to our efforts to achieve our objective is the full implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. CARICOM reiterates once more that the Instrument's effectiveness is severely impaired due to its non-legally binding nature.

Stockpile management both of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is another important component of the combat against their illicit trade. We have taken note of the efforts being undertaken by the Office for Disarmament Affairs to develop and implement international technical ammunition guidelines. We therefore look forward to their full implementation by the end of the year, as

outlined by the Secretary-General in his report (A/65/153).

At the first session of the Preparatory Committee, held in July, Member States engaged in substantive discussion on the elements and scope of a comprehensive, robust and legally binding arms trade treaty. We commend all States for their constructive engagement in these discussions. CARICOM was encouraged by the expressions of support for the elaboration of the instrument. The challenge for us, however, leading to the 2012 Conference on the treaty, is to ensure that our words are translated into action and that we get the support of all those States that, for some strange reason, have yet to be convinced of the importance of this objective.

We also wish to commend Ambassador García Moritán for his skilful chairmanship of the Preparatory Committee, and we are optimistic that under his stewardship the 2012 Conference will be successful. CARICOM will continue to work intersessionally to formulate its position so that a future arms trade treaty includes within its scope small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. It is our hope that the instrument will also provide for an effective implementation regime that would contain provisions for monitoring and verification. In this regard, we commend the organizers of the workshop held at the University of Massachusetts in Boston earlier this month. That meeting provided a useful opportunity for us to engage in informal discussions on the need for a strong treaty. The effect of the illicit trade in such weapons, and consequently of armed violence throughout the region, is not an abstract concept. Gun crimes are, unfortunately, a part of our everyday existence. We therefore urge international attention to be given to the matter.

In order to combat the scourge and minimize its impact on our societies, CARICOM member States have engaged in joint activities with our bilateral partners to strengthen our capability and capacity to tackle the problem, particularly in the area of border management. At the regional level, CARICOM member States have established the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security and the Council of Ministers responsible for National Security and Law Enforcement. They provide a joint coordinated response to address the crime and security challenges facing the region. We are happy that the head of the

CARICOM Agency is present in the room this morning.

The Implementation Agency for Crime and Security is also working on an initiative for the design, development and implementation of a regional ballistics information framework that would enable the authorities in the region to share information on identifying and tracing guns used in crimes through ballistic identification.

In the war against the proliferation of illegal weapons, we continue to recognize the importance of partnerships. Consequently, CARICOM also commends the work done by the regional office of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, in association with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, in hosting a successful workshop on stockpile management and disposal in July. At the hemispheric level, we continue to work as a unit with the Organization of American States to acquire equipment relating to marking and the requisite training of officials.

Our individual and collective efforts have achieved some success. We have been engaged in multifaceted multisectoral responses to combating the challenges posed by crime and violence. However, in order to translate those small successes into meaningful long-term gains, we need the support of the international community, including all Member States present this morning.

Finally, CARICOM calls on all Member States to continue to work with us in this unique forum to give true meaning to the words “compromise” and “flexibility” in order to ensure that all measures aimed at eliminating the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition become a reality.

We wish to thank the Committee and other Member States for their efforts over the years and to advise them that copies of this statement have been e-mailed to all missions.

Ms. Chovichien (Thailand): I would like to reiterate Thailand’s firm commitment to the full and effective control of conventional weapons. Conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, are a multifaceted issue. They are linked explicitly to international peace and security and implicitly to issues of human rights, human security,

human development and justice. The destructiveness of conventional weapons lies not in their size, but in their widespread use and relatively easy accessibility, which make them more than just a potential threat. The contributions that disarmament and the control of such weapons make to peace and security are thus much greater than generally perceived. Accelerating disarmament and strengthening the control regime for such weapons would also help the international community to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Not only is armed violence in many parts of the world linked to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, but transnational crime and terrorism are its beneficiaries as well. Thailand supports the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the key multilateral framework in coordinating the efforts of Member States to prevent the illicit manufacture, export, import and transfer of small arms and light weapons and, ultimately, to tackle transnational crime and terrorism.

Thailand commends the work of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, held in June this year, which made substantial progress in putting the Programme of Action back on track, particularly with respect to international cooperation and assistance and the strengthening of the follow-up mechanism. Thailand reaffirms its full commitment to implementing the Programme of Action and to cooperating with the international community in combating the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. Thailand reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms on a regular basis — a submission that is voluntary.

In order to strengthen the ability of States to comply with the Programme of Action in a more effective manner, we believe that, first, adequate resources and capacity should be ensured, especially for developing countries. Secondly, regional cooperation must be strengthened, especially in information-sharing and the exchange of best practices in the control of small arms and light weapons. In South-East Asia, that is in line with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Charter and the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint.

Conventional weapons can pose a serious threat to global socio-economic stability if they fall into the wrong hands. Thailand welcomes the work of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, held in July this year in New York. Thailand looks forward to participating actively in the regional workshop on an arms trade treaty, to be held in Nepal this November, and the forthcoming second and third Preparatory Committee meetings, to be held in New York next year.

We note that bridging the gaps between Member States' positions is an important step towards the successful implementation of the arms trade treaty. Considering the different capacities and circumstances of Member States in implementing the future treaty, a step-by-step process may be more desirable. The discussions and negotiations on the arms trade treaty, as well as any other international legally binding instrument on disarmament, should be pursued within the framework of the United Nations so that the outcome will be universally accepted and implemented, enhancing the effectiveness of the regime.

Thailand signed the Mine Ban Convention in 1997 and ratified it in November 1998. We are fully committed to fulfilling our obligations under the Convention, which include mine clearance, stockpile destruction, promoting universal acceptance of the Convention and victim assistance. We are trying our best to proceed with mine clearance and the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas under the Thailand national mine action strategic plan for 2010-2014, which is now under revision to fit the changing situation and new challenges. One challenge that we face is the need for integrated planning and technical and financial assistance, in accordance with article 6 of the Convention. These would enable us to fulfil our obligations under the existing framework and within the specified time frame. The assistance that we receive would also allow us to continue to assist others once we have completed our tasks.

Thailand also wishes to reaffirm our commitment to assisting and promoting the rehabilitation of landmine survivors. We are willing to cooperate, to share our experience and to assist others, especially our neighbours, in that regard. We commend the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014 as the concrete outcome of the 2009 Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World, which will strengthen efforts to end the suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines.

In line with Thailand's long-standing commitments on disarmament and human rights, we fully support the progress of the work done within the frameworks of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Although not yet a party to the two Conventions, Thailand is working to ensure that their principles and objectives can be met effectively before we join.

Thailand looks forward to cooperating with the international community in the area of conventional weapons. We hope that our concerted efforts will contribute not only to the advancement of global peace and security, but also to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development as a whole.

The Chair: I call on the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.44.

Mr. Knutsson (Sweden): Sweden has the honour to present draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.44, entitled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects". I do so together with Senegal, in its capacity as Chair of the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention; Latvia, as President of the Eleventh Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II; and India, as President of the Third Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V, all of which were held in 2009. I would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to these three Ambassadors, who generously gave of their time and valuable experience to serve as officials at those meetings.

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

Adherence to the Convention and its Protocols has steadily increased since the 2009 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties, and today the CCW has some 113 States parties. However, the number of States parties to the Convention still falls short of universal membership. Let me take this opportunity to express my hope that the countries that have not yet joined the Convention will find it in their interest to do so and become parties to the Convention and its Protocols, including the important amendment that extends the scope of the Convention to include situations of non-international conflict.

Speaking on universalization, I would also like to especially welcome the recent decision of the African Union on the accession of African countries to the CCW, adopted by the Assembly of the African Union in July.

The purpose of the draft resolution that I am introducing today is to continue to express support for the CCW, with particular focus on the universalization of the Convention and its Protocols. The text of the draft resolution also reflects the ongoing work within the framework of the Convention since the adoption of last year's resolution 64/67. It is an expression of support for the CCW as an important instrument of international humanitarian law. However, the draft resolution does not refer to the substance of issues being discussed in the various expert groups, and it does not prejudge the outcomes of any future discussions among States parties. Of course, the States parties will have to address the specific substantive issues at their forthcoming Meetings, including at the Meeting of States Parties in November.

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

Ms. Millington (Canada): Canada remains fully committed to collaborative international action to address the negative effects of the illicit transfer and misuse of conventional weapons on the lives and livelihoods of people throughout the world. Canada continues to be seized by the need to address the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, while at the same time respecting the legitimate interests of lawful firearms producers, exporters, importers, retailers and owners.

There have been positive developments on several conventional arms issues during the past year,

and 2011 will present opportunities to build upon our collective achievements to date. We are heartened by the progress that has been made towards an arms trade treaty, most recently at the first Preparatory Committee.

The conclusion of regional and multilateral agreements to control the international transfer of conventional arms over the past decade reflects a growing realization that the problem of arms proliferation can be effectively addressed only through collaboration and cooperation among States. By building on such agreements, an arms trade treaty can make a major contribution to preventing irresponsible arms transfers. We look forward to the February 2011 Preparatory Committee so that we may continue our work towards this important treaty.

The aim of an arms trade treaty should be to establish clear universal principles for States to follow so as to prevent the diversion of conventional arms to the illicit market and their misuse, consistent with international law. At the same time, an arms trade treaty should recognize the inherent right of States to self-defence under the Charter of the United Nations. Such a treaty must also recognize that there is a legitimate, legal trade in conventional arms for defence and law enforcement purposes, and in small arms for certain legitimate civilian uses, including sporting, hunting and collecting purposes. An arms trade treaty should not impose restrictions on how arms may be acquired, held or used within a State's territory.

(spoke in French)

The success of the 2008 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 provided renewed momentum to efforts to stop the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which was fuelled by the successful outcome of the 2010 Biennial Meeting of States. The 2011 Meeting of Governmental Experts will provide a unique and important opportunity to bring together technical experts to discuss and advance implementation of the Programme of Action. We look forward to working with New Zealand, in its capacity as Chair, and with other States towards a positive outcome for that inaugural meeting of experts.

Canada has ratified the Protocols to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

Canada has also been heavily engaged in the work of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts on cluster munitions. With regard to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Canada was pleased to have participated actively in the negotiation of that Convention and to have been among the 94 States that signed it in Oslo on 3 December 2008. Canadian officials are continuing their work to seek authority to ratify the Convention, which can occur as soon as Canadian domestic legislation is enacted to ensure our full compliance with all of its provisions. Canada looks forward to the historic First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, which will be hosted by the Lao People's Democratic Republic in November.

Mr. M'Beou (Togo) (*spoke in French*): As my delegation is speaking for the first time, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on having been elected to lead our Committee and on the outstanding way in which you are conducting our debates.

I speak on this particular issue to highlight, as did most delegations during the general debate, the threat posed to peace and security by the unlawful circulation of small arms and light weapons.

The recurrence of armed conflict in Africa and elsewhere is due in large part to the fact that small arms and light weapons are easy to acquire and available at unbeatable prices, quite simply because they are subject to no control by State authorities. As everyone knows, they largely come not only from illicit import, but also from local manufacture, the scale of which has been long unrecognized. The fight against that illegal trade should be waged on all fronts against traffickers, brokers, users and illegal local manufacturers. It should be conducted in the framework of relevant national laws and existing international legal instruments.

My country, Togo — which has never missed an opportunity to participate in the 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 — knows that it is on the basis of our common experience that we can effectively wage the fight against this phenomenon. The Final Document of the Fourth Biennial Meeting (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3), held here in New York from 14 to 18 June, clearly established the relationship

between disarmament and development. It is well known that development is an outgrowth of peace, which is itself the absence of the warfare waged with such weapons. In order to achieve development through the elimination of weapons, the document emphasizes assistance and international cooperation, because it is possible neither to counter the traffic in arms nor to collect them without assistance and cooperation.

Moreover, General Assembly resolution 64/30 of 2 December 2009, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them", calls on Member States and organizations to extend their assistance to States to curb the illicit circulation of weapons and to collect those weapons.

It is gratifying to note that the countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were quick to grasp that principle, and they are cooperating closely to attain that objective. In the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which my country ratified and which entered into force on 30 September 2009, they expressly committed themselves to do so. Thus, for ECOWAS the fight against small arms and light weapons will remain an ongoing quest so long as peace and security are not completely restored to the subregion.

In order to attain tangible success in the fight against the illegal traffic in such arms, each ECOWAS country has put in place a national commission to combat the illicit proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons. The commissions share their experience in this area so as to better attain their common goal. Their work requires technical and financial international assistance.

On that subject, I would like to point out that my country receives very little technical and financial assistance. Our national commission to combat the illicit proliferation, circulation and traffic of small arms and light weapons, established in 2001, is basically funded by the State. The work it is charged with is huge and demands significant funding that the State is not always able to provide because of financial difficulties resulting from its efforts to address other social issues. The commission is now in need of technical and financial assistance to carry out such projects as the computerization of the register of all small arms and light weapons legally owned in the

country, a census of all local manufacturers of such weapons in order to facilitate their tracing and marking, and increasing public awareness and workshops for police and security forces about the dangers of the illicit circulation of such weapons.

My delegation takes this opportunity to thank the States and organizations that are helping the commission and to appeal for increased assistance to allow Togo to fight this scourge more effectively and to better contribute to international peace and security.

I would now like to refer to the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (A/65/133). The report covers the import and export of conventional weapons as well as, among other things, international transfers of small arms and light weapons in 2009. That information, reported by a small number of countries, gives some idea of the scale of export and transfer of such weapons. While that trade is legal and transparent, the countries that produce and export weapons must still do more to monitor the destinations of their weapons and to help the importing countries to trace and mark them.

My delegation also believes that brokering must be fought more steadfastly so as to keep weapons from being diverted to non-State actors who use them to destabilize and to incite violence. In that regard, in our opinion, the best way to monitor the circulation of such weapons is to adopt an arms trade treaty. Such a treaty would allow us to regulate that trade, to trace the source of arms and to prevent them from being diverted illegally and without control to high-risk countries.

My delegation believes that there is no reason for some countries to exercise self-discipline in the matter of the arms trade while others have unlimited latitude to distribute their weapons wherever and whenever they please. The adoption of a legal instrument in this realm is very important to my peace-loving country, and we will not fail to continue to make our modest contribution to the work of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, which held its first meeting here in July. We call on all Member States to work without preconditions towards the earliest adoption of such a treaty.

No discussion of the problem of the circulation of arms in Africa can be complete without mentioning the

work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which is based in Lomé, Togo. The Centre — whose goal is to promote the full and effective implementation of international disarmament and arms control instruments by strengthening the capacities of Member States, regional organizations, civil society and other disarmament actors — has in reality become a centre in the service of peace. Its work is noble and deserves the strongest support. My delegation will revert to the subject of the Regional Centre when this Committee takes up the relevant agenda item.

Mr. Van den IJssel (Netherlands): At the outset, let me say that the Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the European Union under this agenda item. Further to that statement, I would like to take this opportunity to draw the Committee's attention to a number of issues to which my delegation attaches particular importance.

In the field of conventional arms, this year has seen two important events: the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty and the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

On the arms trade treaty, the position of my Government remains unchanged. The Netherlands favours a strong treaty that sets the highest possible standards, including on human rights, for the responsible international transfer of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, ammunition and relevant components. Ultimately, the treaty should constitute a framework for what is and will remain a national responsibility — the control of international arms transfers. In this regard, let me also stress that we do not accept an a contrario interpretation of the treaty, whereby the treaty would in some cases constitute an obligation to supply.

In July 2010, the Netherlands participated actively in the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. My delegation looks back on that meeting with satisfaction, and we thank Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina for his leadership and for providing us with his draft papers. Progress has definitely been made, but some of the crucial issues,

such as the scope of the future treaty and its parameters, need further work. We look forward to continuing our deliberations at the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee in February, during which further progress towards a robust arms trade treaty will have to be made.

Regarding the Biennial Meeting of States, we are particularly looking forward to the first Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action, which will take place in May 2011. Preparations for the Meeting have already started under the able guidance of Ambassador Jim McLay of New Zealand. In our view, the Meeting should be a forum for concrete and pragmatic exchanges on the implementation of the Programme of Action, contributing to a better understanding of the theory and, even more important, of the practicalities of taking action under the Programme. We therefore support the idea of concentrating the debate on a limited number of our issues, preferably two, in addition to cooperation and assistance as a cross-cutting issue.

Finally, although this year my delegation will not be submitting draft resolutions on the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms or on the database for national legislation on transfers of arms, I would like to reiterate the importance of reporting annually and to call on all Member States that have not yet done so to submit their reports to the Secretary-General without delay.

Ms. Chan (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Although the production and potential use of nuclear weapons are rightly one of the international community's major concerns, it is conventional arms that are the worst everyday weapons of war, crime and violence. In that context, it is small arms and light weapons that cause the greatest number of deaths throughout the world, and for that reason they should be at the centre of our concerns and actions.

In view of these facts, and because of my country's dedication to peace and disarmament, I reiterate Costa Rica's firm commitment to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. My delegation also supports the Meeting of Governmental Experts to be held in May 2011. We trust that the second Review Conference of the Programme of Action will serve to reaffirm the international community's commitment to

strengthening and enforcing it. We hope that the Programme will be a helping hand for international efforts to counter illicit arms trafficking.

Costa Rica is concerned about the production, trade, smuggling and use of light weapons in war, internal conflicts, terrorist activities and organized crime. This scourge threatens our region in particular, but also extends to other parts of the world. For instance, Latin America and the Caribbean are home to just over 8 per cent of the world's population, yet 42 per cent of world homicides by firearms occur in our region. As a consequence, according to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates, Latin America and the Caribbean spend 14 per cent of our gross domestic product solely to cover the economic costs of armed violence.

This situation is even more alarming in Central America. UNDP's 2009-2010 report on human development in Central America defines it as the world's most violent war-free region, and the one with the highest homicide rates. Of course, such levels of violence are not exclusively the result of access to weapons; they have many causes — economic, social and migratory, as well as those related to organized crime in general and drug trafficking in particular. It is with good reason that the report considers that the solution to this complex situation lies not in a hard or soft approach; rather, the solution to high levels of violence and insecurity lies in an intelligent approach. My country has stressed this fact and continues to do so.

An intelligent approach, within a framework of democracy, liberty and respect for the rule of law, would begin at both the international and national levels by promoting more rational, ethical and effective uses of public spending and of resources devoted to development and international cooperation in order to produce higher levels of sustainable development. Costa Rica also believes that we should apply that intelligent approach in combating the worst tools of violence and insecurity in the region: conventional and small arms and light weapons. This calls for reducing excessive military spending, which undermines human security instead of promoting it. In 2009, Central America contributed more than 10 per cent of the \$57.4 billion in military spending in Latin America. This figure is incomprehensible and unacceptable for a subregion that signed the Esquipulas Accords more than 20 years ago; where no country is involved in an

armed conflict; and where two countries, Costa Rica and Panama, have no armed forces.

In other areas of Latin America, we are concerned above all about an emerging arms race. It is senseless for several countries on our continent, facing no real threat to their security, to continue to equip troops and to buy tanks, combat aircraft and weapons in response to what they term an external threat, or simply in order to update their arsenals, while millions of their inhabitants cannot satisfy even their most basic needs. My country considers that our nations' enemies, far from being outside our borders, are inside them. Those enemies are poverty, inequality, social exclusion and sometimes mistaken economic decisions. An intelligent approach on the part of our Governments and those of the rest of the world must be able to reorder our public spending priorities towards investments in health, education, housing, innovation and infrastructure; in other words, to give priority to generating opportunities while at the same time promoting environmental protection and strengthening the institutions of the rule of law, which ensure higher levels of development, peace and security.

At the international level, we also need a wise approach, one that recognizes the efforts of developing countries that ethically reorient their public spending towards human development. That wise approach will create mechanisms that forgive debt in countries with high levels of poverty, while financially supporting poor and middle-income countries that have demonstrated their commitment to sustaining life rather than to destroying it. That same approach should also direct efforts to restricting international traffic in conventional arms and small arms and light weapons.

That intelligent approach has guided the efforts of Costa Rica, together with six other countries, to propose an arms trade treaty. We hope that such a treaty will codify the obligations of States under international law with regard to the sale and transfer of arms. That task is as urgent as it is necessary. An arms trade treaty is a pillar that will support the intelligent approach and should cover a broad range of materiel, since the reality is that many of the weapons that contribute to violence in Latin America and other regions are not included in the seven conventional arms categories of the United Nations Register.

For Costa Rica and other countries, therefore, the scope of the arms trade treaty should not be confined to

seven plus one, but should include all conventional arms, including all small arms and light weapons and ammunition — whether intended for military, security or police use — and all types of related materiel. The treaty should also cover conventional munitions and explosives used with such weapons, as well as components, know-how and equipment essential to the production, maintenance and use of conventional weapons and their ammunition. I should also mention dual-use equipment that can be used for military, security or police purposes, such as military vehicles, aircraft or helicopters, to mention just a few examples.

Against that backdrop, wherein the international community supports the efforts of all countries in truly ensuring human security within and beyond their borders, Costa Rica believes that the excessive use of small arms and light weapons is an issue that requires a concerted response at many levels, including the local, national, regional and international.

Ms. Higgin (New Zealand): The past 12 months have seen a number of significant developments in the conventional weapons arena. First and foremost among them was the landmark decision last year to begin the process of elaborating a legally binding instrument to establish global standards governing transfers of conventional weapons. New Zealand has been a strong supporter of an arms trade treaty for some years now.

The gains to be made from such a treaty will be global as well as regional. Certainly, there is a pressing need to tackle the proliferation of conventional weapons in my region, the Pacific. I have heard what colleagues here have said about the destabilizing effects of illicit weapons in their regions. The adoption and implementation of a global arms trade treaty will benefit the stability and development of all regions.

It will only do so, however, if the treaty's scope is broad and very comprehensive. We note the interest that we still attach to the proposal put forward by Norway at July's Preparatory Committee session for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty that the coverage of the treaty should extend to all conventional arms other than those explicitly excluded, that is, the so-called "yes, unless" approach.

Very good progress was made at the first Preparatory Committee meetings midway through this year, under the very able chairmanship of Ambassador García Moritán. A comprehensive Chair's text was produced on elements, and facilitators held useful

discussions, and narrowed differences, on the scope, parameters and implementation of the treaty, which are all key features of the treaty's framing.

New Zealand looks forward to a further, very substantive arms trade treaty Preparatory Committee meeting in the early part of next year. We are confident that, with the assistance of the useful intersessional work being promoted by civil society, we will be well positioned to intensify work on the actual drafting of the treaty at next year's Preparatory Committee meetings.

August this year saw the welcome entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which New Zealand ratified last December. We continue to urge all countries not yet State parties to accelerate their own processes to ensure the universalization of that Convention. We look forward to the First Meeting of States Parties, which will take place next month in one of the States most severely afflicted by those inhumane weapons, the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Following the active role that New Zealand played throughout the Oslo process, we are pleased to have continued our engagement this year as a member of the Lao Support Group in Geneva, where we have assisted the President-designate particularly in the area of national implementation. We remain committed to working with all partners, including civil society, for a strong and robust First Meeting of States Parties in order to ensure that the next critical phase of implementation is successful. New Zealand intends to be represented at that Meeting at a high level, reflecting the importance that we place on the Convention and the First Meeting.

Both the cluster munitions process and text were modelled along the lines of those used for the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. I note that, together, those two Treaties are exemplars of the strong humanitarian dividend possible when States combine forces with civil society and draw on its expertise, passion and outreach.

The Second Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention, late last year, was an important milestone in the life of the Convention and resulted in the Cartagena Action Plan. States parties agreed to support the enhanced implementation of the Convention and pledged to push for sustainable progress on the Action Plan. As a strong advocate of the need for greater

emphasis on victim assistance, New Zealand was pleased that the States parties agreed to highlight victim assistance as a key priority for implementation in the coming years.

Achieving further progress 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 also be a priority for New Zealand over the coming year. This year's Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms was useful in furthering the objectives of the Programme through the identification of a number of action-oriented measures contained in the Chair's summary that will support its full implementation.

As Chair-designate of the next meeting in the Programme of Action cycle — the open-ended meeting of governmental experts, to be held in New York in May next year — New Zealand, represented by my colleague here in New York, Ambassador McLay, is working with Member States to define a format and focus for that meeting that will be relevant and that will serve Member States well in their practical implementation of the Programme of Action. I would encourage all interested States to engage with New Zealand on such issues and to contribute to what we hope will be a successful meeting in May next year.

Ms. Haile (Eritrea): The proliferation of conventional weapons is a matter of increasing concern because it is a major cause of destruction. The improvement in the production, technology, sophistication and availability of a limitless quantity of weapons is one of the most serious challenges to peace, security and development in most parts of the world.

The proliferation of, and easy access to, small arms and light weapons are sources of concern not only when it comes to peace and security, but also with regard to the social and economic development of many countries. For that reason, Eritrea has attached great importance to, and sees no better instrument than, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects since its adoption in 2001.

The successful outcome of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, held in July 2010, was an opportunity to renew our commitment

and seek additional measures to strengthen the Programme's implementation. My delegation strongly believes that the meaningful implementation of the Programme can be realized only if collective and individual actions are taken in a coordinated manner at the international, regional and subregional levels.

Eritrea is already working on its five-year national action plan on small arms and light weapons, for the period 2008 to 2012, which covers the areas of stockpile management, marking and destruction. Moreover, the plan is aimed at harmonizing Eritrea's national legislation on small arms and light weapons with our country's international and regional commitments, in particular the Nairobi Declaration. Eritrea is also an active member of the Regional Centre on Small Arms, established to coordinate action against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region.

As a legacy of the 30-year war for independence and the recent border conflict with Ethiopia, landmines and unexploded ordnance litter our countryside and continue to cause injuries and deaths in many areas. A national landmine impact survey, which was completed in June 2004, conclusively found that 486 of Eritrea's 4,176 communities were affected by landmines and unexploded ordnance. This means that there are 914 suspected hazard areas in my country, covering approximately 130 square kilometres and having an impact on 655,000 people.

In view of the limited assistance available from United Nations agencies for such an endeavour, the Government of Eritrea has been using its meagre resources to tackle the impact of mines and unexploded ordnance, with the objective of expediting its mine-clearing programme. Since the programme started, in 2001, Eritrea has recovered an estimated 10,258 pieces of unexploded ordnance. The total area cleared amounts to 54 square kilometres, which is significant but not sufficient to meet our mine-clearance obligations under article 5 of the Convention. In that regard, Eritrea has requested a 10-year extension of the deadline to ensure the complete clearance and destruction of all landmines and unexploded ordnance in our country in accordance with article 5, paragraph 3, of the Convention.

Eritrea remains committed to the full implementation of the Convention. We therefore seek to establish sincere international partnerships to

develop our capacities and strengthen our capabilities in the areas of victim assistance, mine clearance and stockpile destruction.

Eritrea notes with great interest the entry into force of the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions, on 1 August, and appreciates the offer of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to host the First Meeting of States Parties.

Finally, with respect to the ongoing discussions on a future arms trade treaty, my delegation wishes to underline that an international legally binding instrument must take into consideration the concerns of all States and should be consistent with the United Nations Charter, in particular Article 51, which enshrines the right of States to self-defence.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor on behalf of Ambassador Paul Badji, who is not here today.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I would like to make some comments in my national capacity on this topic of vital importance for many regions of the world where there are serious security and stability problems.

Such disturbances, which unfortunately can be seen throughout the world, endanger international peace and security and undermine our development efforts. Without doubt, they are sustained and exacerbated by the lack of international standards on the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons. These weapons, which are now considered as true weapons of mass destruction in our respective regions, foster and perpetuate conflict, sow misery and destruction, spread crime and risks of terrorism and undermine sustainable development.

To remedy this situation and bring about peace and stability, which constitute the foundation for sustainable development for the benefit of our peoples, my country joined the early call for a legally binding instrument on the trade in conventional arms. Moreover, I should like to point out here that an arms trade treaty will be effective and viable only if it includes all conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. In that regard, it will also have to include clear criteria that include a broad definition of transfers, brokering activities, compliance with standards of international

humanitarian law and human rights as the fundamental basis for the treaty, as well as strengthened institutional capacity and international cooperation and assistance.

The path towards an arms trade treaty will certainly be a difficult one, but we will have to show determination and unwavering commitment in the context of an inclusive and transparent process in which manufacturers, exporters and importers participate with equal good faith. We have already welcomed the momentum that began with the holding, from 10 to 23 July, of the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2012 Conference on the adoption of the treaty.

It seems to us that this is the only way to avoid the loss of innumerable human lives, the destruction of social infrastructure and serious violations of human rights perpetrated in many parts of the world. In addition, with regard to confidence-building, my country believes that the Register of Conventional Arms should continue to enjoy the support and active participation of all Member States, especially weapons-producing countries.

Senegal continues to be particularly concerned by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which contribute significantly to the perpetuation and recurrence of conflicts whose exorbitant cost in lives and billions of dollars seriously hinders the development of Africa. In that regard, my delegation calls for the efficient implementation of the Final Document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3) of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in particular on the essential matters of cooperation and assistance, illicit brokering, stockpile management and surplus destruction, marking and tracing.

In that regard, I need not point out that our support and strong commitment are needed in the fight against the trade in small arms and light weapons, if our efforts at peacekeeping, peacebuilding and international security are to have any chance of success. The same commitment should motivate us to ensure that, first, the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons becomes legally binding and, secondly, a similar

instrument is adopted with regard to illicit brokering in small arms.

With regard to anti-personnel mines, if indeed we want to rid the world of these devices that arbitrarily sow death and desolation, my delegation believes that we must continue to mobilize our efforts to implement and universalize the Ottawa Convention. With regard to the technical and financial assistance provided to affected countries to help them carry out mine-clearance programmes, it would be wise to pay special attention to the socio-economic rehabilitation of victims.

That is why my country wishes to extend its unequivocal support to the Cartagena Plan of Action, adopted at the Second Review Conference of the Parties to the Ottawa Convention, held in Colombia from 30 November to 4 December 2009, in which States parties undertake to take concrete action over the next five years in order to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and promote universal adherence to it.

The determination to eradicate anti-personnel mines must be commensurate with the need to address the suffering, desolation and helplessness of the child who can no longer play with his friends, as well as of the mother who will never again feel the pleasure of rocking her child in her arms.

Furthermore, my delegation welcomes the entry into force, on 1 August, of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. This is a significant step towards civilian protection and the strengthening of international humanitarian law.

Let me conclude by reiterating my country's hopes for the holding of a Security Council summit on conventional weapons, as was the case last year on the issue of nuclear weapons. Such a summit could have a positive impact on the already quite encouraging process to better regulate those weapons, in particular through the conclusion of the long-awaited arms trade treaty. The morality and urgency of putting an end to the unspeakable suffering caused by such weapons require us to mobilize all our energies to rapidly conclude such a treaty during the conference scheduled for the end of 2012.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore the important role of the 1980 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. Senegal, which on 12 and 13 November 2009 presided in Geneva over the most recent Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, which is a key component of the global humanitarian and disarmament regime, welcomes the fact that, to date, 113 States have ratified that instrument, which could very shortly become the primary framework for protecting civilians and combatants in armed conflict.

Mr. Mažeiks (Latvia): As this is the first time that Latvia takes the floor, we wish to congratulate you, Sir, on the assumption of your duties. We pledge our full cooperation and support to you and the Bureau.

It is an honour for me to present this report in my capacity as President of the 2009 Eleventh Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II 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. Since its adoption, in 1980, the Convention has evolved, through the efforts of its States parties, to become a key international humanitarian law treaty, an indispensable element of the contemporary humanitarian, disarmament and arms control machinery, and a valuable forum to consider how best to protect both civilians and military personnel from the effects of hostilities.

The Convention's Amended Protocol II regulates the use, production and transfer of mines, booby traps and other devices. The Protocol, which entered into force on 3 December 1998, marked a significant advancement in addressing humanitarian concerns relating to anti-personnel landmines. The adherence of key military States that use and produce mines significantly broadens the scope of those merits.

Thus far, a total of 95 States are party to Amended Protocol II, an increase of two States since last year, with the Dominican Republic joining on 21 June and Gabon on 22 September. I would like to express my hope that other Member States will follow their commendable example and bring closer the objective of universal membership of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols. Latvia is one of the 47 States that have acceded to all the Protocols and amendments to the Convention.

Latvia is fully committed to the provisions of the Amended Protocol.

As with the framework Convention, the implementation of the Amended Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices, as amended on 3 May 1996, has also evolved. In particular, its group of experts now meets annually and considers matters relating to the status and implementation of the Protocol, including its transparency reporting mechanism. Two questions addressed by the group of experts and reported to the Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties are of particular interest.

One is the issue of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Under the very able leadership of the coordinator, Mr. Reto Wollenmann of Switzerland, the States parties and many experts from different States and organizations are considering the various legal, military, technological, security and humanitarian aspects of the use of IEDs and national experience in countering that very specific type of home-made weapon. That is truly exploratory work aimed at better understanding a problem that is a real scourge of war in many parts of the world.

The second issue, which concerns the fate of the original Protocol II, is also focusing our attention. As members are all aware, today it is widely recognized that the original Protocol II had serious shortcomings. To recall briefly, the Protocol failed to prevent the disastrous humanitarian crisis of the early 1990s that was provoked by the worldwide use of landmines. Based on the assessment that much firmer measures were needed in order to find an effective way of improving the situation, urgent negotiations took place in 1995 and 1996, culminating in the adoption of Amended Protocol II and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, also known as the Ottawa Convention.

For those reasons, the original Protocol II had little, if any, humanitarian, legal, military or political logic. It was therefore superseded by the higher international standards included in Amended Protocol II and the Mine Ban Treaty. However, the Protocol is still in force and at times creates confusion, in particular, among States not parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which are often perplexed by the Convention's complicated structure, with its amended article 1 and five annexed Protocols, one of which was also amended.

Against that background, the States Parties to the Conference to Amend Protocol II initiated, under the guidance of the Coordinator, Mr. Abderrazzak Laassel of Morocco, a focused discussion on the legal possibility and feasibility of terminating the Convention's original Protocol II. Those countries that are parties to the original Protocol II but have not yet acceded to Amended Protocol II have been invited to consider becoming party to it as soon as possible in order to facilitate the termination of the original Protocol II.

In the course of the past year, I continued a dialogue with the countries concerned in my capacity as President of the Eleventh Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II. Several of those States informed me that they were currently reviewing the possibilities for acceding to Amended Protocol II.

It is perceived that such a transition towards a higher set of standards would be desirable from the point of view of international humanitarian law. At the same time, one must be ready to take into account the political sensitivities that such legal action could entail at the national level. The termination of the original Protocol II would streamline the Convention and help simplify its complicated structure.

In view of what I have set out here, and in my capacity as President of the Eleventh Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II, I would like to reiterate my call to those States that are parties to the original Protocol II but have not yet acceded to Amended Protocol II to consider acceding to it as soon as possible.

In conclusion, such action would also serve well the achievement of universal adherence to Amended Protocol II, and would indeed represent a substantial contribution to the strengthening of international humanitarian law.

Mr. Tiendrébéogo (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Among the challenges that the international community must address in the area of peace and security is the issue of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, the unimpeded movement of which is a serious threat to peace and security in many regions of the world, especially in Africa. The situation is even more alarming in countries emerging from conflict where such arms are in the hands of criminal groups, thus

increasing violence, on the one hand, and seriously threatening local and regional security, on the other. Needless to say, this also hampers sustainable development and poverty reduction policies.

We welcome the initiatives taken at all levels to eradicate illicit trafficking and combat the irresponsible use of small arms and light weapons. At the international level, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in 2001, provides a legal basis to periodically assess the progress made in that fight by individual countries and the international community. Moreover, we welcome the entry into force, on 1 August, of the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions. We urge those States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so as soon as possible.

An estimated 7 million small arms and light weapons are circulating in the West African subregion. Aware of the danger, the member States of the Economic Community of West African States adopted, in 2006, the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. The Convention, which entered into force on 29 September 2009, today enables us to coordinate efforts at the subregional level.

Burkina Faso has taken a firm stance in the framework of the Convention as well as in the broader context of the fight against trafficking in small arms. We therefore regularly submit our national report on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. The same holds true in terms of the implementation of resolution 64/22, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures", which the General Assembly adopted on 2 December 2009.

My country bases its work in this area on the relevant subregional legal instruments on small arms and light weapons, the implementation of which also reinforces regulatory and institutional measures taken at the national level. Furthermore, my Government adopted a decree on 8 May 2009 establishing a civilian arms and munitions regime in Burkina Faso. The regime now regulates all of the various phases of weapons acquisition, in particular production, import, transfer and reshipment.

At the institutional level, we have established a national commission to combat the proliferation of

small arms and light weapons and a high-level authority to control arms imports and their use. Their mandate is to implement the decisions made at the national, subregional, regional and international levels to combat weapons proliferation; alert and mobilize the public on weapons issues; ensure that key players receive training; structure and bring to bear ethics in the small-scale manufacturing of small arms so that those engaged in such work develop good working relationships with defence and security forces; control all arms imports by the Government of Burkina Faso; and prevent and thwart all illicit weapons trafficking throughout the country.

Notwithstanding our efforts, Burkina Faso unfortunately is still experiencing sporadic armed attacks in some major cities, the main cause of which is the unauthorized possession of small arms and light weapons. That is why Burkina Faso is continuing to develop initiatives to better control weapons marking, registration and tracing processes, as well as arms brokering. Those areas have proven difficult to address owing to a lack of human resources, training and sharing of experiences.

With regard to the transnational nature of the small arms and light weapons trade, Burkina Faso calls for enhanced international cooperation with a view to improving the implementation of instruments adopted subregionally and internationally.

Burkina Faso is deeply involved in mediation and facilitation initiatives in countries in crisis. We are convinced that our efforts to find peace will remain futile unless decisive actions are simultaneously taken to limit or contain the illicit circulation of weapons.

My delegation reiterates its firm support for the drafting of an arms trade treaty. If swiftly adopted by the international community, such a treaty would undoubtedly stem the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and reduce their adverse impact on peace, security and development.

My country's resolve and commitment to fight this scourge are unfailing. We urge the international community to continue mobilizing and to support all efforts aimed at eradicating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this important

Committee. We pledge our support to you and to the Bureau.

Like other Member States that have spoken before us, we reaffirm the centrality of the Charter of the United Nations and its principles to promote and strengthen international peace, security and stability through cooperative arrangements and measures.

During the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in June, we stated that while Papua New Guinea did not manufacture and export small arms and light weapons, we unfortunately suffered greatly from their use, misuse and abuse. That situation continues to hamper our development, causing untold economic and social damage, the latter through deaths.

In an effort to address that challenge, stringent firearms control measures for the Papua New Guinea Defence Force were instituted in 2003 and 2004, through the Papua New Guinea-Australia Defence Cooperation Programme, for the refurbishment of our armories and the installation of a computerized system for monitoring access to and issuance of firearms. While that has contributed significantly to a reduction in firearms loss and theft, weapons unfortunately continue to be leaked from those sources, including private companies that provide security services.

We are also aware that illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons continues across our very lengthy and porous land and sea borders, which seriously undermines our national security and poses serious threats to our development. It has been said that those threats may increase given the current resource boom in the mining and petroleum sectors of Papua New Guinea.

In 2005, the Government of Papua New Guinea established a gun control committee, which was mandated to review the guns situation in Papua New Guinea and report back with recommendations on how best to address the illicit trade and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Committee submitted a final report containing 244 recommendations, which were subsequently accepted by the National Parliament in August 2009. Efforts are currently under way to prepare an implementation matrix for the recommendations, including a proposal for the establishment of a national institutional

framework to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations.

Papua New Guinea is in the final stages of drafting a counter-terrorism and transnational organized crime bill. Once enacted, the bill will give effect to the eight United Nations counter-terrorism conventions that Papua New Guinea has ratified. While we are confident that this new piece of legislation will provide the necessary policy framework to address, *inter alia*, matters relating to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, we are also aware that the actual implementation of the Programme of Action and its enforcement will require effective collaboration with our regional and international partners.

While we have strong regional coordination through the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Security Committee and the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police Organization, more needs to be done in the region to strengthen our collective efforts. In that regard, we call for renewed international cooperation and assistance.

We welcome and support New Zealand's role as the upcoming Chair of the 2011 open-ended meeting of governmental experts to facilitate discussions on follow-up and 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 reiterate our support for the inclusion of international cooperation and assistance on the agenda of the Meeting of Governmental Experts.

Finally, we thank our development partners, including the United Nations, as well as regional and international non-governmental and civil society organizations, which have assisted and continue to assist us in our efforts to address the illicit trade and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Papua New Guinea stands ready to cooperate with other like-minded countries in eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including through the sponsorship and support of relevant General Assembly resolutions and initiatives. While the process of formulating the parameters of an arms trade treaty continues, Papua New Guinea fully supports the principles behind such a treaty, especially as it relates to small arms and light weapons.

The Chair: I give the floor to the representative of Mali to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.11.

Mr. Daou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time I have taken the floor, allow me to begin by conveying to you, Sir, the delegation of Mali's congratulations on your election to chair the Committee, and our assurances of our full support. I am convinced that, under your stewardship, our efforts will have positive and satisfactory results. My congratulations also go to the other officers of the Bureau. I would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador José Luís Cancela for his excellent work last year in his capacity as Chair of the Committee.

The delegation of Mali associates itself fully with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. In its national capacity, and also on behalf of the States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mali takes this opportunity to congratulate and thank the Secretary-General for our Organization's efforts to assist States in curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them.

There is no doubt that peace and security, which are crucial to any viable development project, cannot be guaranteed in an environment in which the trade in small arms and light weapons continues to destroy human lives, destabilize States and undermine the efforts of Governments and regional and international groups to ensure the well-being of the peoples concerned.

Beyond the West African subregion, draft resolution A/C.1/65/L.11, which Mali is introducing today, also reflects the will of many countries in Africa and around the world to work in concert in order to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and to collect them. Thus, on behalf of the States members of ECOWAS, Mali is introducing the annual draft resolution entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them", under agenda item 97 (m). I need hardly recall that the draft resolution, which is an expression of the political will of our States to create the conditions necessary to true security in our area, has always been adopted by the Committee without a vote. Taking into account the current state of international affairs and the relevance of this issue, Mali is convinced that the Committee will not shrink from the tradition of adopting the draft resolution by consensus.

The draft resolution, on the one hand, calls on the international community to provide technical and financial support to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to take action to help to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and to collect them; and, on the other, encourages it to support the implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, whose entry into force on 20 September 2009 we welcome.

In response to the many challenges facing the international community, particularly the most vulnerable States, ECOWAS remains convinced that the struggle against the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons is an essential element requiring the backing of the largest possible number of States.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): As usual, I will read an abridged version of my speech, the full text of which will be circulated.

Switzerland notes with pleasure the intensive efforts of the first Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty to arrive at a shared concept of what such an instrument should be. We welcome the fact that the mandate of the General Assembly allows for an operational approach with a view to establishing the elements of a legally binding, effective and balanced instrument.

The treaty should be based on a consolidated version of the seven categories of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. It should also cover small arms and light weapons, as well as ammunition, and should apply to all common types of transfer. Switzerland further urges the adoption of stringent criteria prohibiting any transfer to a State that has committed serious violations of international law, particularly international humanitarian law and human rights. Switzerland reiterates its commitment to and support for a treaty that will establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating the transfer of conventional arms.

Switzerland also attaches particular importance to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We are concerned about the drop in States' participation in this instrument over the past three years. We are convinced that the level of participation in the Register

depends in large part on its relevance to Member States. They will submit information only so long as the Register addresses their security concerns. The fact that the Register does not include certain categories of conventional weapons, such as small arms and light weapons, has a direct effect on participation levels. Switzerland calls on countries that have not yet done so to submit to the Secretary-General their views on whether the absence of small arms and light weapons as a distinct category in the Register has limited its relevance and directly affected their decision to participate.

The adoption and entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions are among the most notable advances of the past decade in the area of international humanitarian law and conventional disarmament. Switzerland signed the instrument in Oslo and has initiated the domestic ratification process. The issue of the fight against the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of these weapons, however, is far from resolved. Translating the intentions set forth in the Convention into practice will still require a major effort in which Switzerland will remain involved.

Switzerland participates actively in the efforts of the States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to negotiate a legal instrument addressing the issue of cluster munitions. The CCW seeks to regulate weapons that have already been banned by the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Switzerland is of the opinion that the consistency of the legal regime applicable to cluster munitions would be seriously compromised if the parties to the CCW were to adopt an instrument that would have the effect of legitimizing the use of weapons that are known to have an unacceptable humanitarian impact. Switzerland therefore supports continuing negotiations on a protocol on cluster munitions with the aim of developing a legal instrument that would not weaken the standards set by the Oslo Convention, but would rather represent a complementary and balanced alternative.

Ten years after the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention entered into force, States parties and international and non-governmental organizations renewed their commitment to a mine-free world at the Second Review Conference 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, held in Cartagena in November 2009, and agreed on ambitious benchmarks for the future, including with regard to the universalization of the treaty.

The Cartagena Action Plan underlines the importance of strict compliance with mine clearance deadlines — a key challenge to the credibility of the treaty. Cartagena also allowed groundbreaking progress to be made towards a comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach to victim assistance and the inclusion of the gender dimension in mine action.

The upcoming Tenth Meeting of States Parties in Geneva will be instrumental in reporting on achievements made in the first year after the Second Review Conference. For Switzerland, an important goal for this year's Meeting of States Parties is to strengthen an implementation architecture that effectively responds to the needs of States parties.

The Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was a highlight in the fight against the illicit traffic in those arms. Switzerland welcomes the adoption by consensus of the Final Document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3), including, *inter alia*, measures to strengthen the follow-up mechanisms of the Programme of Action. We recommend that the Meeting of Governmental Experts, planned for May 2011, in addition to international cooperation and assistance as a cross-cutting issue, should address no more than one or two additional priority issues so as to allow for productive discussions.

Endeavours to control small arms and light weapons help to mitigate the scourge of armed violence, which undermines development and constitutes an impediment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. That reality was recognized by the Secretary-General in his 2009 report "Promoting development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence" (A/64/228), which provides an excellent basis for further United Nations action.

My country urges communities and institutions involved in disarmament, peacebuilding, humanitarian affairs and development to engage in further collaborative efforts, through the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, to reduce armed

violence and to further increase human security worldwide. There are currently more than 100 signatory States to the Declaration. I take this opportunity to encourage those States that have not yet done so to subscribe to the Geneva Declaration and its principles.

Mr. Rao (India): Before I make some remarks on this theme in my national capacity, I wish to speak in my capacity as President of the Third Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V 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 (CCW), held in Geneva last year. The Final Document of the Conference states, in the context of the goal of attaining the universality of Protocol V, that "the Conference requested the President to consider reporting to the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly on his endeavours" (CCW/P.V/CONF/2009/9, *para.* 30). I therefore take the floor first to discharge the responsibility given to me by the Third Conference.

On the universalization of Protocol V, I am pleased to report that the number of high contracting parties the Protocol has increased from 61 countries at the time of the Third Conference last year to 69 States parties this year. I would like to congratulate the eight new States parties to CCW Protocol V: Belgium, which acceded to Protocol V on 25 January 2010; China, on 10 June 2010; Cyprus, on 11 March 2010; Gabon, on 22 September 2010; Honduras, on 16 August 2010; Italy, on 11 February 2010; Qatar, on 16 November 2009; and Saudi Arabia, on 8 January 2010.

Universalization will continue to be a priority in the coming year as well. The Third Conference also called on the high contracting parties to Protocol V to promote wider adherence to the Protocol in their respective regions, pursuant to actions 2 to 5 of the Plan of Action to Promote the Universality of the Convention and its Annexed Protocols, as adopted by the Third Review Conference.

Aside from universalization, another pillar of Protocol V is implementation. The First Conference in 2007 established an informal mechanism of Meetings of Experts to focus on a wide range of issues. The work of the Coordinators responsible for leading the discussions on those issues has been very significant in

this process. I would like to express my gratitude to the five Coordinators and the Friend of the Coordinator, who led the discussions during the Meeting of Experts held in Geneva from 22 to 24 April 2009. They have indeed helped to advance our understanding on the various aspects of the Protocol's implementation, notably clearance; removal or destruction of explosive remnants of war; victim assistance; cooperation and assistance, and requests for assistance; the recording, retaining and transmission of information; national reporting; and generic preventive measures.

In his message to the Third Conference, the Secretary-General asserted that the States parties had made a good start, but that more was needed. He encouraged the States parties to agree on strong practical steps to assist victims of explosive remnants of war. He urged the States parties to give even more support to the clearance, removal and destruction of unexploded ordnance, and to establish a culture of information-sharing, in particular to collect and record information despite the obstacles posed by battlefield dynamics. Indeed, all these efforts would mean mobilizing the necessary resources to enhance the Protocol's implementation.

Explosive remnants of war are generated by every armed conflict. They kill and maim long after the end of hostilities. They are deadly hazards that must be eliminated. Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War is an invaluable tool towards that end. It provides a flexible and stable framework for addressing the horrendous humanitarian and development impacts of explosive remnants of war. The Third Conference last year achieved much progress on the substantive issues under Protocol V, which I am sure will be continued under my successor, Ambassador Peter Richard Woolcott of Australia as President-designate of the Fourth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to CCW Protocol V, which will be held in Geneva on 22 and 23 November. I would like to pledge our full support to him. I would also like to convey India's support to the two Vice-Presidents-designate, the representatives of Pakistan and Slovakia.

Allow me now to say a few words in my national capacity. India believes that global measures on conventional arms control contribute significantly to international peace, security and development as well as to the goal of general and complete disarmament. As a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and all its five Protocols,

including Amended Protocol II on anti-personnel landmines, India attaches particular importance to carrying forward the CCW process, which offers a unique forum for progressive controls over certain categories of weapons through international consensus-building and cooperation.

India has always exercised the highest degree of responsibility in conventional arms transfers. We have contributed regularly to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms transfers since its inception in 1994, and have participated actively in deliberations in the United Nations Disarmament Commission and elsewhere on conventional arms transfers. India's security interests have been affected by illicit and irresponsible transfers, especially of small arms, light weapons and explosives. The illicit trade in conventional arms is a major factor in armed violence by organized criminals and by terrorists.

Therefore, priority must be given to combating and eliminating the illicit trade in such arms, which will require the full and effective implementation of the existing obligations of Member States, in particular those flowing from the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, on strict national controls over production, adequate marking, international cooperation and tracing of illicit arms, effective management of stockpiles, export controls and their strict enforcement.

India has participated actively in discussions in the Group of Governmental Experts, the Open-ended Working Group and the first Preparatory Committee on the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty. We believe that a legally binding instrument establishing international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms should contribute tangibly to preventing, combating and eliminating the illicit trade in such arms. The United Nations Charter provisions for self-defence imply that States enjoy the right to engage in the trade of arms, including export to another country. The exercise of this right has to be in accordance with relevant international obligations.

In India's view, establishing and exercising control over trade in conventional arms is a matter of national responsibility that States should discharge on the basis of their obligations under both national and international law and in the light of their legitimate security and foreign policy concerns. Our discussions underline the continuing technical and political

difficulties involved in seeking to construct a single unified instrument to govern all conventional arms transfers. We believe that a step-by-step, pragmatic, realistic and consensus-driven approach would enhance the prospects of establishing an instrument of universal acceptance.

India supports the vision of a world free of the threat of landmines in which individuals and communities live in a safe environment conducive to development and mine survivors are fully integrated into their societies. Since 1997, India has discontinued the production of non-detectable anti-personnel landmines and observed a moratorium on their transfer. We are contributing to international demining and rehabilitation efforts. We support the approach enshrined in Amended Protocol II of the CCW, which addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States with long borders. However, we are fully committed to the eventual elimination of anti-personnel landmines.

The availability of militarily effective alternative technologies that can perform cost-effectively the defensive function of anti-personnel landmines will facilitate the achievement of this goal. India has been participating as an observer in the meetings of the Ottawa Convention since the Review Conference held in November 2004 in Nairobi. We will be participating as an observer in the forthcoming meeting of the States Parties in Geneva.

India also remains engaged in negotiations on a protocol to the CCW on cluster munitions. We share the international community's concerns about the humanitarian impact of the irresponsible use of cluster munitions. We believe that the use of cluster munitions is legitimate if it is in accordance with international humanitarian law. Accordingly, we support the negotiation of an instrument in the CCW that strikes a balance between military and humanitarian concerns. We welcome the progress that has been made by the Group of Governmental Experts on negotiating a draft text, and look forward to concluding these negotiations so that we can add another edifice to the CCW framework.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom): I thank my colleagues for hearing me out twice during the course of today. I would like to turn our attention to the United Kingdom's position on conventional weapons.

I have already spoken about 2010 being a vintage year for progress on nuclear disarmament and

non-proliferation with the successful outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We have high hopes that, when looking back, 2010 could also turn out to be a vintage year on the conventional weapons agenda with the start of negotiations on the arms trade treaty as a key milestone.

During the Open-ended Working Group discussions in 2009, there was broad agreement that the absence of effective regulation of the international trade in conventional weapons, notably the lack of commonly agreed standards, was causing serious problems and that that needed to be addressed. In July of this year, the international community gathered in New York to start negotiating an arms trade treaty. There is an overwhelming appetite to secure a robust and effective treaty, and we have to maintain the positive engagement and momentum of the first Preparatory Committee meetings.

The arms trade treaty will not be a panacea for all the world's ills, and it is important that we do not see it as such. But it will be an important tool for addressing the most damaging effects of the unregulated trade in weapons, helping to reduce conflict and preventing arms from being used to commit human rights abuses, helping to ensure that the trade in arms does not undermine socio-economic development, and helping to stop arms from being diverted to terrorists, pirates and insurgents who then use them against our own peacekeepers and civilians. Nor does the absence of effective regulation call into question the need for a legitimate arms trade that allows States to provide for their self-defence as a right enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The establishment of common global standards for the conventional arms trade will benefit the defence industry, which wants to act responsibly. Working according to common global standards would help remove the uncertainty created by the current patchwork of existing national and regional export controls, which no longer meet the needs of business in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world where supply chains are increasingly global. Common agreed standards will help pave the way for industry collaboration and joint ventures.

The move to negotiation was an important step for the arms trade treaty, but it was only one more step in the process of achieving that treaty. Under the able

chairmanship of Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, we have every opportunity to build on the progress made, and he will need all our support to do so. The United Kingdom remains committed to providing that support and to securing a robust and effective arms trade treaty.

The United Kingdom welcomed the constructive discussions at the Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in June this year. Progress has been made, but we must now ensure that we measure the impact that the implementation of the Programme of Action has had not only on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, but also on the humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of the illicit trade.

Only through effective measurement can we gauge the success of the Programme of Action in addressing its key concerns of conflict, human suffering, terrorism, organized crime, poverty and underdevelopment. We must also consider the integration of the control of small arms and light weapons into broader conflict prevention, armed violence reduction and development strategies and interventions. We must examine how the positive outcomes of efforts to control small arms and light weapons can be maximized by linking them to those areas of related work and with other interventions that are taking place, such as justice sector reform and wider development programmes. Those are challenging yet necessary areas for further work.

In 1999, the United Kingdom ratified the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines and is proud to be part of an effort that has effectively stigmatized the use of these indiscriminate weapons. We have long since stopped the use and production of such weapons and have destroyed our stockpiles. We make a large contribution to the clearance of anti-personnel mines in areas of the world where their legacy threatens the lives and development of communities long after the conflicts themselves have been resolved. In addition, we successfully completed a four-site mine clearance pilot project in the Falkland Islands in June this year which will help inform future clearance work. We look forward to giving our update to the Meeting of States Parties in late November in

Geneva, and we will continue to promote the Convention to those who have yet to sign it.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is one of the most important disarmament treaties of recent years and is an excellent example of what can be achieved by the international community working together effectively. The United Kingdom is proud to have ratified the Convention, which comes into force for us on 1 November and will allow us to attend, as a State party, the first Meeting of the States Parties to be hosted by the Lao People's Democratic Republic next month. We are committed to continuing our work with States parties and civil society to free areas from the blight of cluster munitions and ensure that further suffering does not occur by encouraging other States to join us.

The United Kingdom is active in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention, including stockpile destruction and universalization. Perhaps most importantly, since 1999, through our Department of International Development, we have provided on average £10 million every year for the clearance of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war from the most heavily affected countries of the world. The United Kingdom is committed to maintaining this support as we go forward.

Mr. Ikongo Isekotoko (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): My country aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. On behalf of my country, I would like to make the following additional comments.

In the field of conventional weapons, the events that have taken place in recent months in the Democratic Republic of the Congo clearly illustrate our country's specific agenda as 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, in our territory in particular and in the Central African subregion in general.

Since the submission of its 2010 annual report on conventional weapons to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has obtained the following results at the national and subregional levels. From 24 to 25 April 2010, a regional workshop on small arms

and light weapons was held in Kinshasa, the capital, with the participation of the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States and Rwanda, East African States, several agencies of the United Nations system and representatives of subregional and international civil society.

From 26 to 30 April 2010, jointly with the United Nations, the Democratic Republic of the Congo organized the thirtieth meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, following which the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, which is also known as the Kinshasa Convention, was adopted. The Convention will be signed in Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of the Congo, at the thirty-first ministerial meeting of the Advisory Committee.

On 22 August 2010, the Democratic Republic of the Congo destroyed its 100,000th weapon within the framework of the United Nations Programme of Action, a first in Central Africa and a first for the States of the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States.

From 14 to 18 June, the Democratic Republic of the Congo participated in the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on small arms and light weapons, organized by the United Nations, and was represented at a very high level, as our delegation was led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is formally engaged in negotiations on an arms trade treaty and has participated in various forums, including, recently, in the Conference on Disarmament earlier this year in New York.

In their constant quest for peace and security, the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo did not hesitate to collaborate with the international community in the publication of the preliminary report of the fact-finding mission of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office into mass rapes and other human rights violations by a coalition of armed groups along

the Kibua-Mpofi road in Walikale, North Kivu, from 30 July to 2 August 2010.

The National Commission on Small Arms Control and Armed Violence Reduction, in place since 30 May 2008, which is chaired by the Minister of the Interior and Security, has entered the implementation phase and is setting up satellite offices in the country's 11 provinces.

In our statement during the general debate, we reiterated that the Democratic Republic of the Congo would continue its determined actions towards disarmament, the fight against the proliferation and for the best use of conventional and other weapons, which pose a real threat to the country. There can be no doubt today as to the will of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue the fight, despite its meagre resources as a post-conflict country. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, after decades of war that resulted in more than 6 million deaths and the uncontrolled looting of its natural resources, is one of the few countries in Africa to have achieved such results in the field of disarmament and taken irreversible steps in the framework of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo would like to emphasize a single point with regard to the Central African subregion, namely, the successful implementation of the Kinshasa Convention, which was reached with such difficulty following several stages of negotiations beginning in 2003, from Brazzaville to Sao Tome to Kinshasa — at least seven years of negotiations all told. Collective success will have been achieved when each State party to the Convention has done its part to implement the measures adopted. At that stage, we will have made progress towards ensuring greater safety for the Central African subregion.

Our country assumes, and will continue to assume, its responsibilities through concrete actions such as those mentioned previously. We note simply that an improvement in the strategic context, in which each of us plays a part, always precedes each new stage of the arms control and reduction process. Similarly, only a sustained dynamic aimed at easing the serious tensions that affect the Central African subregion in various but always extremely difficult ways will make decisive progress possible in the area of the non-proliferation and curbing of those weapons.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of the Congo reiterates its support for the continued existence and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, as it is the ideal decision-making forum in the field of disarmament for all States. We also call for a robust and binding arms trade treaty for all States Members of the United Nations and appeal to the various donors and United Nations agencies to financially and materially assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo so as to enable it to achieve success in its disarmament programme activities.

The Chair: I would kindly ask the interpreters to give us a few more minutes in order that the representative of China can deliver his statement.

Mr. Zhang Junan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank you, Mr. Chair, for arranging it so that I can deliver my statement. I also thank the Secretariat for its cooperation.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). As an important international legal framework in the field of arms control dealing with humanitarian issues, the CCW has become an ever more important instrument whose vitality has continuously increased during the past 30 years. There has also been steady progress in the implementation of Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices, as well as a gradual increase in the number of signatory States to the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War. The Group of Governmental Experts on cluster munitions has also carried out hard work over the past three years. The CCW is proving to have an indispensable role in addressing the humanitarian concerns caused by certain conventional weapons, such as landmines.

The Chinese Government firmly supports and actively participates in the international conventional arms control process and attaches importance to and supports the work of the CCW. The Chinese Government is dedicated, on the basis of a people-centred paradigm, to addressing the humanitarian concerns caused by certain conventional weapons. China supports efforts to continuously strengthen and improve relevant international legal mechanisms in the field of conventional arms control while addressing, in a balanced manner, both humanitarian concerns and

legitimate security needs, so as to enhance international peace and security.

China ratified the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War in April and deposited its instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General in June. Protocol V will officially enter into force in China on 10 December. China has become a high contracting party to the CCW and each of its five Protocols. China will continuously and earnestly fulfil its obligations under the CCW and its Protocols and will continue to be dedicated to enhancing the effectiveness and universality of the CCW.

Since 1998, the Chinese Government provided mine clearance assistance to nearly 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America by providing financial donations, mine clearance equipment and personnel training. This year, China offered various forms of mine clearance assistance to Sri Lanka, the Sudan and Afghanistan. China also provides mine victim assistance to Peru and Ethiopia, contributing, within its capacities, to the reintegration of mine-affected persons. The Chinese Government will continue to work towards humankind's common goal of a mine-free world.

China attaches great importance to the humanitarian concerns caused by cluster munitions and supports the work of the CCW's Group of Governmental Experts to negotiate a protocol that addresses this issue while striking a balance between legitimate security needs and humanitarian considerations. China commends the work of the Group and appreciates the efforts by the Philippine chairmanship to promote the negotiations. We believe that the latest version of the Chair's text reflects the consensus achieved so far during the negotiations of the past three years and attempts to strike a good balance between legitimate security needs and humanitarian concerns. China supports the Group in continuing its negotiations on the basis of that text and calls upon all parties concerned to make joint efforts in a practical and cooperative manner to narrow differences and broaden consensus, so as to reach a positive outcome on this issue as soon as possible.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons causes regional instability and fuels humanitarian crises. China is fully aware of such concerns, has always attached great importance to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and has

been supportive of, and actively participated in, the relevant international efforts in this area. China upholds the notion that the comprehensive and effective implementation of existing international instruments such as the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, is of vital importance to the work in the area of combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. China is ready to enhance coordination and cooperation with all parties to eliminate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at an early date.

Last June, we witnessed the success of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Progress in the Implementation of the Programme of Action. The adoption by consensus of its Final Document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3) shows that the international community has a common aspiration on a number of important issues, such as combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and strengthening international cooperation and assistance. China believes that poverty and social unrest are two of the primary reasons that give rise to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We maintain that a comprehensive approach should be taken to address both the symptoms and root causes. The international community should take effective measures to help the countries concerned to achieve economic development, eliminate hunger, poverty and social injustice, and maintain peace and social stability, so as to create conditions for rooting out the causes of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

China has always taken a prudent and responsible attitude towards arms export and exercises strict and effective control over arms exports in accordance with its international obligations and national laws and regulations. The Chinese Government has serious concerns about regional instability and humanitarian

crises fuelled by the illicit trafficking of conventional weapons. The international community must take measures to regulate the international arms trade and prevent arms from being diverted from legal channels to illegal markets.

China participated constructively in the work of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. China believes that arms trade issues are complex and sensitive in nature and that the international community should adhere to the principle of coordination and consensus and, in a step-by-step manner, conduct open and transparent discussions on these issues in order to satisfy the reasonable political, security and economic demands of all parties concerned. China is willing to continue to make joint efforts with all parties to properly address the issue of the trade in illegal arms.

China attaches importance to military transparency and has been committed to enhancing mutual trust in the military field with other countries. In 2007, China joined the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures and since then has returned to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. China supports and will actively participate in the work of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures.

The Chair: I wish to inform members that we have managed to exhaust less than two thirds of today's list of speakers on conventional weapons. We will therefore hear the remaining speakers tomorrow morning before turning to the topic of other disarmament measures and international security. I would kindly ask delegations to consider delivering a shortened version and to distribute their full texts in the room.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.