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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga. (Romania)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

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

The Chair (*spoke in French*): The Committee will now hear from a panel under the cluster “Regional disarmament and security” and then continue its consideration of the cluster “Conventional weapons”.

It is therefore my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to our panellists for this afternoon: the Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Mary Soliman; the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Mr. Anselme Yabouri; the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Ms. Nancy Robinson; and the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Yuriy Kryvonos.

I will first give our panellists the floor to make their statements. Thereafter, we will change to an informal mode to afford delegations the opportunity to ask questions. I urge our panellists to kindly keep their statements concise to ensure that we have adequate time for an interactive discussion on the subject.

I now give the floor to Ms. Soliman.

Ms. Soliman (Chief, Regional Disarmament Branch, Office for Disarmament Affairs): I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to address the First Committee under the cluster “Regional disarmament and security”.

I am pleased to provide a brief overview of the work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs’ Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The Committee will also hear from my colleagues, the Directors of each of those Centres, who will provide an overview of the projects and activities undertaken by the Centres. A more detailed account of the Regional Centres’ activities since the convening of the Committee last year can be found in the reports of the Secretary-General (A/73/126, A/73/127 and A/73/151) that are before the Committee for its consideration.

The Regional Centres continue to work with Member States and regional and non-governmental organizations to promote, facilitate and strengthen regional cooperation, dialogue and confidence-building and to provide capacity-building, training and legal and technical assistance to support Member States in their efforts to implement regional and international treaties and other instruments.

They also support Member States in their efforts to prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in particular their diversion to non-State armed groups; enhance physical security and stockpile management of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition; assist Member States in security-sector-reform efforts; support the implementation of Security Council resolutions; and promote the role of women

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in peace and security. In a nutshell, their activities span the entire gamut of issues on the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control agenda, ranging from conventional weapons to weapons of mass destruction and emerging issues.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs and its three Regional Centres continue to be guided by the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals that it contains were officially adopted by all Member States, while in May of this year, the Secretary-General launched his *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, with 40 action points. Those two frameworks provide further direction and guidance.

Given today's fast-paced developments and limited resources, the need to forge common approaches and improve collective responses to peace and security challenges is greater than ever. Therefore, developing mutually beneficial partnerships within the United Nations family, as well as with regional organizations, will facilitate a cohesive approach and promote strategic regional dialogue on relevant and pressing issues.

To further the implementation of the mandates entrusted to it by Member States in that context, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its Regional Centres will continue to foster existing partnerships and cooperation with natural and long-standing partners within the United Nations family, as well as with regional organizations and other stakeholders. Emphasis will also be placed on developing new partnerships, while applying a synergistic approach and building on the comparative advantages and complementarities of those partners.

In addition and in order to better support Member States, the Regional Centres will work more closely with beneficiary States in their respective regions to identify strategic priorities and gaps where assistance is most needed and to develop projects, in collaboration with those States, that would effectively address those challenges and set clear and realistic goals.

The focus of those efforts will be on developing multidisciplinary, multi-partner projects of longer duration to address in a comprehensive and concerted manner the different aspects of those gaps and bolster national capacity to the advantage of beneficiary States. It is hoped that such an approach will also facilitate

fundraising efforts and encourage donor engagement and interest.

I would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to those Member States and organizations that have made financial and/or in-kind contributions to the Regional Centres. I would also like to register our gratitude to the Centres' host countries — Nepal, Peru and Togo — for their long-lasting support. As the Committee is aware, the Regional Centres depend upon extrabudgetary resources to fund their substantive programmes and activities. I therefore encourage and invite all Member States to support the Centres through voluntary contributions. Their financial and political support allows the Regional Centres to maintain and expand their active engagement at the regional level.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Yabouri.

Mr. Yabouri (Director, United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa) (*spoke in French*): This statement of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), which I have had the honour to direct since September 2017, takes stock of the Centre's activities, challenges and perspectives during the period from January to October 2018.

During the reporting period, the Centre continued to support Member States of the African region, at their request, and to work with intergovernmental, academic research and civil-society institutions on the issues of security, disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and peace education.

(*spoke in English*)

The report of the Secretary-General (A/73/151) on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa provides detailed information on UNREC activities during the reporting period. Therefore, my remarks will focus on highlighting some key aspects of the security context, the Centre's achievements and challenges and the way forward.

The African continent has continued to face significant challenges to peace, security and stability caused by the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, mainly in the hands of armed and terrorist groups in the Sahel-Sahara and Central Africa and criminal groups in the remaining parts of Africa. The fact that the crises in Libya and Somalia have yet to be sustainably addressed continues to fuel the many

security hotspots across the Sahel, as they remain major safe havens and sources of illegal small arms and light weapons for terrorist fighters and transnational criminal groups.

Of particular concern is the fact that attacks by terrorist fighters and armed groups are slowly expanding further south in both western and central Africa — towards the Gulf of Guinea and the Mozambique Channel. As a result, the security of civilian populations and Government institutions is at stake, thus resulting, among other consequences, in significant flows of refugees, internally displaced peoples and internal and external migrants, who are easy prey for human traffickers and recruiters for armed and terrorist groups. That situation calls for additional coordinated efforts by the international community to address the fundamental instabilities in Libya and Somalia and develop innovative peace and disarmament initiatives that are rooted in human security.

Against that background, UNREC is quite logically faced with a surge of requests for assistance from Member States in the region, which has led the Centre to expand its operations and double its staff within one year. During the reporting period, the Centre provided multifaceted legal, capacity-building and practical assistance to two thirds of African States across the whole spectrum of conventional arms, nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons and related arms.

Since the majority of weapons utilized by armed and terrorist fighters are diverted from Government-owned stocks — whether domestic or foreign — the Centre placed particular emphasis on providing assistance to Member States to improve the physical security and stockpile management of weapons and ammunition through the rehabilitation and construction of storage facilities compliant with international standards. Emphasis was also placed on capacity-building for Government officials, parliamentarians, civil servants, defence and security officers, United Nations peacekeeping personnel, civil-society organizations and journalists who focus on that subject matter.

Much effort was invested in assisting Member States in the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and related subregional instruments on the control of small arms and light weapons, such as the Economic Community of West African States

Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, the Kinshasa Convention, the Nairobi Protocol and the Southern African Development Community Protocol, in line with the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative of the African Union (AU).

More emphasis was placed this year on peace education, particularly targeting African young people and including awareness campaigns via friendly and pragmatic channels, such as social media and international broadcasting on radio and television stations that cover Africa. One such campaign was carried out on the occasion of the International Day of Peace on 21 September.

More than 900 beneficiaries from all regions of the African continent participated in person in the Centre's programmes, while additional stakeholders from all African Member States benefited indirectly. To support the Centre's expanding activities and personnel, new spacious and modern-style premises were graciously offered by the host country, Togo, whose authorities, jointly with Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu, inaugurated the new building on 5 July.

The Centre further strengthened its partnerships and synergies with other United Nations entities, including the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in order to better deliver as one, in compliance with the key recommendation to enhance cooperation among United Nations entities, as articulated in Secretary-General Guterres' *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*.

In delivering its mandate, UNREC serves 54 African States populated by 1.2 billion people, covering more than 30 million square kilometres. Yet limited financial resources remain the most significant challenge facing the Centre. That is why we encourage pledges, commitment and voluntary contributions from Member States. I would like to add my voice to those of the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs in expressing gratitude for the political, in-kind and financial support provided to the Centre by some Member States and regional organizations.

I would like to thank in particular the African Union and African subregional organizations, the European Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, France, Switzerland, Japan and China for their support during the reporting period. My sincere thanks go especially to the Government of Togo for providing modern and spacious premises to serve as the new headquarters for the Centre and to support its expanding activities and staff.

While we provide them with assistance on arms control, Member States in our area of responsibility increasingly draw our attention to the necessity to help them forge links with efforts that address the fundamental fragilities that render their local communities, especially women and young people, vulnerable to violence by criminal, armed and terrorist groups. Addressing weak State presence, distrust among security forces and local populations and limited access to quality education, job opportunities and basic public services is, for them, a prerequisite to achieving sustainable impacts in arms control programmes and building resilient societies.

Therefore, UNREC is engaged in a paradigm shift to overcome traditional silos and strengthen partnerships with sister United Nations entities, the AU and African subregional organizations, drawing on each organization's respective comparative advantage to rationalize resources and optimize impact. UNREC focuses in that context on the "Disarmament that saves lives" and "Strengthening partnerships for disarmament" components of the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, in pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals 4, 16 and 17, which promote quality education and peaceful and inclusive societies through enhanced partnerships.

In conclusion, I would like to again stress that the Regional Centre needs Member States' continued and increased political, financial and in-kind support to advance the United Nations agenda for a more peaceful, stable and secure African continent that contributes to global peace and security.

The Chair: I now give the floor to Ms. Robinson.

Ms. Robinson (Director, Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean): I will outline the key activities carried

out by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) over the past year, their impact and the way forward.

Since we met this time last year, UNLIREC has undertaken over 70 activities in 15 different countries, targeting more than 1,800 national authorities, security-sector agents and young persons. That made it a very busy year of supporting States' efforts to improve arms control, advance the disarmament agenda and prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), with the highest female participation rate on record at 37 per cent — up 3 per cent from last year.

In efforts to bolster the framework of non-proliferation treaties and conventions in order to help prevent proliferators and criminal organizations from obtaining WMDs, UNLIREC provided hands-on legal support and practical training to eight States across the region. Work also included helping States to draft national action plans, in accordance with resolution 1540 (2004), and guiding States through the legal terrain necessary to bring their national legislation into closer alignment with the Biological Weapons Convention. Perhaps most emblematic of its work in this area was the support provided by the Centre to Member States in developing national control lists and licensing guides to better control the proliferation of dual-use items, which was widely recognized by both States and partners alike.

In the light of the fact that today's young people are more connected, dynamic and engaged than ever, UNLIREC intensified its work with young people in four countries of the region to help attain the global disarmament goals. This time around, UNLIREC joined forces with the United Nations Volunteers to guide young people in developing practical indicators at the community level in order to measure the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In an effort to manifest the spirit of resolution 65/69 and contribute to the equitable representation of women at all decision-making levels, in particular in the security sector, UNLIREC convened its first international symposium on women and security, bringing together more than 100 women from the region to discuss strategies to promote the women and security agenda and explore approaches to strengthening the role of women in arms control. That forum was also

used to launch the third edition of UNLIREC's popular publication on forces of change, which showcases the contribution of Latin American and Caribbean women to shaping the security of our region.

At the core of requests from Member States was the appeal for practical measures to combat illicit arms trafficking and reduce armed violence. In response, UNLIREC worked with Central American and Caribbean law enforcement on maintaining integrity while managing firearm-related crime scenes and on avoiding the diversion of weapons at entry and exit points through state-of-the-art X-ray training leading to instantaneous interdictions on the ground. In recognition of the fact that firearms marking represents a key arms-control measure to prevent the diversion of licit weapons, improve accountability and enhance the traceability of illicit weapons, UNLIREC lent on-site technical assistance to Caribbean States in their marking of weapons.

To feed the growing public debate on the need to control the ammunitions trade and prevent its trafficking, the Centre generated content-rich research on control practices and trends in the region. The research findings are aimed at contributing to the development of sound ammunition-control policies across the region.

As a means of addressing the increasing role played by the private security sector, UNLIREC worked with private security companies to improve the physical security of their weapons-storage facilities, in line with the International Small Arms Control Standards and the United Nations SaferGuard's International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, and undertook baseline studies, in collaboration with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, to contribute to national debate in the fields of good governance, oversight and regulation and small arms control within the sector.

Finally, UNLIREC's support for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was demonstrated through specialized training that targeted import- and export-control authorities and support in the creation of national commissions responsible for overseeing the execution of the Treaty.

Now that we are approaching 2019, what can States expect from UNLIREC to help them improve the safety and security of the Latin American and Caribbean region?

In line with the Centre's mandate, the Secretary-General's ambitious disarmament agenda, the 2030 Agenda and the needs expressed by States, the Centre is eager to expand its technical training at entry and exit points to avoid weapons diversion and contribute to national policy debates and the development of arms- and ammunition-control regulations through technically sound research. ATT implementation will continue to be a priority, with the establishment of effective controls over the transfer of elements under the Treaty's scope, while young people will remain vital beneficiaries and partners in measuring illicit trafficking and community security through participatory indicators based on Goal 16 of the SDGs.

The Centre will also launch baseline work and outreach events to tackle the mounting presence of firearms in academic settings with a view to contributing to sound programmatic development to address that rising threat. In the field of WMD non-proliferation, UNLIREC will work with lawmakers to draft WMD legislation, deliver practical training to law-enforcement officials and operationalize national control lists and strategic trade controls.

Finally, in further support for the women and security agenda, UNLIREC is currently undertaking legal reviews to cross-reference small-arms laws with domestic-violence provisions in Central America and the Caribbean. Those studies include recommendations to establish restrictions on the acquisition of guns and ammunition by those who have been convicted of interpersonal violence into small-arms legislation.

UNLIREC will also increase access to training for Caribbean and Central American women so that they may effectively combat illicit arms and ammunition trafficking and work hand in hand with policymakers to strengthen the gender accountability of legal frameworks vis-à-vis armed violence and its link to women's security.

In closing, I wish to thank our host country, Peru, and our other donors — Canada, Germany, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Sweden and the United States of America — as well as the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security and the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund, for their indispensable and ongoing support, without which none of the activities that I have mentioned today would have been possible. I appeal to Member States, in particular those of our region, to continue supporting the Centre through bilateral and/or in-kind contributions,

and I call on regional organizations to knock on our door to explore viable cooperation opportunities.

The Chair: I now give the floor to Mr. Kryvonos.

Mr. Kryvonos (Director, United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific): I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to report to the First Committee. This statement will provide an overview of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) for the past year, beginning in November 2017.

The Centre continued its project activities to support Asia-Pacific States in implementing arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements, as mandated by the General Assembly and streamlined by the recently introduced disarmament agenda. With all its activities in the region, UNRCPD contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. During the reporting period, the Centre implemented 10 projects at both the regional and national levels that involved 400 participants from Governments, parliaments, academia and civil society. It also engaged in six collaborative projects.

The Centre extended its commitment to promoting dialogue among Member States. In November 2017, in cooperation with the Governments of Japan and the Republic of Korea, it organized two annual conferences on the issues and challenges facing disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. The conferences contributed to security and confidence-building and efforts to seek solutions for complex issues in those areas, both globally and in the Asia-Pacific region.

In cooperation with the Geneva branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the Centre organized two Asian regional workshops, held in Thailand and Kazakhstan in March and September, respectively, on the consultative process of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group.

With respect to building national capacity and providing technical assistance, the Centre implemented a number of projects to assist States of the Asia-Pacific region in implementing commitments relating to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Arms Trade Treaty and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

The Centre organized a South-East Asia regional seminar, held in Phnom Penh in December, on the illicit trafficking and diversion of small arms, conventional arms and ammunition. The seminar facilitated regional dialogue on identifying the main trends and challenges related to the illicit flow of arms and ammunition, as well as on strengthening subregional coordination and cooperation with the World Customs Organization and INTERPOL in order to prevent arms diversion and trafficking. Representatives of national law-enforcement agencies also discussed the advantages of developing national and regional action plans to prevent the diversion of arms and fight their illicit trafficking. That project was funded by the Government of Germany.

The Regional Centre also organized a regional meeting of Asian States, held in Bangkok in March, to prepare for the third Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms.

The Centre also implemented this year a joint UNODA-Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe project to support the regional implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in Central Asia and Mongolia, which was launched in July 2016. The main outcome of the project was the submission of national implementation action plans by Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to the 1540 Committee. The project was funded by the European Union.

The submission by Timor-Leste of its initial report to the 1540 Committee, following the national inter-agency meeting held in October 2017, was another outcome of UNRCPD activity in supporting the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in the region.

As an example of the great importance it attaches to promoting women's active participation in decision-making processes on arms control and disarmament at the national, regional and global levels, this year UNRCPD launched a regional project on the theme "Gun violence and illicit small-arms trafficking from a gender perspective". The Centre successfully conducted two subregional workshops — in Bangkok for South-East Asian countries and in Kathmandu for South Asian countries.

Funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR), the workshops brought together representatives of

non-governmental organizations that focus on gender-empowerment issues and parliamentarians from States of the region. They exchanged ideas and discussed joint initiatives to address the challenge of illicit small arms and their specific impact on women.

UNRCPD remained involved with the peace and disarmament education and advocacy activities of the United Nations to promote global agreements in the field of arms control and disarmament by engaging with officers of the Nepalese security forces and students of high schools and universities in Kathmandu. In the framework of International Youth Day, the Centre organized an event for discussions on peace and disarmament with young people. With UNRCPD staff, more than 80 students and teachers received a unique opportunity to discuss what peace and disarmament means to youth and what they can do to actively engage in meaningful ways with their communities, country and region.

The Centre actively cooperated with other organizations and stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region, including other United Nations entities, parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations. The collaborative projects focused on providing training on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; promoting confidence-building measures; the implementation and universalization of arms-control and non-proliferation instruments; enhancing the women and peace and security agenda; and engaging with parliamentarians on achieving target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on reducing illegal arms flows.

The achievements of the Centre were made possible by the support of our sponsors — both donor States and countries of the region that assisted with in-kind contributions to our projects. We highly appreciate the consistent and generous support provided to the Centre's operations by the host Government of Nepal. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to our donors: Australia, China, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Thailand and the members of the UNSCAR Trust Fund.

Bearing in mind our mission to support nations throughout the Asia-Pacific region in building their arms-control capacity, strengthening regional dialogue and promoting confidence-building on disarmament and non-proliferation, UNRCPD continues to work on

conceiving the new programmes and projects that we plan to implement next year.

The Centre has developed a programme to support the regional implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in South Asia; a series of project proposals to strengthen States' capacities to control small arms and conventional ammunition and prevent their diversion; and a programme on disarmament education for youth in Asia and the Pacific with a view to its further application in other regions.

With the support and commitment of regional States, our donors and other regional stakeholders, we look forward to continuing to carry out our mission on security matters, while working closely with the host Government of Nepal. The Centre continues to work with donor States and other funding bodies to secure resources for new projects, laying the groundwork for activities in 2019.

The Chair: In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I shall now suspend the meeting to afford delegations an opportunity to hold an interactive discussion with our panellists through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 3.50 p.m. and resumed at 3.55 p.m.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): The Committee will now resume its consideration of the cluster "Conventional weapons". I once again urge all speakers to kindly observe the established time limits.

Mr. Mohd Nasir (Malaysia): Malaysia associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (see A/C.1/73/PV.17) for this cluster and the statement delivered by the representative of Ireland on explosive weapons in populated areas (see A/C.1/73/PV.18).

While maintaining our efforts to eradicate all weapons of mass destruction, we should not lose sight of the devastating consequences of the use of conventional weapons. Malaysia commends the Secretary-General for placing particular emphasis on that subject in his agenda for disarmament, released earlier this year. Malaysia joins members of the international community in calling for further action to reduce the serious humanitarian impact of such weapons, especially on the lives of civilians.

It is imperative that effective measures be established to prevent the diversion of conventional weapons to illegitimate ends. Recognizing the important role of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in countering the illicit trade and diversion of conventional weapons and arms, Malaysia signed the Treaty in 2013 and will continue to uphold its spirit and work towards its ratification. We believe that the ATT will augment existing national policies concerning the control of such weapons, while acknowledging the rights of States to utilize those arms judiciously in the interests of security, self-defence, research and trade. Malaysia is also considering working with the ATT States parties and international bodies to explore other initiatives in order to fulfil its obligations under the Treaty.

Malaysia has implemented a number of domestic legal provisions, including the Arms Act of 1960 and the Strategic Trade Act of 2010, to govern the circulation of conventional weapons. We have also identified particular elements of our national legislation that could be improved to ensure the full and effective implementation of the ATT. We are ready to work with States parties and the relevant international bodies to assess how we may best meet our obligations pursuant to the Treaty.

Malaysia fervently hopes that issues such as the illegal trafficking of arms will receive continued attention from multilateral forums, primarily those of the United Nations. Sustained action by the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, among others, is essential in that regard.

Mr. Baek Yong Jin (Republic of Korea): Small arms and light weapons continue to be the weapons of choice in armed conflicts and outbreaks of violence around the world. The vast scale of their use has made them the de facto weapons of mass destruction of our age and a dire threat to international peace and security. We cannot just stand idly by. The international community can and must work harder to impede the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of those weapons.

It is of vital importance in that context to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. We welcome the outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) of the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action, which was

held in June. We believe that meeting has definitively enlarged the basis for making more substantive efforts to control small arms and light weapons.

The Republic of Korea, together with Australia, has joined international efforts by submitting a draft resolution on preventing and combating illicit brokering activities since 2008. We are submitting that draft resolution for the last time, based on our joint assessment that the resolution has fulfilled its purpose in advancing unified efforts, especially following the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which addresses illicit brokering activities in a much broader context. We hope that our decision to phase out an existing resolution will set a positive precedent in our efforts to streamline the work of the First Committee.

As one of the original signatories to the ATT, we would like to reaffirm our strong support for that legally binding document, which provides standards for the transfer of conventional weapons at the global level. My delegation welcomes the progress made in the five years since its adoption and looks forward to further efforts across its three core pillars: universalization, effective implementation, and transparency and reporting.

Universalization is of particular relevance in Asia given the limited membership of the ATT among the countries of the region. Broader regional membership is an issue on which the Republic of Korea intends to focus in the build-up to the fifth Conference of States Parties, given that the ATT directly supports Sustainable Development Goal 16 and has a spillover effect on other important Sustainable Development Goals, including those on gender equality.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) as an effective platform for addressing humanitarian concerns, while taking into account legitimate security needs and military necessities. My delegation is of the view that more efforts should be made in that regard to advance towards the universalization of the Convention. We appreciate in that context the sponsorship programme, which serves as a useful tool for encouraging relevant countries to join and implement the CCW. We also believe that more efforts should be made to address the threat posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and welcome in that context the adoption of a political declaration on IEDs at the fifth Review Conference of the CCW.

The Republic of Korea welcomes the recent adoption of the report (CCW/GGE.1/2018/3) of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on lethal autonomous weapons systems, which is another meaningful outcome of the CCW process this year. My delegation hopes that we can draw on this year's achievement so that next year we may further improve our understanding of outstanding issues, including those related to human-machine interactions, within the framework of the GGE.

Lastly, my delegation would like to express its concern about the financial situation of the CCW. We believe that it would be in everyone's interests to find a feasible solution, thus creating a more stable environment for future discussions.

Mrs. Liolocha (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Morocco on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16) and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.18), respectively.

I would like to recall that the uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons remains an ongoing concern and an obstacle to peace that hinders development in general. That is the case in the Great Lakes subregion, in particular in my country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and that is why we are resolutely engaged in fighting arms proliferation through several political and legal instruments at the subregional, regional and international levels, with the aim of increasing our control of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons.

My country welcomes the various initiatives already taken in this area, including the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament. Although the Democratic Republic of the Congo is not yet a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty, my delegation is of the view that the Treaty illustrates the effectiveness of multilateralism in addressing that issue of common concern and will help to put an end to illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

We must look ahead and meet the challenges of the future, because our efforts in the area of conventional weapons will contribute to strengthening peace and international security. The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its five Protocols since the

human, social, economic and political consequences of the uncontrolled proliferation of those weapons would otherwise cause irreparable harm.

With regard to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, my delegation remains committed to continuing the demining process in affected areas. Since the beginning of its activities in 2002, the United Nations Mine Action Service and other partners have supported the efforts of the Congolese Government to ensure a safe environment for its people.

My country therefore hopes that the issue of conventional arms will always be treated with the utmost attention given its negative consequences, and we will continue to work constructively on that important issue.

Mr. Huot (Cambodia): Cambodia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Viet Nam on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16) and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/73/PV.17), respectively.

The presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war still pose a threat to human security and the national development agenda. Cambodia, one of the most landmine-polluted countries, is still suffering from unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war hidden underground, either in farm fields or along our borders. Even though the number of victims has decreased over the years, there is still a lot of land to clear and many people continue to suffer, which is a heavy burden on our economy and society.

The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority held a national mine action conference in May to celebrate the country's accomplishments in mine action over the past 25 years and to prepare its future mine-clearing plans. As of December 2017, 1,700 square kilometres of affected land had been cleared, resulting in the destruction of 1.25 million mines and 2.7 million explosive remnants of war. Despite our hard work, 2,000 square kilometres of affected land remain to be cleared.

Recognizing the need to address mine issues regionally along with other ASEAN member States, Cambodia decided to establish the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre in Phnom Penh. It serves as

a regional centre of excellence for addressing the humanitarian aspects of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war in interested ASEAN member States. It also facilitates cooperation with other countries and the relevant institutions, including the United Nations Mine Action Service and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

Small arms and light weapons continue to destroy thousands of human lives every day instead of protecting livelihoods around the world. Armed conflicts inflict injuries, disabilities, hunger and homelessness on millions of human beings and also create widows, orphans and refugees. Cambodia shares the concerns of First Committee members about the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, as well as their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions.

Recognizing the severity of the problems surrounding small arms and light weapons both in the region and in our own country as well, Cambodia has integrated the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects into its national agenda in order to manage small arms and light weapons and ensure peace and security in the country. We strongly believe that the Programme of Action will provide a means to effectively prevent and combat illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We call on Member States to abide by and properly implement it.

Ms. Haile (Eritrea): I would like to express my delegation's satisfaction with the manner that you, Sir, are steering the work of the First Committee.

While my delegation fully aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16) and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.18) by the representatives of Indonesia and Morocco, respectively, I would like to briefly stress the following.

Conventional weapons have been the major instruments of destruction during the past decade, particularly in the third world. The improvement in production technology and the sophistication of the proliferation, transfer and circulation of illicit small arms and light weapons have had an enormous impact and have undermined peace and security, resulting in destabilizing effects across several countries and regions. The strategic, political, commercial and security interests of States and the lack of faithful

implementation of the existing international and regional commitments and obligations have hindered progress towards meaningful regulation.

The unauthorized use of those weapons by non-State actors and their widespread and uncontrolled access to them indeed also remains a threat. It is with serious concern that we continue to note that the proliferation and transfer of illicit small arms and light weapons have had a major impact on developing countries, particularly those in which State control is weak or non-existent. Such security gaps enable terrorist groups and other criminal networks to take advantage by advancing chaos and insecurity in fragile States.

The international community must in that connection stand up against steps or actions that undermine the security and stability of countries. Eritrea reiterates its firm position that our actions must be guided by our respect for the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and possess conventional arms and their parts and components for self-defence and security needs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The proliferation and misuse of small arms is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that transcends political boundaries and requires regional and international solutions. Eritrea expresses its unwavering commitment to continue working with regional States and the international community to control and put an end to the illegal trade and transfer of those weapons. Eritrea looks forward to the full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument, as those are vital elements in promoting security and sustainable development.

As a nation that has recently emerged from 30 years of war for independence and respect for its sovereign national territory, Eritrea is among several countries that has experienced the horrors of war and the human suffering resulting from the indiscriminate use of landmines. We attach great importance in that regard to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and its full implementation.

In conclusion, I would like to seize this opportunity to stress that weapons only fuel insecurity. A conflict-free world can be achieved only through strong political

commitment and a determined and shared responsibility for multilateralism.

Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union on 25 October (see A/C.1/73/PV.18). I would like to make a few points in my national capacity.

The objective of disarmament and arms control is ultimately to save lives. It does not happen in a vacuum. As the Secretary-General highlights in his Agenda for Disarmament, there is a direct link between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and disarmament efforts, and we need a more integrated approach in addressing the two.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons remains a grave cause of concern, as it exacerbates conflict, contributes to violence and puts stability and international security at risk. No efforts should be spared in countering that proliferation and preventing diversion. In that regard, we welcome the outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) of this year's third Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It provides a good basis for guiding our efforts in further strengthening the global regime against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among other things.

The case for the need to control ammunition has been made on various occasions, and it remains valid. We cannot have truly effective measures against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons without controlling ammunition — both supply and stockpiles. If such control is put in place and vigorously exercised, there will be fewer cases of diversion.

The universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty remains a priority for my country. The Treaty promotes robust export-control systems and responsible trade. So far, strict export-control implementation has proved to be the most effective measure in preventing diversion. The international norm on responsible trade in arms set by the Arms Trade Treaty plays an important role in preventing atrocities, curbing terrorism and promoting international security.

The Mine-Ban Convention is a success story. That instrument has proved in practice that disarmament saves lives, and it has created a global norm that has

positively altered the livelihoods of whole nations. However, much remains to be done. Efforts towards the full implementation of the Maputo Action Plan 2014-2019 should continue.

The year 2018 marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. While it is encouraging that the implementation of the Dubrovnik Action Plan is on track, reports of the continued use of cluster munitions are highly disturbing.

The increasing use of explosive weapons in populated areas has devastating effects on civilians. Any use of conventional weapons by any party in armed conflict should be in full compliance with international humanitarian law. In that regard, we welcome the ongoing efforts made within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to raise awareness of the issue.

Lethal autonomous weapon systems pose yet another challenge that needs to be addressed by the international community. We welcome the progress made this year by the open-ended Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems, namely, on the agreed guiding principles to reaffirm that international law also applies to autonomous weapon systems and that future weapon systems need to remain under human control. Human beings must always remain in control of such weapons. That is the only way we can ensure accountability and compliance with international law. Bulgaria shares the view that the use of unmanned armed vehicles should be strictly consistent with international law. Further in-depth discussions on the use of such technologies need to be held.

Mr. Moreno (Israel): I will deliver an abbreviated version of my statement to adhere to the time limit; the full version will be available on PaperSmart.

Conventional weapons play an important role in our daily lives. Problems emerge once conventional weapons are not in authorized hands or are abused to promote radical agendas. It is clear that States need to abide by their international obligations not to proliferate conventional weapons but rather to fight proliferation and be effective in the management of their stockpiles.

In the past few years, conventional weapons have been acquired and have proliferated in the Middle East region in unprecedented quantities and qualities. Those weapons find their way into the hands of oppressive

regimes, terrorist organizations and terror-sponsoring countries, which use them to spread violence and extremism. It should be noted that some States in the Middle East region not only do not try to stop or curb the activities of terrorist organizations, but consistently encourage, support and back them.

In that context, Iran, in an attempt to gain regional dominance and spread its extremist ideology, is the biggest proliferator of conventional arms in the region, using proxy organizations and entities to inflict terror and engage in hostilities. In other cases, such as in Syria, the regime tragically uses its weapons, conventional and non-conventional alike, against its own population, and the death toll is outrageous.

The threat posed by some weapons systems once they are in the wrong hands — such as man-portable air defence systems, short-range rockets, mortars and surface-to-air missiles — is immense. Weapons in general, and those weapons systems in particular, should be in the hands only of responsible sovereign States that comply with the international norms and standards that they have undertaken to abide by.

The United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Tracing Instrument are important instruments in combating the illicit trade in and diversion of arms. Israel welcomes the extensive work and achievements so far, but acknowledges that great challenges still lie ahead. The third Review Conference was valuable, and Israel would like to again express its gratitude to the President, Ambassador Brunet of France, for his leadership, as well as to his team and the Secretariat. The success of that instrument lies in its full and efficient implementation.

In that regard, we believe that there is a need to focus on the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and its International Tracing Instrument and stay true to its scope, rather than try to inject into it other elements that are not part of that scope. For example, we believe that the Programme of Action is not the right venue with regard to ammunition, as another venue has already been chosen — the group of governmental experts (GGE) meeting in 2020. Going beyond the scope of the Programme of Action will make its implementation more difficult and create bigger gaps in that implementation.

Israel values the mechanism of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and submits its report on an annual basis. It is very unfortunate that in the Middle East region, Israel is one of the few countries to submit annual reports. Israel urges all States to submit their reports, subject to their national security considerations. Israel has submitted its military expenditure report as well, and its report on small arms and light weapons is a work in progress.

Israel acknowledges the significance of the Arms Trade Treaty as a milestone in the international community's pledge to enhance efforts to curb illicit transfers of arms. The fourth Conference of States Parties was valuable, and Israel would like to express its gratitude to the President, Ambassador Takamizawa of Japan. Israel, as a signatory State, supports the goals and purposes of the Treaty, and many of the Treaty's principles and standards are already embodied in Israel's robust export policy and control mechanisms.

In Israel's view, the fact that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons strives to strike the necessary balance between military necessity and humanitarian considerations in the application of international humanitarian law makes it an important instrument in the field of conventional weapons. It is also an important forum for discussing challenges in that sphere.

With regards to the GGE meeting on lethal autonomous weapon systems, we would like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill of India for his leadership. We found the deliberations fruitful.

Ms. Pintola (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), and of Viet Nam, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/73/PV.17).

Disarmament saves lives. Nowhere else do those three words resonate more clearly than in this First Committee thematic discussion on conventional weapons. However, there is an even more compelling argument for putting those words into action.

The illicit trade and proliferation of conventional weapons pose a serious threat to global security. Their direct and gendered impact, especially on women and

children, acutely hinders the attainment of sustainable peace, development and prosperity.

Thailand is one of the countries affected by unexploded remnants of war, and we are working with all stakeholders to rid the country of mines. At present, 86 per cent of mine-clearance work in Thailand has been completed, and 17 of the 27 affected provinces have been declared mine-free. While the numbers are significant, what is even more meaningful is the fact that recently released land now benefits people's livelihoods and advances the economic prosperity of the Thai population, facilitating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, that endeavour cannot be a solitary one. International cooperation is a pivotal and important enabler for success in those efforts. We can and must do more, together. Thailand is a member of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and we are working to promote assistance and cooperation among States parties and stakeholders, in order to fulfil all obligations under the Treaty, including victim assistance and rehabilitation and mine-risk education.

It remains abundantly clear that the proliferation and illicit transfer of conventional weapons pose a grave threat to State and to human security, sustainable peace, justice and development. It is estimated that approximately 400,000 to 500,000 civilians succumb to illicit small arms and light weapons every year. Those numbers may even be conservative estimates, rendering those weapons the real weapons of mass destruction. It also remains poignantly clear that States with the least capacity to deal with illicit arms are often the most affected. That is the world we live in, and those are the issues that we must confront head on.

International cooperation and assistance are vital to ensuring that disarmament saves lives. Moreover, catering to context-specific threats and regional cooperation adds value to our efforts. For Thailand, the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons remains the primary framework for addressing the widespread and uncontrolled availability of illicit small arms and light weapons. As a signatory State to the Arms Trade Treaty, we believe that the Treaty complements the ongoing efforts under the Programme of Action in ensuring that the illicit flow of conventional arms is effectively regulated.

We have consistently heard from colleagues in the Committee that new technologies, including drones and other lethal autonomous weapons, have wide and understudied implications. Thailand could not agree more, and we reiterate that, in our growing understanding of those new technologies, we have to underscore the importance of respecting and evolving international humanitarian law. Ongoing discussions on new technologies and weapons should be based on codifying current practices and ensuring progressive development in appropriate international forums.

Our work on conventional weapons can save hundreds of thousands of lives and improve the quality of life for many more. As is the case with any other weapon, funds that are set aside for conventional weapons could be allocated away from armaments and into poverty reduction, universal health care and other important goals, all of which can contribute to the prosperity of our people. We need to change mindsets and continue to seek out more collaboration, not only among States but also with civil society organizations and local communities. The Committee can count on Thailand to be a partner in that endeavour.

Mrs. Batagarawa (Nigeria): Nigeria aligns itself with the statements delivered under this cluster by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), and of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.18).

A large portion of the global population, including many people in my country, have experienced the painful consequences of illicit small arms and light weapons in the hands of criminal gangs, terrorists and armed militants. Those weapons continue to undermine otherwise peaceful societies and cause internal displacement, and they are responsible for hundreds of deaths each day. My delegation commends all States for their renewed efforts in this connection and welcomes the successful conclusion of the third Review Conference 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, held in June.

Nigeria welcomes the successful outcome of the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), held in August in Tokyo, and reiterates the need for a robust and effective implementation of the numerous instruments already in place as tools for

regulating the global transfer of conventional weapons. We urge States, particularly large weapons-producing and weapons-exporting States not yet parties to the ATT, to ensure their timely accession. My delegation is also pleased to report that, in keeping with our commitment to the implementation of the ATT, the ATT Nigerian secretariat was launched in August.

Nigeria has redoubled its efforts to strengthen its national borders and its alliances across the West African subregion and beyond. Our commitment is further demonstrated by the signing and ratification of the relevant international, regional and subregional instruments, as well as the establishment of sustainable and robust partnerships with the African Union, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and other relevant organizations.

In addition, the Presidential Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons was set up by the federal Government of Nigeria. The Committee has been involved in activities geared towards stemming the tide in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It has organized capacity-building programmes for security agencies and carried out an initial baseline assessment of the situation with regard to small arms and light weapons in Nigeria, including a comprehensive national survey on small arms and light weapons, the comprehensive national weapons-marking programme, the establishment of a database and a review of Nigeria's firearms laws, among others.

Nigeria continues to support and advance the course of regional, subregional and other relevant initiatives aimed at addressing the threats of the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons in Africa. My delegation heartily welcomes the steps taken by countries to enhance the respect for law and to improve the protection of civilians.

To that end, Nigeria and 18 other African countries, international organizations and civil-society organizations, including victims and survivors, met in Maputo last year with the objectives of sharing expertise and evidence on the distinctive pattern of harm caused to civilians by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and exploring steps to address that harm at the political and national operational levels, from a national and regional perspective. The meeting culminated with the adoption of a landmark communiqué on protecting civilians from the use of explosive weapons, as well as support for the process that will lead to the negotiation

and adoption of an international political declaration on the use of those weapons in populated areas.

While many gains have been made in curbing the menace of conventional weapons, we acknowledge that more needs to be done. Therefore, international support and assistance is required in that regard, particularly through the establishment of capacity-building programmes that are tailored to transfer the necessary technologies, equipment and know-how to developing countries in the implementation of the ATT, the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

In conclusion, the Committee may be assured that my delegation will actively participate in all processes geared towards making our communities peaceful and secure. In doing so, we look forward to working with other delegations to translate the vision of international peace and security into a reality today and for generations to come.

Mr. Dzonzi (Malawi): Small arms and light weapons persist as the weapons of choice in many acts of armed violence. According to the Small Arms Survey of 2016 — the most recent year for which data is available — 560,000 people died as a result of armed violence. Of those deaths, an estimated 18 per cent were the direct result of conflict. In order to develop a comprehensive approach to reducing deaths caused by small arms and light weapons, we need to focus on armed violence as a whole, rather than limiting our efforts to addressing only violence in conflict.

Malawi is not greatly affected by the illicit proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons, compared with some of our neighbour countries. However, our people still suffer significantly from the illicit use of small arms and light weapons within their homes, on public roads and in business premises. That is evidenced by an apparent increase in the recovery of illegal firearms. Community policing continues to play a big role in facilitating the recovery of such illegal firearms. In 2017, Malawi destroyed 2,700 confiscated illegal firearms, an event that is usually conducted every year during the Global Week of Action against Gun Violence.

In our case, key instruments that address the trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons include the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which Malawi

joined in 2001, when it entered into force. Since 2006, Malawi has submitted annual reports to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and has participated in the Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, with accompanying biennial reports submitted to the International Tracing Instrument, which was adopted in 2005.

Other key instruments include the Firearms Protocol — which entered into force in 2005 and supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which entered into force in 2003 — and the Arms Trade Treaty, which entered into force in 2014 and to which Malawi is a signatory. In June, Malawi participated in the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action in New York, and Malawi is currently working towards the implementation of the Conference outcomes.

At the regional level, Malawi signed the Southern African Development Community Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in 2002, the implementation of which is being coordinated by the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization.

At the national level, Malawi established the National Focal Point on small-arms-and-light-weapons control in 2006, which coordinates all issues of small arms in Malawi. The National Focal Point comprises the Malawi police, the Malawi defence force, the Ministries of Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs and several other ministries and Government departments, as well as civil-society organizations. Malawi also developed a national action plan, as well as a policy on the control and management of firearms and ammunition in 2013, with support from the Regional Centre on Small Arms. That remains a key policy document that outlines a road map of what Malawi wants to achieve in the area of small-arms control. In 2017, Malawi started the process of marking all arms owned by the police, which will extend to firearms owned by civilians.

In conclusion, Malawi joins other Member States in focusing on gender-based action to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and violence using them, and will work to ensure women's full participation and representation in arms-control programmes and diplomatic processes.

Mr. Sanda (Niger) (*spoke in French*): The Niger wishes to make a contribution in its national capacity

to the discussion on banning the use of certain conventional weapons in the world.

In the disarmament framework, the international community seeks not only to eliminate the production of all weapons of mass destruction, but also to control the production, sale, use and trade of conventional weapons, in view of the need for all States to safeguard international peace and security.

West Africa and the Sahel continue to be severely affected by the uncontrolled production and proliferation of firearms and ammunition, as a result of armed conflicts and their repercussions in those regions. The Niger is in a region characterized by the presence of extremist groups and numerous armed groups and gangs that take advantage of the insecurity in the north-western and north-eastern regions of the Sahel, as well as in the region of the Lake Chad basin.

That correctly illustrates the complexity of arms control; such arms are spreading across West Africa and the Sahel and fuelling terrorism and general banditry. To that, we must also add the many conflicts and tensions linked to the scarcity of natural resources in a context of climate vulnerability, land and pastoral conflicts and the phenomenon of irregular migration, combined with security, economic, social and political issues — factors apt to weaken social peace.

To demonstrate its will to promote general disarmament and development by building a world safe from fear and need, the Niger has signed almost all regional and international legal instruments to combat terrorism and organized crime.

At the national level, the Niger created the National Commission for Illicit Arms Collection and Control in 1994, which is responsible for the national implementation of all the treaties, agreements, conventions and resolutions on arms to which our country has subscribed. That institution, which is directly attached to the Civil Cabinet of the Presidency of the Republic, has already prepared and enacted several pieces of domestic legislation for implementing treaties on disarmament. Operationally, it has also conducted several demining and decontamination projects, as well as illegal-weapons collection projects, recovering over 1,800 weapons and 100 anti-tank mines, digging up and destroying 960 anti-personnel mines and collecting more than 19,000 rounds of ammunition.

As well as combating the circulation and proliferation of illicit weapons, the National Commission strives to respect our country's commitments to those disarmament treaties, particularly through raising awareness, advocacy, collecting illicit weapons, ensuring the control and security of legal weapons, drafting domestic laws, demining mine-affected areas in the country and implementing all resolutions, decisions and recommendations on small arms made since 2001, including the International Tracing Instrument, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Firearms Programme and so on.

Also in the field of conventional-weapons disarmament, the Niger is a party, among others, to the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, which the Niger was one of the first African countries to ratify, in 2009; and the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty, fostering more responsible arms trade, which the Niger signed on 23 March 2014 and ratified on 24 July 2015.

It should be noted that the Niger also ratified all five additional Protocols to 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. The Niger is also a State party to all weapons-related recommendations and resolutions, including resolution 1540 (2004), adopted in April of that year.

The Niger continues to maintain an active partnership with the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. My country is also active in programmes on security and stockpile management, national arsenals and defence and national security forces.

In conclusion, the Niger welcomes the results achieved by the Arms Trade Treaty and calls for the universalization of the Treaty, with a view to more effectively combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its forms.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.39.

Mr. Rodrigo (Sri Lanka): The widespread use of conventional weapons continues to incur an immense loss of life and cause other egregious impacts across the globe. The illicit trade in and unregulated use of such weapons, especially in the hands of non-State actors, pose a serious threat to global security and imperil the lives of populations the world over. Sri Lanka is

therefore deeply committed to combating the illicit trade in and unregulated spread of these weapons.

Sri Lanka regards the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons as an important legal instrument that contributes to the protection of both civilians and combatants from the excessively injurious and indiscriminate effects of conventional weapons, while taking into consideration the legitimate security concerns of States.

Sri Lanka remains committed to the prevention, curbing and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. These flows of trade are often a factor behind the forced displacement of civilians and constitute massive human rights violations. As a signatory to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Sri Lanka established a national commission to fight the proliferation of illicit small arms. We must work to create the conditions necessary for addressing all the relevant dimensions of the problem of illicit small arms.

It is a well-established fact that cluster munitions pose severe humanitarian threats and have serious social and development consequences. The method of deployment and nature of these explosives means that they are indiscriminate and incapable of distinguishing between military targets and civilians. This is in clear violation of the cardinal principles of international humanitarian law. In addition, the grave danger that they pose is enduring, with many turning into de facto landmines, able to kill and maim indiscriminately long after conflict has ended.

Sri Lanka is unequivocally committed to the cause of ending the use and prevalence of those destructive, indiscriminate and inhumane weapons. In this regard, we reaffirm the importance of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which Sri Lanka acceded to in March. Having already acceded to the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines, we look forward to demonstrating similar commitment and action as part of the vision to eradicate cluster munitions.

Sri Lanka assumed the presidency of the ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions last month and, in keeping with past practice, is, in our capacity as President, taking the lead this year in submitting draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.39, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions". We are pleased to note that the number of

sponsors of the draft resolution has increased this year, with 35 sponsors as of today. The universalization of the Convention is important to the vision of achieving a world free of cluster munitions in the long term.

Sri Lanka reaffirms its commitment to addressing the issue of conventional weapons and continues to pledge its full support and commitment to the multilateral legal framework in that regard. We reiterate the necessity of concerted, collective action towards the curbing of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the eradication of cluster munitions. My delegation looks forward to a meaningful and constructive engagement on these issues during this thematic debate.

Ms. Arcilla (Philippines): The Philippines associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Viet Nam (see A/C.1/73/PV.17) and Indonesia (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively. On behalf of the Philippines, I would like to highlight the following points.

Every year, millions of people the world over suffer from the direct and indirect effects of the poorly regulated arms trade and the illicit trafficking of firearms. The Philippines is no stranger to this phenomenon. The proliferation of conventional arms has contributed to violence and instability in many parts of the world. With the alarming rise of instances of armed violence throughout the world, the Philippines believes that strong regulations covering conventional weapons, including small arms and their ammunition, parts and components, should be firmly enforced.

On the Convention on Cluster Munitions, we are pleased to announce that the Philippines has ratified the treaty, which commits our country to never use, produce, stockpile or transfer cluster munitions. The Philippines acknowledges the indiscriminate harm cause by cluster munitions to military personnel, combatants and civilians. We stand in solidarity with other countries that have suffered the same harm.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) establishes international standards for the global trade in conventional arms. The Philippines has strongly supported and actively participated in the discussions surrounding the Treaty since it was proposed at the General Assembly in 2006. On 25 September 2013, the Philippines signed the ATT, the first South-East Asian

country to do so. The ratification of the ATT by the Philippine Senate may prove a daunting task. There are questions of how high a priority its ratification should be, given the other urgent issues that the country is facing. Questions on support from various stakeholders, including civil society groups, will also come into play.

On the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, the Philippines welcomes the outcome of the third Review Conference and will be guided by the commitments of the outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex). In this regard, we are particularly supportive of the following actions: securing international cooperation on marking and tracing to build the capacities of concerned personnel; exploring possibilities for a dedicated fellowship/training programme on small arms and light weapons to strengthen technical knowledge; strengthening certification processes and end-user certificates, as well as effective legal enforcement measures, and, if warranted, adopting the good practices of other States appropriate to the Philippine context; supporting discussions on establishing an international template for end-user certificates; promoting strengthened subregional and regional approaches to addressing illicit small arms and light weapons, particularly on the issue of arms diversion within ASEAN; focusing on target 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and monitoring, with appropriate measures, significant improvements in reducing illicit financial and arms flows, strengthening the recovery and return of stolen assets, and combating all forms of organized crime; and continuing to strongly advocate the involvement of women — the gender that does not go to war but binds the wounds it causes.

On anti-personnel mines, in the course of negotiating peace with armed groups, we continue to assert our commitment to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the rule of law, and, most especially, international humanitarian law, in every effort to mitigate the suffering that war imposes on our peoples.

The Philippines continues to cooperate with the international community to ensure a robust international regime on conventional weapons, while always bearing in mind respect for the sovereignty of individual States, which know best, in the first instance, how to protect their populations.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.10.

Mr. Ghaniei (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16).

Among the major challenges of the current decade with respect to conventional weapons is their overproduction, the increase in their transfer internationally and their excessive accumulation in certain regions. The overproduction of conventional weapons has adverse consequences for international peace and security. Therefore, States must act responsibly to reduce their production. More importantly and, given that the transfer of such weapons has unfortunately steadily grown since 2003, there must also be substantial limitations on their transfer.

This situation is particularly alarming for our region, the Middle East, where the security situation is already complicated. For example, in addition to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, the Israeli regime's large arsenal of sophisticated offensive conventional weapons continues to threaten the peace and security of the region and beyond. Likewise, Israel has been the largest cumulative recipient of United States foreign assistance since the Second World War. To date, the United States has provided Israel with \$134.7 billion in bilateral assistance, almost all of which is in the form of military assistance. Under the terms of a new memorandum of understanding covering 2019 to 2028, the United States has also pledged to provide \$38 billion in military aid to Israel. Such aid has been designed to maintain Israel's so-called "qualitative military edge" over neighbouring militaries.

The weapons this aid will buy are those that the Israeli regime uses systematically and broadly to kill civilians, commit genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, violate basic norms, rules, regulations and principles of international law, and breach the principles of morality and humanity. The number of Palestinian protesters killed by such weapons during the Great March of Return in Gaza exceeded 200 — including the inhumane and intentional killing of Razan al-Najjar, a 21-year-old Palestinian paramedic who was wearing a high-visibility medical jacket that showed that she was medical personnel, thereby

obligating all not to target her — and the number of those injured surpassed 22,000.

In the past decade, the situation in the Middle East has been exacerbated, including by manifold increases in the military budgets and arms imports of certain States in the Persian Gulf. One example of this trend was the signing, in 2017, of a \$110 billion weapons deal between Saudi Arabia and the United States, which was separate from the 10-year \$350 billion arms deal that Saudi Arabia signed with the United States. Similarly, in recent years, the United Kingdom has authorized the export of £4.7 billion of arms to Saudi Arabia.

During the past three years, we have witnessed how Western-made weapons have been used by Saudi Arabia to kill hundreds of thousands of civilians in Yemen. Such acts are in clear violation of international humanitarian law and represent stark examples of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Countries that provide arms to Saudi Arabia are culpable of war crimes. They must stop these destabilizing transfers of arms.

The foregoing is only the tip of the iceberg with regard to the security situation, military expenditure and arms-import issue in our region. I would like to stress that we should work together to reduce global military expenditure and foster responsible production and the transfer of conventional weapons to meet the actual security needs of States.

In conclusion, I would like to introduce draft decision A/C.1/73/L.10, "Missiles", proposed jointly by Egypt, Indonesia and Iran, and hope that, as in previous years, it will be adopted without a vote.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Mali to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.32.

Mr. Diarra (Mali) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Mali aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Morocco (see A/C.1/73/PV.18) and Indonesia (see A/C.1/73/PV.16) on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively.

It is recognized that hotbeds of tension are fuelled by the often highly illicit flow of weapons, whether conventional or not. The particular case of small arms and light weapons is a source of great concern for my country, Mali, and those of the Sahel and West Africa.

Compared to weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons seem unsophisticated. However, the disastrous effects that they have, given the vast number of deaths and physical injuries recorded each year, not to mention the resulting trauma and impact on communities, make them worthy of being considered weapons of mass destruction.

Having been quick to understand the challenges that controlling the circulation of small arms and light weapons would bring for peace and security in the region, the member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) instituted the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, in October 1998. The Moratorium later resulted in the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, which entered into force in 2009. In parallel with that initiative, Mali has been honoured to annually present a draft resolution entitled “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them” (A/C.1/73/L.32), on behalf of the States members of ECOWAS. Unfortunately, the challenges that led to the initial introduction of the draft resolution remain current, which is why we call on all delegations to support the draft resolution with adoption by consensus.

With regard to subregional initiatives, I am pleased to recall that the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) have established a joint force aimed at bringing together the efforts and actions of those five countries, with a view to effectively combating terrorists and drug traffickers of any kind, including arms traffickers plaguing the subregion. This concerted approach will ultimately restore a secure environment that fosters the socioeconomic development activities of the G-5 Sahel and its partners.

At the continental level, the implementation of the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons are both tools that should help to stem the uncontrolled flow of small arms and light weapons.

At the national level, the Government of Mali has taken several initiatives and remains committed to

disarmament. With regard to regulations, my country has therefore adopted robust legislation on arms and ammunition, which establishes restrictions on the possession of firearms and their ammunition.

At the institutional level, Mali established a permanent secretariat for combating the proliferation of small arms, which is responsible for coordinating the actions of various State services involved in the fight against the proliferation of small arms. This entity carries out several activities in close collaboration with civil society organizations and the private sector.

As part of the ongoing peace process in my country, the signatory movements of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali resulting from the Algiers process are engaged in a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process with the Government, which will contribute, *inter alia*, to better control of the circulation of light weapons on national territory.

Convinced of the central role that multilateralism plays in consolidating international peace and security through the disarmament process, Mali is party to a number of international instruments, including the Arms Trade Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

In conclusion, my delegation calls for responsible cooperation in implementing all international conventions.

Mr. Kazi (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries under this thematic cluster (see A/C.1/73/PV.16).

Bangladesh remains committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols, to which it is a party. We commend the work accomplished by the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, culminating in the consensus adoption of its reports, including the possible guiding principles.

Bangladesh acknowledges the forward-leaning outcome of the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We take note of the modest progress made in addressing ammunition for small arms and light weapons in the context of the Programme of Action.

The issue of new technologies in the manufacturing and marking of small arms and light weapons needs to be addressed in view of the particular constraints faced by developing and least developed countries.

As a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty, Bangladesh underscores the mutually reinforcing effects of enhanced coordination and synergies among the relevant instruments. We reaffirm the potential contribution of the Programme of Action to the realization of the relevant targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Bangladesh remains concerned about the casualties suffered by our peacekeepers due to the indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices by non-State actors in certain mission settings. Such attacks are tantamount to the commission of the gravest crimes under international law. It is critical that further attention be given to United Nations peacekeeping intelligence and to enhancing support for mine action by United Nations peacekeeping missions, including through the additional deployment of expertise and equipment.

Bangladesh shares the growing concern about the humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, including of those with wide-area effects. We join other States in calling for the adoption of a possible future political declaration that would address this issue.

Bangladesh remains concerned about the continued use of anti-personnel mines, including in neighbouring Myanmar. In the report of its detailed findings presented to the Third Committee last week (A/HRC/39/CRP.2), the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar documented the use of landmines by both State and non-State actors in Myanmar's Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states since 2011, often with fatal consequences.

With regard to the situation in Rakhine state since August 2017, the report says that

“the Mission has reasonable grounds to conclude that landmines were planted by the Tatmadaw, both in the border regions as well as within northern Rakhine state, as part of the ‘clearance operations’ with the intended or foreseeable effect of injuring or killing Rohingya civilians fleeing to Bangladesh. Further, it seems likely that new anti-personnel mines were placed in border areas as part of a deliberate and planned strategy of

dissuading Rohingya refugees from attempting to return to Myanmar” (*ibid.*, para. 1214).

The Myanmar authorities have a responsibility to account for such conclusions and take urgent and necessary steps to ensure mine clearance, declare a moratorium on the production of landmines and end casualties suffered by civilians. During his visit to Myanmar in May, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty Special Envoy called upon Myanmar to accede to the Treaty, irrespective of the armed conflicts in its territory, and we endorse that call.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the position that States have the sovereign right to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their components for security requirements and self-defence. We also emphasize that no unilateral coercive measure be imposed on the transfer of such arms. However, we continue to urge all responsible Member States to restrict the transfer of arms, including small arms and light weapons, in situations where such arms and weapons are or may be used in the commission of genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity. The authoritative evidence provided by the aforementioned fact-finding mission about the atrocity crimes committed against the forcibly displaced Rohingya from Myanmar's Rakhine state should be a particular case in point.

Mr. Emiru (Ethiopia): My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco (see A/C.1/73/PV.18) and Indonesia (see A/C.1/73/PV.16) on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to threaten international peace, security and stability. The excessive accumulation and widespread availability of such weapons remain a source of great concern, particularly for countries affected by conflicts and civil wars. Moreover, they also continue to pose a significant challenge to the implementation of the mandates of peacekeeping missions, the provision of humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilians.

It is precisely for that reason that the implementation of international and regional commitments and treaty-based obligations with respect to combating the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons remains critical. In this respect, we commend the successful accomplishment of and outcome achieved during the third Review Conference of the United Nations

Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex). Ethiopia remains committed to the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

In its national capacity, my country is focusing on creating legal frameworks for regulating compliance, increasing public awareness and enhancing operational arrangements among law-enforcement agencies so as to facilitate inter-agency coordination and cooperation in preventing the spread of small arms and light weapons.

Despite those national efforts, surrounding conflicts and porous borders have increased our vulnerability to the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in the country. In cooperation with local communities in different parts of the country, the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission curbed an unprecedented number of illegal arms this year. This is indeed a pressing concern that has the potential to create instability by negatively affecting human lives and impeding the socioeconomic development of the country.

Of course, national efforts need to be complemented with regional and subregional initiatives. In the light of this fact, we support the efforts undertaken by the African Union and subregional organizations to combat the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. The initiative taken by the Heads of States of the African Union in adopting the Silencing the Guns initiative is another encouraging step that helps to advance the regional strategy to combat problems caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. However, this strategy needs to be complemented by continued and sustained technical and financial support at both the national and regional levels.

Another issue that needs to be highlighted is the cross-border and international nature of the challenge. We believe that this requires a multilateral response that complements the measures taken at the national level by Member States. In our view, it is important to consider the multifaceted aspects of the direct and indirect support that terrorists receive and adopt a comprehensive mechanism for addressing issues related to access to conventional weapons by these groups.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, known as the Ottawa Convention, is another important convention to which my country is a State party. Ethiopia declared the

completion of its destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines before the deadline. However, the shortage of operational equipment, capacity challenges and a lack of adequate funding hampered the accomplishment of the programme planned in accordance with article 5 of the Convention. Therefore, in order to fully accomplish the envisaged task, support from the international community is indispensable.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that Ethiopia remains committed to addressing the increased proliferation of conventional arms, particularly illicit small arms and light weapons, and call upon all stakeholders to work collectively to curb the devastating impacts that these weapons have on human lives and civilization.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to the issues at hand, preventing, combating and eradicating the manufacture and illicit trafficking of conventional weapons are naturally among El Salvador's priorities, owing to the fact that crime and violence involving such weapons causes harm and negative effects for various regions and because of the existing links among such weapons and current and emerging forms of organized crime. We therefore believe that inaction in establishing international controls only contributes to exacerbating those scourges. The international community must therefore assume its responsibility. For that to happen, it is essential that effective measures be taken to prevent illicit international transfers of conventional weapons, serious violations of international human rights norms and international humanitarian law and violations of sanctions and embargoes imposed by the Security Council.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, we support maintaining a preventive focus on their diversion through the implementation and strengthening of transfer regulations and control systems, while also ensuring adequate registration and proper end-user authorization, without neglecting to prevent their illicit manufacture. We welcome the outcome document of the Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex), which was held here this year, and we welcome the fact that the Programme recognized the importance of including ammunition for the first time. This inclusion will bolster its application

and ensure that the Programme of Action keeps up to date with reality.

We support the essential role of ammunition control as a prerequisite for ensuring the effective control of conventional weapons, and we believe that both should be treated as aggregate pieces of a product chain. Consequently, a partial approach to those pieces will generate only partial results.

Moreover, on the issue of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), we believe that the Treaty responds to the need to stop the irresponsible and unregulated transfers of weapons that fuel conflicts and violations of human rights and stem the development of our countries. It is important to highlight that the universalization of the Treaty is key to fulfilling that task. Cooperation and mutual support among the various actors involved in this process is an essential aspect of properly enforcing the Treaty. Its full application also requires maintaining a continuous exchange of experience, knowledge, technology and good practices, but, above all, that all actors work transparently and with a view to ending this suffering once and for all.

El Salvador welcomes the results of the fourth Conference of States Parties to the ATT and reaffirms its support for the proper implementation and universalization of the Treaty. We are pleased with the recent accessions and call on those countries that have not yet done so to accede to it without further delay.

The use of armed drones causes significant damage to communities, loss of life, injuries, destruction of property, psychological damage and the displacement of people. We call for their transparent use, as the irresponsible use of drones is in clear contravention of the norms of international law and international humanitarian law. We condemn irresponsible practices in the use of armed drones and agree that this issue must be addressed and appropriate and effective international standards developed in order to prevent the damage that such drones cause.

In conclusion, for El Salvador, the possibility of a machine being responsible for deciding whether to end someone's life is of great concern and poses considerable ethical and legal challenges. In this regard, we condemn the use of autonomous lethal weapons, and we regret that, during the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively

Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, held this year, no substantial agreement could be reached on the issue. We hope that next year's deliberations will yield better results. El Salvador's aspiration concerning this matter is to successfully adopt a legally binding instrument that allows for the monitoring of such weapons and guarantees respect for human rights and the well-being of all.

Mr. Matale (Zambia): My delegation wishes to align itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Morocco (see A/C.1/73/PV.18) and Indonesia (see A/C.1/73/PV.16) on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively.

Zambia remains gravely concerned about the deadly effect of small arms on the human race. These weapons kill one person every two minutes somewhere in the world, either through the civil strife that plagues some nations, in which most victims tend to be civilians, or through crime, which means that, in the time that it takes me to deliver this statement, someone, somewhere, will be shot dead. These deaths are, in many cases, caused by illicit small arms and light weapons that come from a number of sources, including illicit brokering, leftovers from conflicts, illicit manufacturing, leakages from military and police stockpiles, smuggling and theft.

At the regional level, statistics on the terrible impact of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa identify the phenomenon as posing one of the biggest hurdles to development on the continent. Over the past 50 years, Africa has suffered no less than 5 million fatalities attributed to small arms and light weapons. These deaths have been caused by the estimated 30 million firearms on the continent.

Small arms and light weapons have a serious impact on the trajectory of sociopolitical and economic development in Africa, affecting the ability of Governments to function effectively. Equally, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects undermines respect for international human rights law and aids terrorism and illegal armed groups. We therefore emphasize the need for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument in the global fight against all forms of violence and crime, including terrorism.

Zambia calls for the promotion of effective and sustainable international cooperation and for assistance to States lagging behind in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. Apart from the relevant United Nations bodies and subregional and regional organizations, States are encouraged to cooperate with civil society to draw on their experiences, expertise and best practices in the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

There is a symbiotic link between peace and sustainable development. Development is unsustainable without peace, and peace is not durable without development. The full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument will definitely lead to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 and target 16.4. Illicit trade has implications not only for the attainment of SDG 16 but also for those goals related to peace, justice and strong institutions, poverty reduction, economic growth, health, gender equality and safe cities and communities. We would therefore like to see strong coordination between the national authorities responsible for planning, implementing and reporting on illicit small arms and light weapons policies and programmes and those responsible for sustainable development.

Zambia welcomes the coming into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which contributes to international and regional peace, security and stability. A rigorous application of the ATT provisions would contribute to reducing flows of conventional arms to areas of high tension or volatility, engagement by Governments in systematic human rights abuse, and terrorists and transnational crime organizations. We therefore call upon States parties to the ATT to strictly adhere to article 6 of the ATT regarding the prohibition of conventional arms and their parts, if true peace is to prevail.

In conclusion, Zambia wishes to welcome the African Union (AU) Commission's initiative, Silencing the Guns by 2020. The AU's road map for dealing with arms will contribute to peace and security on the continent. The success of that road map will be a major boost for Africa, especially for those countries that continue to experience conflict.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): I would like to begin by stating our support for the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, in particular, its call for disarmament that saves lives by reducing and mitigating the impact of conventional weapons.

During Japan's presidency of the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), stakeholders deepened substantial discussion on effective Treaty implementation, transparency and reporting and Treaty universalization. A thematic discussion shed light on diversion. Japan echoes States parties to the Treaty in calling for more engagement with industry, as it plays a significant role in preventing diversion.

In maintaining momentum in the process of the fourth Conference of States Parties, Japan, as co-Chair of the Working Group on Treaty Universalization and a member of the Voluntary Trust Fund Selection Committee, continues to work towards realizing 100 States parties and beyond. We will engage with regions with States not yet parties, including the Asia-Pacific region, with the help of States and civil-society organizations. I welcome the newest member, Guinea-Bissau, as the ninety-ninth State party, and look forward to welcoming those States that have shared their domestic developments with regard to the Treaty. It is worth mentioning that the ATT's recently renewed website is more accessible and user-friendly for new members. As one of many sponsors of the ATT draft resolution (A/C.1/73/L.8), led by Latvia, Japan calls on all States that have not done so to support and co-sponsor the draft resolution.

The widespread availability of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is a key enabler of armed violence and conflict. In that regard, Japan welcomes the adoption of the outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) of the third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and is ready to work with States for the 2020 Biennial Meeting of States to consider and address key challenges and opportunities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument at the national, regional and global levels.

To facilitate putting words into action, I call on all Member States to support draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.63, "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", submitted by South Africa,

Colombia and Japan, so that it can be adopted again by consensus.

Last year marked the twentieth anniversary of the adoption and signature of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Significant work remains to be done to achieve our important goal of realizing a mine-free world by 2025. Japan calls for international support for mine action in the humanitarian, development and human security spheres, in order to carry out various projects in clearance, victim assistance, risk-reduction education and so on. Japan provided more than \$32 million during the Japanese fiscal year of 2017. Japan welcomes the presidency of Afghanistan as we gather again next month in Geneva for the seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, which will be the last opportunity to assess progress in achieving the aims of the Maputo Action Plan 2014-2019 in advance of the Convention's fourth Review Conference in November 2019 in Oslo.

Japan takes the humanitarian consequences of cluster munitions seriously and engages in clearance of unexploded ordnance and support for affected people. Since 1998, we have reached out to 40 States in diverse regions and spent nearly \$757 million on mine action and unexploded-ordnance-related projects. In that context, we appreciated the discussion during last month's eighth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Participants reviewed the progress and challenges concerning the clearance of contaminated areas, the destruction of stockpiles and risk-reduction education. Japan actively took part in the discussion on Treaty universalization, a framework for cooperation and assistance to ensure adequate assistance to survivors and their communities, transparency, national implementation measures and implementation assistance. Japan welcomes new members, Sri Lanka and Namibia, and in particular Sri Lanka's presidency for the ninth Meeting of States Parties, to be held next year.

Much has been said about lethal autonomous weapons systems in the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Japan believes that a technical approach, in which humans engage in design, and a human approach, in which humans directly engage in operation, both have pros and cons, and we need to find the best combination of the two in further discussions. In that regard, we look forward to our discussions at the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW next month in Geneva.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the significance of implementation, interaction and initiative.

Mr. Tituaña Matango (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16). We also endorse the statement on explosive weapons in populated areas delivered by the representative of Ireland on behalf of several States (see A/C.1/73/PV.18).

True to its commitment to disarmament and universal peace and in strict respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, Ecuador reiterates its firm commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Ten years after the adoption of that international instrument, we believe that its universalization is a priority, and therefore we call for that goal to be achieved. Likewise we condemn the use of those terrible weapons, no matter where they are used or by whom, as they are particularly cruel and harmful, especially against the most vulnerable groups.

Ecuador also expresses its full support for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In that regard, my country would like to underscore its aim of transforming its borders into places where people can effectively meet and safely integrate, through our own development projects and those shared with neighbouring countries.

My country underlines the importance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and its International Tracing Instrument, as the international reference point and the principal universal and consensus-based framework for addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We emphasize our commitment to implementing the Programme at the national, regional and global levels and to the implementation-related agreements in the final documents of its Review Conferences.

Ecuador is party to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

My country also expresses its concern about the use, progress in and improvement of unmanned aerial vehicles and lethal autonomous weapons, and we condemn their use. We believe that the international community should continue its debate on that issue and on lethal autonomous weapons systems, even on the prohibition of that type of weapons. Thus we support work carried out within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in that connectin, and we believe that regulating only the international trade of such arms is not enough.

Finally, my country is continuing to analyse its decision with regard to the Arms Trade Treaty, due to potential politicization caused by the possible double standards surrounding the instrument's implementation. The Ecuadorian delegation warned others about that issue in a timely manner during Treaty negotiations.

Mr. Petchezi (Togo) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that Togo has taken the floor since the beginning of this session, allow me to start by congratulating you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. I assure you, Mr. Chair, of my delegation's support in the accomplishment of your mission.

I would also like to express my country's solidarity with the statements delivered by the representatives of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.18), and of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), under all of this session's agenda items.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report (A/73/168) providing an update on the multilateral efforts to eradicate the scourge of trafficking in small arms and light weapons, in accordance with the Programme of Action that Member States adopted in 2001. We also welcome his new Agenda for Disarmament, which reminds us that disarmament is the main pathway to a more peaceful world.

The third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place from 18 to 29 June, was a milestone for the international disarmament agenda. Seventeen years after the adoption of that flagship Programme, it allowed us to evaluate again the situation and consider the ways and means that will enable us to better eradicate the trafficking of those types of

weapons, which create a climate of insecurity in our respective countries and regions, especially in Africa. One could say that that gathering has kept its promises, as those meetings enabled us to achieve positive results on many essential points in the implementation of that important Programme, even if much remains to be done.

In that regard, I welcome the fact that the outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) reaffirms the recognition of the link between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Programme of Action on Small Arms, the groundwork for which was laid during the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, held in New York from 6 to 10 June 2016. We welcome that progress, which undoubtedly will make it possible to further entrench in our minds the need to eliminate those weapons, which fuel a climate of insecurity that is not conducive to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The issue of munitions remains a major concern for Togo in the problem of small arms and light weapons. Even though the third Review Conference did not definitively settle the issue, in view of the diverging views of Member States, we should welcome the fact that it is mentioned in the third Conference's outcome document, which also reflects its increasing importance for the majority of States. Togo is of the opinion that the issue of munitions should be seriously studied as part of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

We might also welcome the progress on problems linked to gender issues and the acquisition of small arms and light weapons by non-State actors. However, Togo remains concerned about declining commitments in cooperation and international assistance, which are at the heart of the Programme of Action. As the number of applicants needing assistance increases, the number of States providing that assistance decreases. I take this opportunity to launch an appeal to partners to redouble their efforts in providing assistance, in order to maintain momentum in the fight against small arms and light weapons, the illicit circulation of which is destroying our development efforts.

All in all, small arms and light weapons could be described as weapons of mass destruction in certain regions, given the damage caused by their illicit trafficking. According to statistics, millions of small arms and light weapons are scattered around the world,

especially in developing countries, and their trafficking is causing countless casualties. That is why Togo, like other countries, is concerned by the extent of the illicit circulation of such weapons. Indeed, the phenomenon of small arms and light weapons jeopardizes peace and security, destabilizes States and undermines their sustainable development. Nowadays, that is of particular significance in West Africa, where such weapons provide fertile soil for the proliferation of crimes of all kinds and for rampant terrorism, posing further security challenges to our States.

Togo is resolutely committed to combating this scourge in all its forms. At the national level, measures are being taken, in accordance with the United Nations Programme of Action, to counter this phenomenon. At the subregional, regional and global levels, Togo is working with other States to control the flow of small arms and light weapons. To that end, we have signed and ratified several texts relating to the illicit trafficking of light weapons, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, the Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty, and we have taken internal initiatives to bring our legislation in line with all those instruments.

At the national level, numerous measures have been taken to combat the proliferation, circulation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. The National Commission to Combat the Proliferation, Illicit Circulation of and Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons in Togo is the linchpin of those measures. The Commission, established in 2001, has carried out many activities that include, *inter alia*, raising awareness among the population of the importance of registering those weapons, regardless of whether they are legal or illegal, and the destruction of seized illegal weapons. To date, that exercise has resulted in the destruction of more than 9,909 weapons and 609,288 munitions, according to the Commission's statistics. The Commission has also identified local manufacturers and distributors of homemade small arms and light weapons and has registered weapons held by civilians. To date, 5,579 small arms have been registered following awareness sessions held in that regard.

Those are the beneficial actions that contribute to reducing insecurity in the country, which is caused primarily by such arms. We must stress that those actions benefit from the support of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa,

whose activities include assisting Member States in controlling such weapons through capacity-building. I take this opportunity to commend the Centre for its pivotal role in controlling those weapons, which present considerable security challenges in Africa, even more than elsewhere.

My delegation therefore calls on Member States to support and adopt by consensus, as they have always done, the annual draft resolution entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them" (A/C.1/73/L.32), submitted by Mali on behalf of ECOWAS member countries, the objective of which is to appeal to the international community for increased support to ECOWAS member countries in the fight against the proliferation of those weapons.

Mr. Seretse (Botswana): I thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to participate in this important debate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), and of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (A/C.1/73/PV.18). Permit me to now make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Botswana remains deeply concerned about the illicit trade, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons around the world, which often worsen conflict and have adverse humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. My delegation fully supports the United Nations Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, which seek to address the problem of small arms and light weapons.

Botswana welcomes the consensus outcome of the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which was held here in New York in June. The Conference made critical decisions on a wide range of issues, including the positive role of women and youth in conflict prevention and resolution. We therefore appeal for international cooperation and technological exchange in order to fully implement the Programme of Action.

Botswana reaffirms its support for the work of the fifth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. In that connection, we welcome the appointment of the

Group of Governmental Experts, which will, among other issues, consider challenges related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. While some nations may promote and even see value in the use of such weapons, we are convinced that such critical decisions involving the use of weapons of war and the taking of human lives should not be surrendered to machines and in that process disregard international humanitarian law and human rights law.

We welcome the adoption of the Declaration on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), which will raise public awareness about the dangers posed by those weapons. The use of IEDs, particularly in densely populated areas, is deplorable, as it normally results in high civilian casualties.

With regard to the elimination of anti-personnel mines, Botswana reaffirms its commitment to the Ottawa Convention. While some remarkable progress has been attained towards the elimination of anti-personnel mines, those weapons continue to cause many casualties, a considerable number of which are, again, civilians. It is our fervent hope that we all tirelessly strive towards the 2025 objective set by States parties, wherein the clearance of landmines, their destruction and assistance to victims will be realized globally.

Modern warfare is urbanized and largely fought around populated areas, where various weapons and delivery systems are often employed. The rampant use of explosives in populated areas, particularly those with wide-area effects, results in great indiscriminate harm to civilians and damages critical infrastructure such as hospitals and schools, to mention just a few. Those effects last long past conflict and often require great financial and socioeconomic sacrifices.

In that connection, Botswana welcomes the communiqué from the Maputo regional meeting on protecting civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, which was held on 27 and 28 November 2017 in Mozambique. It is our expectation that the recommendations adopted at that forum will go a long way towards contributing to disarmament education and observance and to respect for internationally established norms governing the conduct of warfare.

Finally, Botswana reiterates its support for the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional weapons for their self-defence and other security needs. In that

regard, we recognize the legal trade in conventional weapons and also stress the importance of observing the associated responsibilities thereof. It is indeed incumbent upon producers, suppliers and all other legitimate stakeholders to ensure that conventional arms do not enjoy uncontrolled distribution, since such illicit transfers serve only to fuel conflicts and other transnational security challenges. We take note of existing instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty, which is designed to essentially regulate the illicit transfer and accumulation of conventional arms and ensure that they are curbed. We therefore urge for its balanced implementation.

Mr. Idrizi (Albania): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU) (see A/C.1/73/PV.18), and I would like to add the following remarks from a national perspective.

My country attaches great importance to arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, as well as to export-control regimes, as a means to prevent such proliferation. Therefore, recognizing the connection between the security and stability of regional and international peace and security, and aware of all the negative consequences of the violence caused by the illicit circulation of arms and weapons, Albania has shown its commitment to the universalization and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

In that context, in line with the Arms Trade Treaty, with EU standards on arms transfers and with the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, and with the steady support of donors and partners, numerous actions have been taken at both the policy and law-enforcement levels. They include establishing legal and policy frameworks, destroying large amounts of weapons and ammunition surpluses, enhancing the security of stockpiles, reducing the number of illegal weapons in possession of civilians through voluntary surrender and raising awareness on the dangers of misuse and illicit possession of firearms.

In line with the ATT obligations, the Government of Albania has committed itself to the implementation of and adherence to pacts and international agreements related to small arms and light weapons. Those agreements have become part of our national legislation and are constantly enhanced.

As a party to agreements such as the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and

Light Weapons, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition and so on, Albania has made substantial commitments to responsible international arms-transfer control. In that context, it has contributed to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16.4, on reducing the illicit flows of arms and ammunition and combating organized crime. Albania completed the destruction of all its inherited surpluses of small arms and light weapons and ammunition in 2016, with substantive support from Germany, the United States of America, France, Norway, Great Britain and Canada, to name just a few.

Firearms trafficking has also seen a decrease, mainly due to changes in the criminal code by increasing convictions for trafficking of firearms and increasing the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies, in particular of the State police. In addition, a new law on weapons was adopted in 2014 to ensure better and more effective arms control.

The orientation of Albania's foreign policy toward regional cooperation and regional ownership is reflected in our proactive participation in all initiatives and multilateral organizations operating in the region of South-East Europe and beyond. In that regard, processes of cooperation and mutual support among countries, especially at the regional and subregional levels, such as the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, are of the utmost importance.

In order to implement the road map for comprehensive control of small arms and light weapons, endorsed at the Western Balkans Summit in London on 10 July, as part of the Berlin process, Albania has prepared a draft national plan that includes a summary of all measures on small-arms and light-weapons control and fighting their proliferation, as well as a list of needs and areas in which our Government can benefit from international assistance.

A full version of this statement will be made available online.

The Chair: I shall now call on those delegations that have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Ms. Al-Sultan (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country exercises its right of reply in response to the representative of Iran, who made baseless allegations.

Iran is destabilizing security and stability in the Middle East region through the launching of more than 200 ballistic missiles by the Iranian Houthi militias against my country. We have successfully intercepted those missiles, and experts examining their components have established that their origin is Iranian. This constitutes a blatant violation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which states that Iran is committed to not exporting ballistic missiles. However, we have seized a number of ships leaving Iran while transporting weapons to Houthi militias.

The Iranian Houthi militias pose a threat to navigation routes, commercial vessels and oil tankers. Iran is also providing Houthi militias with logistical support, such as training, recruiting children and sending Iranian military experts to Sana'a. Iranian Houthi militias have looted humanitarian assistance and impeded its delivery to the Yemeni people. There is no need to elaborate further. Such evidence is enough to condemn Iran and prove its involvement in and support for a terrorist minority that shares its ideology and beliefs, despite the fact that it represents only a small component of the free and Arab Yemeni society. Those militias also carried out a coup d'état against the legitimate Yemeni leadership, headed by the elected President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

My country continues to believe that a peaceful solution is the best way to end the Yemeni conflict and supports United Nations efforts to reach a political solution based on the national Yemeni dialogue, the Gulf peace initiative and Security Council resolution 2216 (2015). The Arab coalition led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is taking all the necessary measures to protect civilians against any attacks, while adhering to disengagement and investigating all occurring incidents with full transparency.

Mr. Aleksaev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to respond to the statement made by our Ukrainian colleague this morning (see A/C.1/73/PV.20). He levelled accusations at Russia regarding a supposed aggression that was carried out against Ukraine, illegal transfers of arms to eastern Ukraine and the participation of Russian military personnel in armed combat.

In that connection, I am once again compelled to note that the Russian Federation is not a party to the internal conflict in Ukraine and is not connected to the bloodshed in eastern Ukraine. It is the authorities in Kyiv that are involved in large-scale shipments of arms. As a result, millions of people in that part of Ukraine — members of the population whom the Ukrainian authorities have designated as terrorists — are suffering.

Those facts have been confirmed multiple times by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian authorities continue to refuse to comply with the sole road map for resolving the conflict and the measures to implement it, as well as the agreement of 12 February 2015.

We call on our Ukrainian colleagues once again to stop advancing unfounded accusations and instead to focus on the full, consistent and strict implementation of their own obligations.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to exercise my right of reply in response to the allegations made by the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Iran has nothing to do with the over three-year-long aggression that Saudi Arabia launched against Yemen. That aggression was launched illegally and has killed approximately 50,000 Yemenis, mostly women and children. By continuing its aggression on a daily basis, Saudi Arabia is violating its obligations under international humanitarian law. Saudi Arabia is targeting civilians in markets, at weddings, at ceremonies and at funerals, as well as small children on schoolbuses, without any restraint or respect for its obligations under international law.

I therefore leave it to the representatives of the First Committee to judge which country is destabilizing the region. It is the State that has launched an aggression against a poor country under the pretext that Houthis are Iranian-supported terrorists. Houthis, as most people know, are part of the fabric and society of Yemen and have belonged to that society for more than 1,000 years. How can they be terrorists? However, Saudi Arabia refuses to tolerate their demands and wants to suppress them. It is easier for Saudi Arabia to label them as terrorists and launch an aggression.

We have nothing to do with the aggression that Saudi Arabia has launched against Yemen. Yemen is under a complete sea, air and land blockade. The

Yemeni people are suffering from hunger and their economy and infrastructure have been devastated by Saudi Arabia's relentless bombardments. How can Iran help Houthis or other Yemenis? We cannot even send humanitarian aid to Yemen, because Saudi Arabia has imposed a complete blockade on the country and is not allowing medicine or food to pass through it.

Moreover, Saudi Arabia is trying to buy more and more weapons. It is trying to destabilize the region with its aggressive policy and posture by helping to export the highest number of foreign terrorists to other States in the region and by fuelling conflict in other countries through its sectarian approach. The First Committee has heard how shamelessly its consulates in other countries have acted. Such action is carried out with the political support of the United States, which has emboldened the country to do whatever it wants to do and violate whatever international law is in its way.

Mr. Nikolenko (Ukraine): I feel obliged to exercise my right to reply to respond to the remarks made by my Russian colleague.

Over the past four years, the Russian Federation has continued to underline that the conflict in some regions of eastern Ukraine, which is occupied by the Russian Federation, is an internal Ukrainian conflict or even a civil war. Moreover, that country claims that it is Ukraine that considers its population to be terrorists. It also sometimes claims that Ukraine is killing its own people on its territory.

Such inappropriate claims are nothing new for our delegation and should be considered part of Russia's propaganda to persuade its own people and the international community that the Russian Federation has nothing to do with this conflict. Those claims are totally false. Russia is a full-fledged party to this conflict and continues its military presence in and aggression against Ukraine. It occupies the Ukrainian territories of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and some parts of eastern Ukraine and continues its militarization with illegal mass transfers of armaments and military personnel to our territory.

As for the Minsk agreements mentioned by my colleague from the Russian Federation, Ukraine remains fully committed to the peaceful resolution of the conflict plaguing some regions of eastern Ukraine and to implementing the Minsk agreements in good faith. However, sustainable de-escalation and progress on all tracks of the Minsk agreements remain blocked

by Russia's unwillingness to implement the security provisions of those agreements, including a sustainable and comprehensive ceasefire regime and the withdrawal of Russian troops, fighters, mercenaries and weaponry from Ukrainian territory.

While Ukraine persistently calls on Russia to respect its commitments regarding the ceasefire regime and the withdrawal of heavy weapons, which are basic requirements of the Minsk agreements, that State ignores those calls. The hybrid Russian forces in the Donbas region continue to resort to shelling with artillery and mortars. Ukraine has regularly drawn the attention of the international community to those numerous facts, which have, incidentally, been registered by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, which operates in the region. The presence of proscribed weapons in areas controlled by Russian hybrid forces, in violation of the withdrawal lines, is reported by the Special Monitoring Mission on a nearly daily basis.

In September alone, Russian armed formations carried out almost 800 shellings, including 80 using weapons proscribed under the Minsk agreements. The residents of the towns and villages located along the contact line can fall victim to Russian weapons, militants or mines at any time. Russian proxies continue to deploy heavy weapons in residential areas to provoke response fire that they can use in the Kremlin propaganda war against Ukraine.

We emphasize that Russia's denial of the facts and its direct role in the conflict in the Donbas, as a fully fledged party, coupled with its ongoing aggression and failure to implement the commitments it has undertaken, remain the key obstacles to bringing peace and a normal life to the people of the Donbas. We take this opportunity to again urge the Russian Federation to return to the tenets of international law by ending its aggression against Ukraine, including by withdrawing its troops from Ukrainian territory, and reversing the illegal occupation of Crimea and parts of eastern Ukraine.

The Chair: We now have to release the interpreters. I therefore ask those who intend to take the floor to use a language that is understood by everybody.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am just taking the floor to respond to the comments made by the Iranian representative. I will be brief.

That country is the number one State sponsor of terror in the world. It has killed and maimed hundreds and thousands of people, if not more, around the world through its proliferation of all types of weapons. It has no credibility. It is in no position to lecture anyone. It is just pointless to elaborate in that regard.

However, I do have one final point. On 4 November, the First Committee can rest assured that we are going to make it a lot more difficult for that regime in Tehran to export terror. We are going to cut the funding to that regime. Let us therefore be very clear about who the leading State sponsor of terror is.

Mr. Robotjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): In response to the lies that we have again just heard from the representative of the United States regarding Iran, I would like to make a few points.

I think that the leading sponsor of terrorism in the world is the United States. The United States used nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That was an act of terrorism that killed more people than any other bomb in the world is capable of doing. In one single bombing, 200,000 were killed. The United States is the leading sponsor of terrorism because it is terrorizing people in the Middle East region and around the world by bullying, trying to exercise regime change and threatening others in order to make them submit to its illegal wish and will. It illegally attacked Iraq in 2003, which led to the killing of and injury to thousands of people. It is also helping terrorists in Syria to overthrow the legitimate Government of the Syrian people, aiding terrorists in Afghanistan and relocating Da'esh from Syria to Afghanistan. Those are examples of the addiction of the United States to terrorism and its support for terrorists around the world.

It also supports the Israeli regime, which is the most heinous State sponsor of terrorism in the world. Israel kills Palestinians on a daily basis and has launched aggressions against its neighbours and the countries of the region more than 15 times in just 60 years. The United States is the leading sponsor of terrorism, as it supports Saudi Arabia and supplies it with weapons for killing Yemeni civilians, thereby creating the worst-ever humanitarian disaster, as confirmed by United Nations reports. Those are examples of the United States support for terrorism around the world and in our region. Those are the destabilizing acts of the United States, and what we are experiencing in the Middle East

is the result of those mistakes and support of terrorism by the United States.

With regard to sanctions, the Committee has heard our comments. The United States addiction to sanctions is an old addiction, for which it seems there is no cure. The sanctions that that State wants to impose, of which it has boasted, are in complete violation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). The United States is happy about that violation, which is no surprise, as it is addicted to breaking international law and disrespecting Security Council resolutions. In the First Committee, the United States representative boasts about his country's violation of international law and Security Council resolutions. That is fine. It simply shows that nobody can trust the United States.

Mr. Aleksaev (Russian Federation): I will be very brief. In responding to the statement of my Ukrainian colleague, I will ask just one rhetorical question that does not require a response.

If one side to a peace agreement is faithfully complying with that agreement, does it commit political murder over the border, killing the very

counterparts with whom it is entrusted to implement that agreement? The Committee would agree that that is not a usual occurrence. Unfortunately, that is happening in Ukraine.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): I inform delegations that we have made arrangements for an additional two plenary meetings this week, which will take place tomorrow at 10 a.m. in conference room 3 and on Wednesday morning at 10 a.m. in conference room 1. That will enable the Committee to complete its thematic discussion in a timely manner so that the action phase can begin on Thursday afternoon.

The Chair: The next meeting of the Committee will take place tomorrow morning, Tuesday, 30 October, at 10 a.m. in conference room 3. The Committee will first hear from the remaining speakers on the list for the cluster "Conventional weapons", and we will then continue with the cluster "Other disarmament measures and international security".

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.