



Security Council

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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Fernández de Soto	(Colombia)
<i>Members:</i>	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Ireland	Mr. Cooney
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mali	Mr. Kassé
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Chaouachi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchinsky
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Small arms

Letter dated 25 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/732).

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The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of August I should like to take the opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Wang Yingfan, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of July 2001. I am sure that I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Wang for the great diplomatic skills with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Small arms

Letter dated 25 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/732)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, Ghana, India, Japan, Mexico, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Sudan and Venezuela, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Listre (Argentina), Ms. Moules (Australia), Mr. Ling (Belarus), Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium), Mr. Moura (Brazil), Mr. Sotirov (Bulgaria), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Valdés (Chile), Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica), Mr. Bebars (Egypt), Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana), Mr. Pal (India), Mr. Satoh (Japan), Mr. Navarrete (Mexico), Mr. Sharma (Nepal),

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Valdez Carrillo (Peru), Mr. Manalo (Philippines), Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea), Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Erwa (Sudan) and Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now consider the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations. Members of the Council have before them a letter dated 25 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/2001/732.

I welcome the distinguished presence of the Secretary-General at this meeting. Before giving His Excellency the Secretary-General the floor, I would like to make some introductory remarks.

I would like to start my presentation by telling you how honoured Colombia is to be presiding over the Council for the month of August. We are undertaking this responsibility with the firm conviction that this organ has an indispensable part to play, through the mandate entrusted to it by the Charter, to preserve international peace and security. Colombia, as is traditional in the many times that it has served on the Council, will act in strict accordance with the rules and principles contained in the Charter. As Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Republic, I am convinced that we will be able to benefit from the cooperation of the other members of the Council and the other States Members of the Organization and the staff of the Secretariat, whose work is indispensable for carrying out the mandates of the Council.

The problems that arise from illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their impact on conflict situations have been the focus of growing world attention. Global, regional, subregional and national initiatives in this field call for efforts of international cooperation and the support of the organs and programmes of the United Nations, including the Security Council.

The debate proposed by Colombia has several general objectives. The first is to follow up on the small arms issue, almost two years after it was

incorporated in the agenda of the Security Council, on 24 September 1999. The second is to critically examine how the issue is handled in specific conflict situations that are being considered by the Security Council. The third is to deepen understanding of this topic in the Council, broadening the discussion with the clear and active participation of countries not members of this body. The fourth objective is to examine the role of the Security Council in implementing the Programme of Action that was just adopted, in July, by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, taking advantage of the momentum generated by that Conference. Finally, this debate should produce a series of practical and workable recommendations that we hope can be enshrined in a presidential statement to set out the activities of the Council and define the nature of its participation in this field.

In order to achieve these objectives, we have suggested some topics for consideration in this debate: the relevance of small arms in conflicts being considered by the Council; the contents of the reports of the Secretary-General; greater access to information on the illicit trade in small arms; strengthening regional and subregional mechanisms; the impact of small arms embargoes; the dispatch of assessment missions to countries requesting them; and, as I have said, implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. I invite participating delegations to refer to these topics in their statements.

I now call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: It gives me great pleasure to join the Council today as it considers the contribution it can make in addressing the devastating impact of small arms and light weapons on people and societies throughout the world.

Last month's United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects achieved important progress. I would like to congratulate the President of the Conference, Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodriguez of Colombia, for his instrumental role in ensuring its successful outcome.

The Conference attracted widespread attention, with the world's media reporting extensively on the cost and carnage caused by these weapons. Civil society groups from across the globe were deeply and

creatively involved. After tense and difficult negotiations, Member States forged a consensus among diverse views and interests and adopted a comprehensive Programme of Action.

Faced with the global scourge of small arms, the international community has now begun an important process of constructive global action. States have committed themselves to developing, strengthening and implementing norms and measures aimed at preventing, fighting and, ultimately, eradicating the illicit manufacture of and trade in small arms and light weapons. They agreed to place special emphasis on post-conflict situations and, in particular, to provide greater support to programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, including child ex-combatants. They also agreed to act responsibly in the areas of export, import, transit and retransfer of weapons, since legal weapons all too often and all too easily find their way into the hands of terrorists, criminals and drug traffickers.

States recognized the need to mark and keep accurate records that will enable timely tracing and identification. They pledged to improve the implementation of arms embargoes decided by this Council and they agreed to destroy illicit or surplus weapons as necessary. I am pleased to note that the Department for Disarmament Affairs has produced a handbook on ecologically safe methods of weapons destruction, which I hope will assist States in this regard. The Programme of Action calls for greater transparency and for education and public awareness programmes. And, to assess progress and maintain the momentum that has now been generated, it provides for a review conference to be held by the year 2006.

These are significant first steps in alleviating a grave threat to international peace and security. We must now consolidate these gains. A Programme of Action is a beginning, not an end in itself. Implementation will be the true test. I would also encourage Governments to continue work on those issues on which consensus could not be found at the Conference.

There is also the question of negotiating legally binding instruments. States have established international norms in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation and have adopted treaties banning chemical and biological weapons and anti-personnel landmines. The illicit trade in small arms and light

weapons is conspicuous for its lack of such a framework of binding norms and standards.

There is also a need to address the supply side of the problem. Since the mid-1980s, there has been an increase in the number of companies and countries manufacturing small arms and light weapons. Some of the world's wealthy nations are the main suppliers, but many developing countries also produce small arms, including for export.

The devastating impact on children also warrants special attention. Children suffer the direct effects of small arms violence, such as death, injury or displacement; the loss of parents and siblings; and trauma at witnessing violence. But there are also severe indirect consequences, such as the destruction of health and education facilities and the lack of opportunities that comes with stunted societal growth.

The glorification of guns also sends children a terrible message: that non-violent solutions are unworkable and unrealistic and that power is to be found not in one's skills or intellect, but by intimidating or inflicting harm on others. The fact that small arms require such minimal training has surely played a role in the recruitment of some 300,000 child combatants around the world. Children are the most vulnerable victims of small arms and light weapons and their special needs have not been given sufficient attention.

Small arms are easy to buy, easy to use, easy to transport and easy to conceal. Their proliferation exacerbates conflict, sparks refugee flows, undermines the rule of law and spawns a culture of violence and impunity. This is not just a question of disarmament; it is also an issue of development, democracy, human rights and human security.

Last month's landmark Conference was not meant to infringe on national sovereignty, limit the right of States to defend themselves or interfere with their responsibility to provide security; nor was it meant to take guns away from their legal owners. The targets remain unscrupulous arms brokers, corrupt Government officials, drug trafficking syndicates, terrorists, armed groups and others who bring death and mayhem into our streets, schools and towns and who ruin lives and destroy in minutes the labour of years. No country is immune from this threat.

There are no simple solutions and there is no single method of dealing with the impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Political commitments can make a critical difference in saving lives and easing suffering and this Council has a major role to play in making small arms a focus of urgent global attention. I look forward to continuing our work on this central aspect of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his kind words about Ambassador Reyes' presidency of the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): I thank the Foreign Minister of Colombia for coming to New York to join us today and to preside over this open meeting of the Security Council. I congratulate him and his colleagues on Colombia's assumption of the presidency of the Council. I want also to acknowledge the presence of the Secretary-General. His attendance and his comments today reinforce the importance of this issue for all of us.

All of us in this Chamber today are well aware of the agonizing impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, especially in areas of conflict, where the problem is most acute. We commend Colombia for its initiative to convene this meeting, which continues the momentum of the successful United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. I want to join the Secretary-General in commending Ambassador Reyes for his leadership of the Conference.

The Conference reached consensus on a comprehensive Programme of Action: a solid foundation for dealing with this issue. The Programme, if diligently carried out by Member States, will engender significant progress towards curbing this illegal and deadly trade.

The United States believes that steps to tackle the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons must be practical and effective. The most effective way to prevent small arms and light weapons from getting into the hands of those who would misuse them is through strict export and import controls and strong brokering laws, and through ensuring the security of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons.

The United States has one of the strongest systems in the world for regulating the export of arms. Small arms and light weapons made in the United States cannot be exported without the approval of the Department of State. Nor can arms of United States origin be re-transferred without the approval of the United States. We rigorously monitor arms transfers and routinely investigate suspicious activities. In the past five years we have interdicted thousands of illicit arms, and we have cut off exports to five countries that failed to comply with United States law. Moreover, all commercial exporters of arms in the United States must be registered as brokers and must submit each transaction for Government licensing approval.

The United States has also been active internationally in stemming the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We offer bilateral financial and technical assistance to help countries develop national export and import controls, to improve border security, and to secure and destroy illicit stocks of small arms and light weapons in conflict-prone regions. We remain ready to continue that support.

My Government believes that the focus of the Conference, as reflected in the Programme of Action, was properly on Member States and on their obligation and their efforts to eliminate the illicit small arms trade. Thus, the Security Council's role is circumscribed. We do not believe that the Security Council should seek a more elaborate role beyond its competence; but it does indeed have an important role to play.

The paper (*S/2001/732, annex*) submitted by the Government of Colombia in advance of this meeting very thoughtfully focused on a number of important issues. The issue of the flow of information to the Council is a key theme. Information on the role of small arms and light weapons can be of great value in helping us evaluate specific areas of conflict, including decisions to establish or enforce Security Council arms embargoes. Also, as called for in the Programme of Action, the United States urges Member States to use all appropriate legal and administrative means against violators of Security Council arms embargoes.

Thus, while the function of the Security Council in accomplishing the Programme of Action is limited, we have the opportunity, through the leadership of Colombia, to thoughtfully define our role.

The Programme of Action of the first United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is just over one week old. Ensuring its success should be a priority; that success depends on the will and effort of Member States. The United States has a history of demonstrated commitment to finding practical and effective ways of curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We look forward to working with other Member States, and with you, Mr. President, to fulfil the Programme of Action.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me.

Ms. Durrant (Jamaica): Mr. President, allow me on behalf of the Jamaican delegation to welcome you, the Foreign Minister of Colombia, most warmly. My delegation is certain that under your guidance this important debate will be extremely useful in seeking to meet the objectives you have outlined. We are particularly grateful that the Colombian presidency has provided an opportunity for non-members of the Council to participate in this discussion, as we believe that the Security Council can only benefit from exploring new approaches to a subject that affects all aspects of its mandate related to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The increased attention of the international community to the issue of small arms is both timely and welcome. The spread and use of those weapons has contributed significantly to the escalation and perpetuation of violence in conflict and post-conflict areas; it has brought more pervasive violation of human rights and erosion of social justice and has expanded the threat both to personal security and to the stability of States. The escalation in the level of violence that has accompanied the increase in the use of small arms and light weapons and its linkage to the illicit drug trade now pose a formidable challenge to the economic and social development of many countries.

There is no question that the greatest injury and loss of human life result from those weapons, most often within the context of national or regional conflicts. Particularly disturbing is the fact that the victims of small-arms violence are increasingly from the most vulnerable sectors of society, especially women and children.

Today's open debate, which follows the recent conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, under the leadership of Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodríguez of Colombia, is, in our view, very appropriate. We also express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and to the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their exhaustive efforts to keep this issue before the international community. In that context, we thank the Secretary-General for his presence here today and for his valuable introduction to our debate.

The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference can be seen as the first significant initiative of the international community as a whole to map out a comprehensive set of measures for national, regional and international action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. The Security Council must build on that momentum.

There can be no doubt that the ready availability of small arms and light weapons has undermined the efforts of the Security Council to achieve many of its objectives. When it last considered this item, on 24 September 1999, the Council acknowledged the destabilizing accumulation of small arms as a contributing factor in the intensity and duration of armed conflict and in the undermining of peace agreements, complicating peace-building efforts and increasing the vulnerability of civilians to the indiscriminate use of these weapons in both conflict and post-conflict situations. The Council also expressed particular concern at the humanitarian impact and socio-economic implications of the excessive accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons. Since that debate, new situations have arisen that have served to further substantiate these concerns.

This reality is a compelling reason for the Council to include integrally, within the framework of its assessment and decision-making, specific consideration of the role played by small arms and light weapons. We therefore hope that this debate will result in practical proposals and recommendations for the mainstreaming of small arms in the work of the Council, moving it from a tangential to a more central position in our deliberations. To this end, I wish to offer the following perspectives.

First, the Secretary-General should be encouraged to include an analysis on the proliferation of small arms in his reports to the Security Council on specific conflict situations, identifying sources of supply and financing for these weapons where possible. We note, for example, current reports that the civilian population in Burundi is being armed despite efforts to advance the Arusha peace process. This is an example of a case in which special briefings or reports by the Secretary-General with an analysis on the spread of arms could be particularly valuable.

Secondly, the Security Council should significantly improve its attention to the disarmament component of disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration (DDRR) programmes. Greater attention should be given to devising more effective programmes to ensure that peacekeeping operations respond clearly to the question of arms control. Such consideration should include the securing of accurate information on the origin, volume and nature of small arms and light weapons in the possession of ex-combatants and the civilian population. More accurate and comprehensive data collection is important for the success of the disarmament phase of any DDRR programme.

Such programmes should also include clear guidelines for the disposal and destruction of weapons, in order to consolidate peace and to prevent the migration of these weapons to other regions of conflict. In this regard, the Council should pay special attention to the destruction of weapons in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation or resettlement programme anticipated for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to preclude the access to these weapons by groups in other countries.

The Secretary-General has drawn attention to the devastating effects of small arms on children, and it is important that psycho-social rehabilitation of child ex-combatants be an important part of the DDRR programmes.

Thirdly, the sanctions committees of the Security Council have an important role to play in redefining the Council's approach to the question of small arms. There is an urgent need for more innovative strategies that address the issue of the illicit exploitation of natural resources being used by combatants for purchasing weapons. In this regard, we need to build on the important successes achieved by the

mechanisms in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola. It is imperative that greater attention be given to ways to achieve sharper and more targeted sanctions so as to limit combatants' access to resources. It is also important that information on financial transactions fuelling the illicit flow of arms be shared and made public. We also need to ensure that appropriate and regular information is provided on arms flows and effective enforcement of arms embargoes.

In due course, the Council should undertake an analysis of the lessons learned from the mechanisms established for the sanctions against UNITA, and more recently on Afghanistan. The importance of regional agreement and cooperation in this regard must be underscored. The Council could benefit from the results of the Interlochen and the Bonn-Berlin initiatives on targeted sanctions.

Fourthly, there is an urgent need to engage business and financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and other actors at the international and local levels in an effort to curb the ability of local groups to secure the resources to purchase illegal arms. In this regard, Jamaica reiterates its position that more effective domestic and international regulation of the legal arms trade, so as to stem the leakage of legal weapons to illegal markets, is central to any strategy to effectively control the illicit trafficking in and use of these weapons.

Beyond this, experience has shown that the most effective initiatives to date in controlling the spread of illegal weapons have been initiated at the regional level. Regional bodies are well placed to provide useful information and perspectives on the regional dimensions that characterize arms flows. We therefore strongly recommend more structured consultation between the Council and regional organizations seized of this issue. Towards that end, the Council may wish to consider holding consultations with the heads of regional organizations when they meet here at United Nations Headquarters next year, to consider follow-up for implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons relevant to the work of the Council and to the mandate of the regional organizations.

In his statement the Secretary-General underscored that the issue before us is not just a question of disarmament, but an integral question of

development, democracy and human rights. The complex, integrated challenge that it poses demands a comprehensive, coordinated response. In this regard, Jamaica considers that closer consultation and cooperation with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations system for the control of wrongful use of small arms and light weapons could only serve to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the Council.

Within this framework, we believe that there is a central role for the Secretariat to play in coordinating all United Nations activities concerning small arms. We welcome the important role that the Department for Disarmament Affairs, through its mechanism for Coordinating Action on Small Arms, continues to play in ensuring regular consultation and coordination among all entities within the United Nations system for which the matter of small arms is an integral concern.

Jamaica considers that these existing mechanisms could be strengthened to enhance in-house capacity to undertake more research and analysis on the nature and scope of the problem, and to provide practical assistance to affected States. There is still a paucity of data on the small arms phenomenon. Instead of establishing another group of experts, institutions like the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research could be strengthened with a view to widening the database of information that the Council could access.

We also note that the United Nations continues to experience difficulty in recruiting disarmament experts and trainers for service within peacekeeping operations in the field. This need could be addressed in part by encouraging Governments to establish databases of expertise on disarmament to enhance the United Nations capacity when the need arises.

These initiatives will, of course, demand additional resources, both human and financial. My delegation was therefore disappointed that the recent Conference did not result in a specific commitment to the investment of new and additional resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action. Without the injection of fresh resources, our efforts will be significantly compromised. We encourage better coordination among existing small arms funds, to ensure maximization of the impact of these resources. We also consider that it would be useful to explore the possibility of working more closely with the United Nations Development Programme to identify areas in

which its trust fund for support of prevention and reduction in the proliferation of small arms, which includes a “weapons for development” approach, can be of assistance in the disarmament component of peacekeeping operations.

The challenge before us to effectively address the problem of small arms is awesome. It is our hope that the Council will embrace the issue integrally within the scope of its work. This is an issue that must remain on the agenda of the Council as long as the death toll from the indiscriminate use of these weapons remains a sad reality.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Jamaica for her kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): We thank you, Mr. Foreign Minister, for your personal presence in the Security Council to preside over this meeting that is very relevant to the Council’s mandate. We thank you and the Colombian delegation, under the able guidance of Ambassador Alfonso Valdivieso, for taking the initiative to hold this open debate on small arms. Your country’s commitment to the issue of small arms has been effectively manifested through the leadership of Ambassador Camilo Reyes at the first ever United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held recently in New York.

The well-articulated, forward-looking statement from the Secretary-General at the outset sets the tone for today’s meeting. We thank him for that. Let me also thank the Colombian delegation for circulating a background note which sets the issue in perspective for today’s debate.

With the changing nature of conflicts, the involvement of small arms and light weapons in sustaining and aggravating conflicts has increased manifold, with devastating effects on our society and economy. The last decade, which saw the upsurge in intra-State conflicts, also witnessed an annual toll of almost 500,000 victims, caused by more than 550 million small arms.

The arms resources nexus is now well documented in at least four of the recent conflict situations active on the agenda of the Security Council. As mentioned in the Colombian note, small-arms-related issues have been repeatedly addressed by the Council, with regard to protection of civilians in armed

conflict; children in armed conflict; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; conflict prevention and peace-building. We believe that the rationale behind today’s debate lies in this premise. Further, the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Small Arms Conference covers areas in which Council action could be relevant in appropriate situations. My delegation would therefore like to address six priority areas.

The first is illicit arms flows. The unbridled flow of arms across borders remains a difficult problem even after a settlement of a conflict has been reached. In his report of 11 February 2000 on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the Secretary-General refers to the need of imposing a local arms embargo and deploying United Nations forces along national borders to stop smuggling. The case of Kosovo is worth noting in this regard. By its resolution 1160 (1998), the Security Council imposed a prohibition on the sale or supply of small arms and light weapons. This needs to be further strengthened, with provision for severe punitive measures to curb large-scale smuggling.

Putting an end to the illegal ownership of arms and crossings of the boundaries of Kosovo was important, as the United Nations Mission there is mandated to hold elections soon. Curbing the widespread availability of illegal arms and the disarmament of the illegal armed groups is an important precondition for ensuring the safety of the population and the conduct of a free and fair election. In East Timor, as in Kosovo, the problem of small arms is recognized even though it has not come to the fore. With elections to be held at the end of this month, this issue needs to be given priority. The legislative measures taken by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor in the form of small-arms regulation and security arrangements are commendable steps that could be replicated in similar situations elsewhere. Small arms are often used by armed groups operating in refugee camps. The Security Council has in the past addressed this issue because of its disruptive effect on post-conflict rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees.

The second priority is arms embargoes. States participating in the Small Arms Conference undertook in the Programme of Action to take all necessary measures against any activity that violates a Security Council arms embargo. In cases of armed conflicts

involving multiple actors, the active cooperation of neighbouring States is essential for the full implementation of arms embargoes.

The enforcement of arms embargoes depends fully on States fulfilling their obligation to provide the Security Council sanctions committees with available information on violations. Widespread violations in a number of specific cases necessitated more effective means of monitoring on a continuous basis.

The cooperation and assistance of Member States in compiling the information and updating the database is an essential prerequisite. The Council should call upon Governments to ensure that they provide the information required to update the lists regarding arms trafficking that have been established by the respective sanctions committees.

The third priority is regional cooperation. Through the sharing of information between law-enforcement and customs-control agencies, regional organizations can play an important role in monitoring the flow of arms. The Security Council, in addressing situations of armed conflict, should continue to encourage such regional actions and stress the importance of regional cooperation in tackling the issue of illicit trade in small arms. As called for by the Council in the presidential statement of 24 September 1999, States concerned should also strive to establish and strengthen voluntary national or regional moratoria or similar measures to prohibit or discourage the manufacture, trade and transfer of small arms in affected regions or subregions.

While taking into account their different characteristics, regions may benefit from the experience of others. The examples of the Economic Community of West African States moratorium, the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports stand out in this respect.

Fourthly, there is the human rights and humanitarian perspective. No discussion on small arms can be complete without addressing the human rights and humanitarian perspective. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee survey, released on the eve of the Small Arms Conference, makes clear the link between irresponsible use of lethal small arms and massive violations of humanitarian law and of the human rights

of civilian populations. On the ground the examples of Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo only substantiate these findings. Among other things, that the presence and proliferation of small arms in these conflict areas acts as a multiplier of violence cannot be overemphasized.

We believe that Security Council action to address specific conflict situations can be greatly enhanced if the reports of the Secretary-General contain an analysis of the availability, stockpiling, lines of supply, brokering and transportation arrangements in respect of small arms and light weapons. Recent experience shows that tracking the financial network behind the illegal arms trade is of vital importance. The engagement of the Monitoring Mechanism on Angola Sanctions in tracking the financial network of UNITA is only a beginning. The success of this initiative should be extremely useful in other such cases.

The fifth priority is peace agreements. The issue of the disposal of arms and ammunition often becomes a stumbling block in the implementation of peace agreements. A determination about this question during peace negotiations and its appropriate reflection in resulting peace agreements is useful for stabilizing post-conflict security situations.

The report of the Secretary-General of 11 February 2000 on the role of United Nations peacekeeping in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration mentions the United Nations keeping custody of collected weapons so that they can be handed over to restructured armed forces. The Programme of Action has provided for the destruction of seized or collected weapons with prior marking and for keeping a record of the disposal. The Council should support destruction as the most effective mode of disposal and call for its inclusion as a provision in peace agreements between parties. We are very happy that the destruction handbook has been circulated to us today.

Sixth and finally, child soldiers. We particularly welcome reference to this aspect in the statement of the Secretary-General. Children are the most helpless victims of armed conflicts that are exacerbated by small arms and light weapons. Their plight becomes more intolerable with their forced recruitment and use as child soldiers. In this context, Bangladesh affirms the need for the declaration of child-soldier-free zones in various regions of the world.

In conclusion, it must be stressed that the challenge posed by small arms is multifaceted and involves, *inter alia*, security, conflict resolution and humanitarian dimensions. Clearly, Council actions in these areas must therefore complement the contribution of civil society, non-governmental organizations and industry. At the same time, a system-wide approach in the United Nations, epitomized by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Coordinating Action on Small Arms, must also be encouraged. In conflict areas, the Council would do well to encourage regional initiatives which can generate global action.

We believe that the issue of small arms and light weapons cannot be viewed in isolation of its peace and security perspective. Given the role of small arms in perpetuating the cycle of violence, we must focus on prevention. In this regard, I cannot overemphasize the importance of promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, particularly among children and young people, through education and advocacy, so that today's victims do not become tomorrow's perpetrators.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Bangladesh for the kind words he addressed to my delegation.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would like to start by welcoming you to New York. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Mr. President, I thank you for having organized this debate, following upon the adoption on 20 July in New York of the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. I would like to warmly congratulate Mr. Camilo Reyes of Colombia, who presided over the Conference with much determination and efficiency despite all the difficulties encountered and the occasionally profound differences between the positions that were defended throughout the Conference. Today's debate enables us to take stock of this issue in the Security Council almost two years after the public ministerial-level meeting held in September 1999.

In a few moments, Belgium will speak on behalf of the European Union. I would just like to make a few comments on the items that seem important to us.

The threat posed by the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms is not a new issue. The Council notes on a daily basis the devastating effect of this traffic, particularly in Africa. The proliferation and illicit circulation of these weapons fuel and prolong the conflicts. They also make the maintenance and consolidation of peace very difficult.

Action is required at all levels — national, regional and international — to combat this scourge. We were gratified to see the outcome of the first United Nations conference on this subject, which was able to adopt a Programme of Action that identifies a good number of measures to be taken and efforts to be made. I shall reiterate the appeal made on that occasion by Minister Charles Josselin with respect to the responsibility of every State to ensure that the international community's response to this problem is commensurate with the hopes placed in it, particularly by countries directly threatened and affected by the excessive accumulation and illicit traffic of small arms, particularly in Africa.

I would like to underline a few priorities and explore a few possible avenues of thought for the Security Council. First, the Council must call upon all States to take the required measures to rapidly implement the Programme of Action adopted on 20 July and to follow up on the efforts under way, in particular as regards marking weapons and international cooperation to investigate the networks used for trafficking in small arms. We have seen the scope of this problem in the Council, in particular in the very detailed reports we have examined on the violations of embargoes in Angola and Sierra Leone.

We must draw the required lessons at a global level and set up a mechanism for cooperation among States that could thwart the action of the traffickers. France and Switzerland have developed a draft international instrument to that end which has received broad support from the international community and which is taken up in the follow-up mechanism of the Programme of Action. We are determined, on the basis of the provisions of the Programme of Action dealing with traceability, to pursue our activities to take this project forward, for it is at the heart of collective efforts to prevent illicit trade in small arms and to enhance the responsibility of States in this field. The next step will be in the General Assembly's First Committee in October on the launching of the United

Nations study on the draft international instrument on the traceability of small arms.

The Security Council must be aware of the scope of the damage caused by the proliferation and illicit traffic of small arms in countries undergoing domestic conflict or experiencing tension with their neighbours. As the weapon of all guerrilla forces, light arms are the easiest to use; military forces and civilians, children as well as men and women, are all in turn users — sometimes under compulsion — or victims. In societies that are already rendered vulnerable by a lack of political stability and a lack of equitable and lasting economic development, where conflicts have unfortunately not been prevented by political solutions, the accumulation of these weapons, in particular through illicit traffic, has the worst consequences.

Small arms, often ridiculously low-priced, are easily obtainable. Traffic in arms not only fuels the conflict under way but is also the spark that sets off the powder keg and is the instrument of a cultural violence that undermines any peaceful attempt to settle conflict. The countries concerned and the international community that tries to help have the greatest difficulty in getting rid of these weapons by means of programmes for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. That is why it is important, as the European Union has done in the context of its common action, that States abstain on principle from supplying weapons to non-State entities or groups.

It also seems indispensable to develop preventive disarmament action. The recent report of the Secretary-General on preventing armed conflict is a timely reminder for States of their primary responsibility for prevention under the Charter of the United Nations. Practical disarmament measures undertaken for the collection and destruction of stocks of illicit small arms are of crucial importance and deserve to be developed further.

The Security Council could ask the Secretary-General to prepare, within six months, a report, based on recent concrete experience, on the principles, modalities and possible recommendations as regards the collection of weapons, disarmament and the destruction of the small arms collected. The Council could thus envisage the possibility of supporting this type of project in the context of its conflict prevention activities.

The Security Council might also benefit from information compiled by the Secretary-General, under paragraph 36 of section II of the Programme of Action, on measures taken by States and, if possible, on statistics available to him on the number of illicit small arms in circulation. The Secretary-General could be invited to provide this information, in particular in the reports that he will be periodically submitting to the Security Council on regional or subregional situations in order to draw its attention to potential threats to international peace and security.

Finally, I should like to underscore the crucial importance of strict respect for arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council, and I would recall also the need to develop a comprehensive approach, as the illicit trade in small arms is inherently linked to other kinds of trafficking — for instance, trafficking in high-value commodities, such as diamonds.

France would like to recall its proposal for the establishment of a standing monitoring mechanism for targeted sanctions and the illicit trade in high-value commodities in armed conflicts. The experience of the panels on Angola and Sierra Leone has demonstrated not only the usefulness of such monitoring mechanisms, but also the limitations of ad hoc bodies that deal only with certain targeted sanctions regimes and that are of limited duration.

A single standing mechanism would provide the Council and the sanctions committees with a reservoir of expertise and an institutional memory that could enable them to better understand the complex nature of trafficking and the interlinkages involved and to monitor compliance with embargoes, in particular as concerns small arms and the resources that allow for their acquisition.

The Programme of Action adopted on 20 July in New York must be fully and urgently implemented by all States. The Security Council and its members have a particular role to play in this area, in view of the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security assigned to this organ by the Charter. We hope that today's debate will enable us to undertake and support effective and collective action in this field.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to my country.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): Let me wish you a very warm welcome, Mr. President, to New York and to the Security Council. I thank also the Secretary-General for his very useful and thoughtful introduction to the debate.

Since the representative of Belgium will be speaking on behalf of the European Union later in this debate, I will keep my remarks extremely short, not least because of the length of the list of speakers we have today.

The first-ever United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July, signaled a step change in the international community's effort to combat the uncontrolled spread and misuse of small arms. It must be regarded as the start of a long-term process with practical follow-up.

I should like to pay tribute, as others have done, to the efforts of Ambassador Reyes in seeing the Conference through to a successful conclusion. For our part, we were very pleased to have been able to make available Sir Michael Weston to act as a facilitator for part of the negotiations.

The success of the Conference will be measured by the extent of its impact on the levels of illicit trade in small arms and the destabilizing accumulations of those weapons. The impact of the whole complex of small arms questions on issues such as disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration (DDRR) and on children — both of which the Secretary-General has mentioned — is, frankly, obvious.

It is clear to us, therefore, that the Conference must be regarded as the start of a process. It is equally clear that the Security Council can make a real contribution to that process, because so many of the issues have an impact on our work.

I was particularly attracted by the idea of mainstreaming small arms in our work, as mentioned by Ambassador Patricia Durrant of Jamaica. It seems to me that the more we can do by practical measures to make sure that the small arms dimension becomes an automatic part of our work, the better off we will be. Perhaps it is a typically British sentiment, but I cannot help feeling that the more we can concentrate on doing things that will actually make a difference, the more they will be worth, as opposed to long and theoretical reports.

For this reason, we, as the United Kingdom, strongly support the Programme of Action which has resulted from the July Conference. We have established a comprehensive small arms and light weapons reduction programme, allocating a minimum of 19 million pounds — or around US\$ 30 million — over the next three years to address proliferation and the misuse of small arms and light weapons and to support the follow-up to the Conference.

We will do our part. It is vitally important that the United Nations system and the international community as a whole should play its part too.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words he addressed to Colombia.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Sir, the Russian delegation welcomes your presidency, in your capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, at today's important meeting of the Security Council, which was initiated by the delegation of Colombia. We welcome also the Secretary-General, and we are grateful to him for his assessment of the problem of small arms and light weapons.

We note that recently the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has begun to take on greater importance in various forums, from international organizations to regional conferences. Quite recently, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects took place here in New York. At that Conference, a final document was adopted that defined the major areas for action by the international community in this field. The Security Council also considered this problem in September 1999.

Russia shares the concerns of a broad range of countries regarding the fact that the uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons can pose a threat to regional peace and security. Without a solution to the problem of the prevention and limitation of the dangerous spread of small arms and light weapons in the world, it will be impossible to settle conflicts, ensure the security of peoples and maintain stable economic development.

Russia, which is one of the major producers and exporters of small arms and light weapons, has adopted

a responsible policy in terms of supplying the international market. It is undertaking measures to tighten control over the manufacture, transfer and circulation of these weapons, and it is carrying out, on a planned and regular basis, the destruction of its surplus. Thus, in the period from 1998 to 2001, at the arsenals and bases of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, more than 420,000 units of small arms and close-combat weapons were disposed of, including 44,000 units during the period 2000-2001. In addition, in 2000-2001 the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation removed from illegal circulation 2,482 units of small arms and light weapons. Of these, 1,142 units were destroyed; the remaining weapons will be destroyed following the completion of criminal investigations.

We share the approach to the problem of small arms and light weapons of the many United Nations members who base their positions on the provisions of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter on the legitimate right of States to self-defence, which also includes the right to legally acquire necessary weapons. Everyone should carry out a responsible policy in the sphere of the supply of weapons to the international market, undertake measures at the national level to tighten control over the export, manufacture, and supply of small arms and light weapons, and strengthen the struggle against their illegal spread.

In recent years in our country laws and acts have come into effect that regulate the internal trade of weapons, including small arms. The rules regulate their manufacture, transfer and safeguarding and also their export to foreign States. Supplying weapons beyond Russian borders, including small arms and light weapons, is carried out through licensing and is under strict State control.

In the work of the Security Council, we often encounter armed conflicts in which the problem of small arms and light weapons plays not only an important role, but even a decisive role. We consider that during the course of substantive consideration of crisis situations, the Council should devote more attention to the problem of illegal and destabilizing supplies of weapons.

One of the clear examples of this is the illegal supplying of weapons to Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the persistence of a great number of small arms and light weapons in the hands of the

civilian population of that region. The existence of this problem was pointed out by the representative of Bangladesh. All of this is in direct contradiction of Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998) and 1244 (1999) and serves only to complicate the achievement of a Kosovo settlement, as well as to threaten the lives of peaceful civilians and the peacekeepers. Those who are parties to such violations are taking on an enormous responsibility for the consequences of possibly destabilizing the entire Balkan region. Unfortunately, in the past the dangers of this situation did not lead to the appropriate conclusions. The result is that we now have the development of the present situation in Macedonia.

Also on the agenda is improving the effectiveness of weapons embargoes imposed by the Security Council. This problem has also been spoken of by quite a number of speakers. A porous arms embargo can only aggravate the confrontation of parties to a conflict and undermine the authority of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole.

We consider that the recent adoption of the Security Council resolution on the establishment of a monitoring mechanism for the implementation of anti-Taliban sanctions is an example of the proper way to resolve this problem. The objective is to enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of the embargo imposed by the Council in accordance with resolution 1333 (2000) on the delivery of weapons to the Taliban. We should like to take note here of the role of Colombia, as chairman of the sanctions Committee established in accordance with Security Council resolution 1267 (1999), in the preparation of and agreement on this resolution.

We support the involvement of the United Nations, including within the framework of peacekeeping operations and efforts to collect and destroy small arms and light weapons with the agreement of the relevant States and upon their request to the Organization for assistance. We are also ready to consider regional initiatives imposing moratoria or limitations on the export, import, and manufacture of small arms and light weapons, if these are voluntary and non-discriminatory in nature.

In this context, a special report of the Secretary-General could be useful for summarizing all of the work done by the United Nations on the problem of small arms and light weapons, including the

contribution of the groups of United Nations Government experts and the results of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We believe that the discussion of this problem of small arms and light weapons within the framework of the Security Council should devote greater emphasis to the consideration of specific situations that create a threat to regional and international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to extend our warm welcome to you, Mr. President, for coming to New York and personally presiding over this open debate. I would also like to thank you for your kind words addressed to me as President during July.

Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodríguez, representative of Colombia to the United Nations Office in Geneva, successfully chaired the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and also facilitated the adoption by the Conference of the Programme of Action. This month, thanks to your country's efforts, we are able to have this open debate today on the same issue. I would like to express our appreciation to Colombia for its efforts and contributions in this regard. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for the statement he has just made.

In recent years, the excessive accumulation of and illicit trafficking in small arms have exacerbated wars and conflicts in certain countries and regions, undermined post-conflict reconstruction and given rise to serious humanitarian problems. This has drawn widespread concern within the international community. The Programme of Action adopted at the Conference last month identifies in explicit terms concrete measures to be taken to deal with this issue at global, regional and national levels, and it marks a good beginning for the international effort toward solving the issue of illicit trade and trafficking in small arms.

As the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council frequently has to face the issue of small arms in its work, especially when reviewing

regional hot-spot issues. In recent years, in its discussions of issues such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programmes, the protection of civilians, women, and children in armed conflict, and the prevention of armed conflict, the Council has always paid special attention to the issue of small arms. In 1999, the Council adopted a presidential statement on this issue. All this can be considered an important component of the international effort towards an early resolution of the issue of small arms.

The Chinese delegation supports the Security Council continuing to give, within its mandate, the necessary attention to the issue of small arms. In our view, such attention should be more reflected in the review of specific issues. Although the Council is not a specialized organ that deals with the issue of small arms, the work it does in this regard represents a crucial part in the global effort for this purpose. The Council should strengthen its cooperation and coordination with other relevant United Nations bodies on this issue, so that each can play its due part and synergy can be achieved.

The problem of excessive accumulation of and illicit trafficking in small arms is most serious and salient on the African continent, with a few countries there bearing the brunt of the impact. Therefore, we believe that special attention must be paid to the issue of small arms in that region. In reviewing conflicts in the African region, the Security Council should listen carefully to views of concerned parties on the issue of small arms and step up its cooperation in this regard with relevant regional organizations. In its efforts to promote peace processes, carry out DDR programmes, dispatch peacekeeping missions, adopt arms embargoes and launch peace-building processes, full consideration should always be given to the issue of small arms as an important factor.

Firmly opposed to the illegal production of small arms and supporting the efforts of the international community against the illicit trade in small arms, China has made its own contribution to the resolution of this issue. Among other things, the Chinese delegation to the Conference last month made a five-point proposition to that end, which I would like to reiterate as follows.

First, based on their specific national conditions, countries should formulate and improve their

legislation and regulations on the production, possession, transfer and stockpiling of small arms and take practical measures to ensure strict enforcement. Secondly, countries and regions should step up their cooperation and coordination in combating the illicit trade in small arms. Thirdly, the international community should further support countries and regions in their efforts to deal with the issue of small arms, and the United Nations and other relevant international organizations have an important role to play in this regard. Fourthly, while seeking to end tensions and conflicts in relevant countries and regions, the international community should also make vigorous efforts to help them develop their economies, eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development and lasting peace and stability so as to address the problem of small arms at its roots. Fifthly, the sovereignty of States should be respected and their right to the legal production, possession and transfer of small arms should not be compromised.

These five points put forward by the Chinese delegation are an outgrowth of our thorough consideration and study of all aspects of the illicit trade in small arms, as well as its underlying causes and background. We are confident that, so long as the international community works together, continuous progress will be achieved in dealing with the issue of small arms.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of China for his kind words addressed to Colombia.

Mr. Chaouachi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Sir, and your country, friendly Colombia, for having organized this open debate of the Security Council on the question of small arms. We also thank you for the very useful working document prepared by your delegation on this issue.

We also thank the Secretary-General for his important statement today.

Through its prerogatives in the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council is directly concerned with the question of small arms and light weapons. Clearly, this is the case each time the Council acts on a situation of conflict or tension in the context of peacekeeping operations.

Today's meeting is particularly timely given the seriousness of the problem and the conflict situations

prevailing in several regions of the world. The convening of this meeting, two years after that held by the Security Council on 24 September 1999, reflects the international community's growing awareness of this serious threat. Indeed, the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are easily transported and inexpensive, has for several years been at the heart of the concerns of States Members of the United Nations, several other international, regional and subregional organizations and the international community as a whole.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, recently held in New York from 9 to 20 July, falls within that context. The adoption at the Conference of an important document, its Programme of Action, represents the first stage of a lengthy process that we must support in order to end the threat of small arms. In order to be fully achieved, this Programme requires us all to work together.

New hotbeds of tension emerge and are sometimes transformed into armed conflicts that are internal or fought between neighbouring countries, with tragic consequences for innocent civilian populations. The circulation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons contributes to increasing the intensity and length of these conflicts and to exacerbating them. Coordinated and urgent action on the part of the international community is therefore necessary in order to assume closer control and better management of this highly complex problem.

In this respect, we believe that the most effective way to prevent a conflict is to address the root causes that may unleash it, such as poverty and economic, ethnic and cultural problems, among others. Hence, the international community must act on all levels: subregional, regional and international; in all areas: disarmament, the maintenance of peace and post-conflict peace-building; and, simultaneously, at the level of prevention and combating the underlying causes of conflicts.

In conflict situations, the problem should be considered as a whole within the context of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. The Security Council has had a certain interest in this aspect, in particular in the course of recent years. The Council should maintain that interest by dedicating itself to further honing its action in this

sphere in order to improve its efficiency. In that context, we feel that the elements suggested in section E of the working paper prepared by the presidency are worthy of the Council's interest and consideration.

My delegation believes that the accumulation of weapons cannot in and of itself be described as excessive or destabilizing, since large quantities of arms under the strict and effective control of a stable State do not necessarily lead to violence. Contrarily, a small quantity of arms can be a factor of destabilization in other situations. This requires us to take into account the specific nature of the situation in each country as we search for a solution.

In that context, my delegation would stress the importance to developing countries particularly affected by these problems of strengthening their national legislation in the area of small arms and light weapons. They must, however, be further assisted by the international community in the implementation of programmes of national control, disarmament and rehabilitation. The producing countries, for their part, must ban the export of such weapons to conflict zones.

The Bamako Declaration, adopted at the ministerial meeting held in Mali from 30 November to 1 December 2000, reflects the commitment and determination of Africa to combat the illicit proliferation, circulation and trade in small arms and light weapons. This Declaration defines the vision of the African countries on how to eradicate this scourge through the adoption of a realistic approach and applicable measures that, if supported by the international community, cannot fail to help eradicate the trade in small arms.

Thus, our efforts must focus on the goal of strengthening regional and international cooperation, for this problem transcends the capacities of certain countries. That does not absolve those countries of their responsibilities. On the contrary, the initial efforts to find solutions appropriate to their specific realities must be made by Governments themselves. In this respect, we welcome the various initiatives undertaken at the national and regional levels, in particular those carried out on the continental level in Africa. In this framework, it is important to emphasize the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Bank and the Economic and Social Council,

through the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and to perfect programmes to address this scourge.

It goes without saying that any action designed to cope with the problems of small arms and light weapons must take into account the legitimate right of self-defence of States, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter, and the right of peoples to self-determination.

In supporting the efforts being made at the international level to solve the problem of small arms, we believe that this should in no way distract our attention from the essential issue of nuclear disarmament, which is far from resolved and remains the greatest threat to all mankind. Attention to the issue of small arms and light weapons must be accompanied by the necessary efforts of the international community to achieve nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): Allow me first of all, Sir, to congratulate your country on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. It is indeed a pleasure for my delegation to see you, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, presiding over this open debate of the Security Council. Your presence among us bears testimony to the commitment and tireless efforts of Colombia in the global fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The recent conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects under the presidency of Ambassador Reyes further underscored the importance that Colombia attaches to this issue. I am grateful to your delegation for providing a background paper (*S/2001/732, annex*) to guide us in our deliberations.

I wish also to express the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General for his valuable statement this morning.

It is a widely acknowledged fact that small arms and light weapons are today the weapons of choice in armed conflicts. They continue to be extensively used by rebel groups, warlords and terrorists to sustain conflicts, to destabilize Governments and societies and to create havoc. The brutal civil wars in Somalia, Angola and Rwanda during the past decade, which claimed more than 2.5 million lives, were fought mainly with small arms.

These weapons are small and light only in name. The miseries they cause have been immense and widespread. Their proliferation remains a major threat to international peace and security. Having primary responsibility under the United Nations Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has more than a moral obligation to address the issue of small arms.

Africa is the continent most affected by small arms and light weapons. In its resolution 1209 (1998), on illicit arms flows in Africa, the Security Council expressed grave concern over the destabilizing effects of the illicit flow of arms, particularly small arms, to Africa. Three years later, Africa is still awash in small arms and light weapons, which continue to fuel and sustain innumerable conflicts. Expert panels have established beyond doubt the nexus between the acquisition of weapons through illegal means and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, such as diamonds and other precious metals, which are used to pay for the weapons.

Although the Security Council is relentlessly making intensive efforts to find ways and means to end various African conflicts, we have yet to witness a decrease in the flow to Africa of small arms and light weapons, most of which are manufactured in the developed countries. Resolution 1209 (1998) stressed the importance of all Member States, in particular those involved in the manufacturing or marketing of weapons, restricting arms transfers which could provoke or prolong armed conflicts or aggravate existing tensions in Africa. Unfortunately, when it comes to Africa, such words are not adequately translated into deeds.

In the statement (*S/PRST/1999/28*) made by its President on 24 September 1999, the Security Council called for measures to discourage arms flows to countries or regions engaged in or emerging from armed conflicts. That presidential statement also encouraged Governments of arms-exporting countries to exercise the highest degree of responsibility in their transactions. In that regard, my delegation believes that, before selling weapons, those countries have a moral duty under international law to ascertain that the end user will put the consignments to rightful use. They should also be in a position to verify and confirm the identity of end users and their capacity to maintain control over the arms and the ammunition.

In June, the Council had a thorough discussion of the report of the Secretary-General on prevention of armed conflict (*S/2001/574*), in which it was acknowledged that there could be no effective strategy to prevent armed conflicts if the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons were not properly addressed. The Security Council can and should play an effective role in that regard.

With conflicts becoming more and more complex, peacekeeping operations should increasingly be viewed as part of a broader process that should include post-conflict peace-building strategies. Experience has shown that well planned disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are an important and effective instrument for reconstructing post-conflict societies. In that regard, it is important that we strengthen peacekeeping operations to incorporate comprehensive programmes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The first United Nations peacekeeping operation with such a component, deployed in Central America in 1989, paved the way for similar operations elsewhere. The United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, which had been mandated to carry out the destruction of weapons as part of their peace-building activities, should be emulated.

Experiences such as the one in Liberia have shown that large quantities of small arms which are not destroyed in the aftermath of a conflict represent a serious hurdle to the post-conflict peace-building process and hinder reconstruction efforts when they find their way into the hands of thugs, terrorists and other antisocial elements.

In both conflict and post-conflict situations, peacekeeping personnel and humanitarian workers have been the victims of armed groups. In most cases, small arms have been utilized to perpetrate these assaults, resulting in loss of life and undermining the confidence of co-workers in the field.

The disarmament process should not only involve the collection of small arms and light weapons; it should also include programmes dealing with arms management, including measures for the safe storage of these arms and for their eventual destruction.

Peace agreements should make provisions for accurate information on the size and location of armed

forces and for details of weapons used in the conflict in question. In that field, the cooperation and assistance of civil society and of non-governmental organizations is most desirable. Such provisions would facilitate the easy retrieval of these weapons for their eventual destruction. The destruction of these small arms not only serves as a means of creating an atmosphere of security, but also sends a strong signal that the countries emerging from conflict are now embarking on an era of peace. This would generate greater confidence among their citizens.

Most people in post-conflict regions will not readily give up their weapons unless they feel that their lives and property are adequately secure. For an effective and successful demobilization programme, former combatants should be given such assurances, and should also be the object of appropriate reintegration programmes — except, of course, when there is justification for prosecution for crimes against humanity. Incentives should be given to combatants to surrender their weapons. Similarly, adequate measures need to be taken when dealing with the disarmament and demobilization of child soldiers. Provisions should be made for their education and training, which would facilitate their reintegration into society. Special efforts should be made also to reunite such children with their families. The Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects includes several recommendations in that regard, and it is important for the Council to take them fully into account when formulating peacekeeping mandates.

In recent years, targeted sanctions have shown their effectiveness. The imposition of sanctions in the form of arms embargoes by the Security Council has to some extent helped in reducing the flow of arms to areas of conflict. Such measures also make the acquisition of these weapons more difficult and expensive. However, we note that unscrupulous elements continue to breach many United Nations arms embargoes. In the case of the United Nations arms embargo against UNITA, the Panel of Experts established by the Security Council pursuant to resolution 1237 (1999) last year systematically detailed and denounced the role of arms brokers and shipping agents in providing UNITA with arms. The Security Council, in resolution 1196 (1998), called upon States to adopt legislation making the violation of arms embargoes a criminal offence. Such a call was

reiterated in the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

But the Security Council will have to take further measures to improve the effectiveness of its arms embargoes. The ability of the Security Council, of sanctions committees and of the Secretariat to monitor arms embargoes needs to be enhanced, and the Security Council has to show the political determination to do this. It would be very important for the sanctions committees to be provided with the means to submit in their annual reports a section on the implementation of the arms embargoes, on possible violations of the measures reported to them and appropriate recommendations for strengthening the effectiveness of the arms embargoes.

The United Nations Secretariat should have a permanent pool of experts to verify any non-compliance with arms embargoes, which must then be followed by concrete actions. We also have to intensify the “name and shame” campaign against those involved in breaching arms embargoes.

Mauritius welcomes the decision of the Economic Community of West African States to renew for a further period of three years the moratorium banning the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons. Such initiatives should be encouraged and emulated by other regions.

The recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms has now added a new impetus for fighting the illicit trade in small arms at all levels. The Programme of Action is indeed an important road map that should guide us all in constraining the scourge caused by the illicit trade in these weapons. However, we Africans are somewhat disappointed that there was not a consensus on the issue of the sale of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors. The international community is fully aware that when it comes to Africa, it is the heavily armed negative forces that continue to undermine peace and security for decades.

My delegation hopes that in the coming years, good faith will prevail and a consensus will eventually emerge in this regard.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Representative of Mauritius for his kind words about Colombia.

Mr. Strømme (Norway): Mali and Norway have a joint statement today on the issue of small arms, and I will therefore say only how much my delegation appreciates seeing you, Mr. Foreign Minister, and Colombia preside over the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Norway for his kind words addressed to Colombia.

Mr. Kassé (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Over recent years armed conflict has claimed millions of victims, the majority of them civilians, and most of them have been killed by small arms and light weapons. The trade in these weapons is a genuine threat to peace and security, in particular in Africa.

Norway has cooperated with Mali on concrete and practical methods to reduce this threat in our region. Norway and Mali attach high priority to the question of small arms on their foreign policy agendas. Thus, our two countries share the same positions on critical issues linked to the problem of small arms, as was made clear during the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that such a procedure is being applied in the Security Council, and it is my honour today to speak also on behalf of Norway.

Allow me to express to you, Mr. Minister, our great satisfaction at seeing you preside over our meeting today, and to hail the initiative that you have undertaken of holding this meeting on a subject to which our Governments attach high priority. In the light of the recent United Nations Conference, this initiative is indeed most timely. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to your compatriot, Mr. Reyes, the Ambassador of Colombia, for the impressive work that he achieved as the President of that Conference. Those of us who were there in the meeting rooms during the long nights of the Conference know that it required all his skill and insight. Otherwise, we would never have reached agreement on a final document. Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General for the statement he made this morning.

Mali and Norway hope that the Programme of Action of the Conference will provide an impetus to international work aimed at putting an end to the illicit trade and excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms. Although the Conference was a step in the

right direction, we will not hide the fact that our Governments would have preferred to see the adoption of a more ambitious plan of action. We share this opinion with numerous countries of Africa, which is the continent that is the most severely affected by the proliferation of small arms. Mali and Norway believe that there is an urgent need for an international agreement on explicit export criteria that can be effectively implemented. We also need to continue to draw up international legal instruments on marking and tracing small arms and on brokering operations. We regret that the Conference was not able to achieve agreement on wording recognizing the need to establish and maintain control of the possession by individual persons of this type of lethal weapons.

At the regional and subregional level, we should emphasize that the African countries have taken important measures to reduce the illicit trade in small arms. The recent initiatives of the Organization of African Unity, the Southern African Development Community and the countries of East Africa are examples. Norway supported the pioneering work undertaken by Mali and other countries of West Africa to establish the moratorium of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on small arms and light weapons. The ECOWAS moratorium has just been extended for a three-year period beginning 5 July 2001. In addition, the measures of the Programme of Action dealing with the moratorium are now incorporated as provisions of the ECOWAS protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention and management. The African countries have taken a step against the trade in small arms, which usually originate outside their continent. Today it is more necessary than ever before to reinforce the initiatives taken by Africa and to embark on a decisive stage in the prevention of conflicts through effective international regulations for the control and collection of small arms and the management of stockpiles. Mali and Norway call on the donor community to provide more substantial support to these initiatives, which represent specific measures for conflict prevention.

In this respect, the programmes for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants are one of the most important instruments available to the Security Council. In West Africa, DDR in Sierra Leone is an example of how crucial these measures are in United Nations peacekeeping

operations. This is why we need to seriously assess how to integrate this type of programme appropriately into future peacekeeping operations. As a result, Mali and Norway propose that the Secretary-General submit to the Council a report on the lessons to be drawn from DDR programmes.

As reflected in our recent debate on peace-building and conflict prevention, one of the lessons that reality has taught us up to now is that the collection of small arms alone is not sufficient. The establishment of a neutral security zone and judicial machinery is important to create a safe environment conducive to development. "Security first" is a motto that has already been used during actions for peace and reconciliation in Mali and for the establishment of the ECOWAS moratorium.

Practical disarmament measures must be put in a broader context and accompanied by targeted development programmes in order to provide better prospects for former combatants. In this respect, Mali and Norway are above all concerned by the situation of child soldiers, to whom particular attention must be paid within the framework of programmes of this type.

As is the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we are now confronted with an important challenge, because of which we are likely to be called upon to support programmes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, which must also include measures for repatriation and resettlement. The organization and coordination of such a comprehensive programme will test the United Nations family's capacity to have all its institutions work together, along with other organizations such as the World Bank, to build a lasting peace. Of course, this will also be a test as to the extent to which long-term, sufficient and predictable financing can be established for the execution of that task. Mali and Norway would like to state their preference for a system in which DDR programmes, as a rule, would be financed through contributions of Member States.

Arms embargoes are another major instrument available to the Security Council. The Programme of Action clearly indicates that States have a responsibility to cooperate with the United Nations for the implementation of such sanctions. Small arms are often financed by conflict diamonds and other raw materials of great value, as the conflicts in Angola and Sierra Leone attest. Mali and Norway believe that the

permanent monitoring mechanism for sanctions, which is now under consideration by the Security Council, will form a valuable instrument for the strengthening of sanctions and will thus contribute to our efforts to counter the illicit trade in small arms.

Mali and Norway see the Programme of Action that emerged from the United Nations Conference as the beginning of a process, and not as the end. The just-concluded, long and difficult negotiations to reach agreement on this Programme of Action taught us that numerous challenges await us in the work to come, particular regarding measures that fall within the competence of the Security Council. By our joint statement to the Council today, Mali and Norway wish to highlight the need to work together to address these challenges.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mali for his kind words addressed to Colombia.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I would like first of all to welcome you, Sir, to New York and to congratulate you on Colombia's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We also commend the important statement made today by the Secretary-General.

I wish to join other speakers in thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate on the question of small arms. We agree that the problem of small arms, and particularly of their illicit proliferation, is one of the challenges that the Security Council, in accordance with its mandate, has to address. We share the view that the uncontrolled accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons may encourage the outbreak of hostilities, destabilize situations, undermine the implementation of peace agreements and hamper post-conflict peace-building efforts throughout the world. These weapons are often primary tools of violence in many conflicts, in particular in the areas where the illicit supply of small arms flourishes.

The global dimension of this problem was clearly identified at the recently held United Nations Conference. I would like to use this opportunity to thank Ambassador Camilo Reyes for his excellent leadership of that important international forum.

Bearing in mind the transnational nature of this problem, it is our deep conviction that the United Nations should play a leading role in the fight against

illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, as well as in restraining the proliferation of these weapons. In this process the Security Council has its own distinctive role to play. We believe that the Council can offer added value in such areas as strengthening the effectiveness of its arms embargoes, putting an end to economies of war and encouraging voluntary moratoria on arms exports to conflict regions, as well as supporting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration measures. We are convinced that the Council embargoes on arms supplies to the so-called hot spots could play a central role in checking the proliferation of and eradicating illicit trafficking in these weapons. Most importantly, the Council must ensure full implementation of its arms embargoes and other sanctions targeting the illicit trade that pays for these weapons.

Effective monitoring mechanisms should be further developed and put in place so as to prevent violations of arms embargoes. We attach particular importance to the need to enhance the effectiveness of these measures through their rigorous enforcement by all Member States. In this regard, we strongly support and believe in the need for establishing effectively functioning national export control systems to prevent illegal small-arms transfers. We note the importance of the effective functioning of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for former combatants, including the destruction of light weapons in their illegal possession as part of the peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building support activities of the United Nations.

While there are still great challenges ahead of us, on the positive side we should note a number of important developments in the struggle against illicit small-arms trafficking and the proliferation of such weapons. In our view, the most significant recent event was the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which gave the international community a unique opportunity to have a comprehensive analysis of this multifaceted problem and to develop a strategy for coordinating collective efforts in this field.

We welcome the final document of the Conference: the Programme of Action. This important document reflects realistic approaches and, in our view, will further facilitate concerted efforts by all States to reach an eventual solution to this problem.

We consider that the strengthening of international cooperation between border, customs and law-enforcement bodies in combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons requires the priority attention of States and regional organizations. In most cases such efforts require technical and financial assistance. Those countries that have the resources and experience should therefore be called upon to provide such assistance whenever necessary.

I would also like to highly commend the initiatives of the European Union and welcome the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) document on small arms and light weapons, which in our view constitute a significant step towards the elaboration and implementation of global measures in this area. We support various other regional initiatives, particularly in Africa.

We also attach great importance to the adoption of 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.

Let me also emphasize that Ukraine pursues a quite responsible policy in the area of arms trade. The national system of export control provides for effective procedures in international transfers of arms, including small arms and light weapons. Our country also fulfils all its obligations as a party to the relevant international export control regimes. The legislation currently in force envisages strict measures aimed at preventing illegal arms manufacture, possession, use and transfer. Ukraine maintains its regular dialogue on these issues with member States of the European Union, the OSCE and other interested States. We fully abide by the relevant recommendations of the General Assembly and decisions of the OSCE.

Ukraine backs the measures aimed at the mandatory destruction of weapons confiscated from those possessing them illegally. I would like to inform the Council that such measures are being implemented in my country on a regular basis.

In conclusion, let me assure you, Mr. President, that Ukraine remains a strong supporter of the final eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and will continue to take an active part in the international efforts to combat this practice, as well as to restrain the proliferation of these weapons.

Mr. Cooney (Ireland): First allow me to welcome you, Mr. President, to the Security Council today. Ireland is very pleased that you are here today to chair this important debate at the very beginning of the Colombian presidency. I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Chinese delegation on the manner in which they conducted their presidency last month.

Later in today's debate, Belgium will make a statement on behalf of the European Union. Ireland fully associates itself with that statement, and I will therefore be brief in my remarks.

We welcome the President's initiative in ensuring that the Council picks up the question of small arms quickly in the follow-up to the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was so ably chaired by Ambassador Camilo Reyes of Colombia. The Conference was both the culmination of a long preparatory process with many activities at subregional and regional levels around the world and the launching pad for what Ireland hopes will be a dynamic follow-up process.

While Ireland, with its partners in the European Union and a number of other countries, would have liked to see even stronger commitments emerge from the Conference, we very much welcome and endorse the very significant achievements that were reached. The Programme of Action represents a reasonable balance between different and sometimes competing interests. It recognizes that one-size solutions do not fit all and that while the fight against the scourge of small arms and light weapons is one shared by the entire international community and cooperative international action will be needed to defeat it, responses may need to be tailored to meet different regional needs.

There is no question that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a significant contributing factor in many of the conflicts that come to the attention of the Security Council. It also underlies many of the cross-cutting problems the Council is obliged to address — for instance, child soldiers and the increasing suffering of women and children in armed conflict.

It is possible to draw a number of conclusions from previous Security Council discussion on small arms and other, associated issues. First, the present

capacity of the international community to control small arms and light weapons is unsatisfactory.

Secondly, primary action to address the issue of small arms and light weapons must be taken at both the national and regional levels. Action at the national level is essential because it is the primary responsibility of Governments to take action in promoting effective national legislation or administrative measures to regulate trade in small arms and light weapons. All parties must address this issue in an open and self-critical manner in order to achieve tangible progress in the near future. We must not permit the United Nations to be used as a vehicle for reinforcing obstacles deriving from domestic, legislative or constitutional provisions. Action at the regional level is also imperative simply because many of the issues can be addressed only in the context of regional security and through mutual cooperation.

Thirdly, it is incumbent on Governments to ensure full compliance with Security Council arms embargoes.

Fourthly, it is necessary to examine the issue from both the supply and demand sides. Manufacturing countries must put in place effective controls on gun holdings and also exercise restraint in exporting small arms and light weapons, including through the monitoring of the activities of dubious arms brokers. Although weapons are not manufactured in Ireland, the European Union and the countries associated with the European Union represent a major part of the world's weapons production. This is particularly true in the case of small arms and light weapons and places a special responsibility on the European Union to check the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and to cooperate in the alleviation of its consequences.

Fifthly, the problem must be addressed in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

Finally, international cooperation between concerned Governments, their licensing and judicial authorities, as well as the enforcement agencies, is essential if progress is to be made.

In your paper for this open debate, Mr. President, you invited us to reflect on the Council's contribution to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference. I think the first thing to say is that the Council can and must show leadership on the issue.

Our debate today is a welcome signal that the Council maintains a strong interest. It is important that the Council, in its own actions, reflect the thrust of the Programme of Action. The Council is already doing this in the attention it has begun to pay to the problem of child soldiers and in the importance it is attaching in post-conflict situations to the effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and the effective disposal of their weaponry. We have heard a number of very practical proposals today, not least those put forward by Ambassador Durrant; these are worthy of further discussion.

The Small Arms Conference was an important step in a process that must be followed up. Ireland takes very seriously the politically binding commitments it has entered into in the Programme of Action and will work actively and cooperatively with other countries in the fulfilment of these, both inside and outside the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Ireland for the kind words he addressed to me and to the delegation of Colombia.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): We would first like to express our appreciation to the Chinese presidency of the Council last month, and we join others in welcoming your presence, Sir, as you preside over our debate today. We appreciate the significant and constructive role Colombia has played in the small arms debate, most recently through the sterling work of Ambassador Camilo Reyes during last month's Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Thanks to his able leadership and that of Ambassador Carlos dos Santos of Mozambique, who chaired the Preparatory Committee process, we have today a watershed Programme of Action to guide our national, regional and global efforts to tackle the problem of illicit small arms. Although some countries have expressed disappointment that the Programme of Action does not go far enough, we believe that it is nevertheless the beginning of a process and a good foundation to build upon.

Today's debate is timely in focusing on the Council's role regarding the small arms issue. In this regard, we thank the Colombian delegation for its very comprehensive background paper in document S/2001/732. As previous speakers have also pointed out, the problem of illicit small arms is multifaceted

and overlays many other issues, including conflict prevention, peace-building, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, sanctions enforcement and sustainable development, just to name a few. That is why the Security Council needs to act in tandem with the General Assembly to address the small arms problem on all these fronts.

In order to complement national and regional efforts, we believe that the Security Council should place special emphasis on countries that are most affected by the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons — in other words, those conflict and post-conflict situations where such weapons continue to wreak havoc. With that in mind, we would like to briefly highlight two key areas where we think the Security Council can play a vital role.

First, we must find better ways of implementing arms embargoes mandated by the Security Council. In this regard, we welcome the recent establishment of a monitoring and assistance mechanism for the sanctions on the Taliban in Afghanistan. This is a step in the right direction. As the Singapore delegation proposed during last month's Conference, a related initiative that could improve monitoring would be the establishment of an international database of authorized arms traders as well as a blacklist of traders convicted of illicit arms trafficking. As stated in paragraph 28 of the Secretary-General's 1998 report on dealing with the proliferation of arms in Africa,

"The goal of public identification of international arms merchants and their activities has proved elusive, but perhaps no other single initiative would do more to help combat the flow of illicit arms to Africa". (*S/1998/318, para. 28*)

It is time to set up such an international database to properly identify legal traders and, perhaps more importantly, to make known the convicted illicit arms traders. This database will go a long way in addressing the problem of illicit arms proliferation, not just in Africa but throughout the world.

The second area I wish to highlight is the reference in the Programme of Action for the inclusion, where applicable, of provisions for DDR in the mandates and budgets of peacekeeping operations. My delegation welcomes this emphasis on DDR, as it will lead to a more holistic and effective approach. Put bluntly, stopping the supply of illicit small arms will be

ineffective if we do not also mop up the excess arms still in circulation.

No one will dispute that disarmament in a post-conflict situation is inherently a dangerous and difficult affair. In many countries engaged in, or emerging from, armed conflict, the possession of a weapon is closely linked to power, identity and status. It is therefore not surprising that many ex-combatants and dispossessed young men in post-conflict situations are reluctant to give up their arms. But the Council must address this as a priority issue, as the persistence of such arms impedes post-conflict peace-building and redevelopment.

In addition, the easy availability of small arms also threatens the security of United Nations personnel and peacekeepers. According to the 2001 Small Arms Survey, 456 international peacekeepers and United Nations staff were killed by small arms between January 1992 and March 1997. Perhaps some of these 456 lives could have been saved had there been more effective DDR.

For these reasons, we feel that it is vitally important to factor the DDR dimension into our peacekeeping considerations, to try to put a stop to the circulation of illicit small arms in affected States.

In conclusion, we think that the Security Council has a duty to work in partnership with the international community, including, where appropriate, civil society, to deal with the intractable problem of illicit small arms. By focusing on key priorities, we can make significant headway in resolving this problem.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Singapore for the kind words she addressed to Colombia.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

I have listened with interest to the opinions expressed during the course of this debate. They reflect the concern of the Secretary-General and the representatives of the States Members of the Organization at the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world. They also recognize the close link that exists between the illicit trade in these weapons and several of the principal problems currently facing the international community, such as terrorism, organized crime and trafficking in

drugs and precious minerals. All them also recognize the grave humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of this scourge and the serious threat it poses to international peace, security and stability.

It could not be otherwise. In the past decade alone, the use of small arms and light weapons has caused the death of millions of people, mostly civilians, including 2 million children. It was also responsible for 6 million persons seriously wounded or permanently disabled, and contributed to the forced displacement of approximately 20 million people. Some 40 per cent of the 500 million small arms and light weapons circulating throughout the world are believed to have been diverted into the illegal market and to have fuelled both old conflicts and those that have erupted since 1990, particularly in the developing countries. Many of these countries earmark more than 10 per cent of their annual gross domestic product for controlling this illicit trade and for treating the victims of armed conflicts.

It is ironic that most of the conflicts in which small arms and light weapons are used take place in the developing world, while most of those arms are produced in the developed world. This terrible irony requires the application to the global trade in such weapons of a principle that has already been accepted in the fight against drug trafficking: the principle of shared responsibility. We must all resolutely confront this problem and seek solutions that apportion responsibility in a balanced way, with a view to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in these weapons.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held here in New York last month and over which Colombia had the honour of presiding, marks a first step in this direction. At that Conference, a firm commitment by Member States emerged — as expressed in the political declaration and the Programme of Action — aimed at preventing, combating and eliminating this trade at the national, regional and global levels, including measures both for securing international cooperation and assistance and for the follow-up to the Conference.

Progress was also made towards defining important elements in the fight against this scourge, such as the marking and tracing of arms, as well as the

monitoring of exports, surpluses and intermediaries in their legal trade.

Regarding the arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council, the countries that participated in the Conference pledged to adopt all appropriate measures to ensure their effectiveness and to cooperate with the United Nations system in the strict enforcement of those embargoes. The Security Council was urged to take into account, in the mandates and budgets of peacekeeping operations, activities related to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed actors. The Conference also reached agreement on the elaboration and implementation, at the national level, of effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes that include the collection, control, storage and destruction of small arms and light weapons.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express, on behalf of my Government, our deep gratitude to all the delegations members of the Council that have made mention of the efforts of Ambassador Camilo Reyes, who, with the cooperation of participating countries, was able to make the Conference a significant first step in a process within our Organization that will undoubtedly take many years.

As President of the Security Council, Colombia favours an approach to the problem of small arms and light weapons that gives priority to those cases in which their availability and illicit trade help to create or exacerbate situations of conflict that are under consideration by the Council. I invite the Council to collectively assume concrete responsibilities in this area in order to ensure that these conflicts do not escalate, to maximize the possibilities of finding political solutions to them and to consolidate a true culture of peace and prevention in the United Nations.

We realize that because of its scale, the problem of small arms is beyond the reach of any individual effort. Nevertheless, its dimension cannot be an obstacle for us in promoting concerted action at the global, regional and national levels, with a view to preventing and combating this scourge by fully applying the principle of shared responsibility, which I mentioned a moment ago. My country has been committed to this process since the 1980s, when, with the support of several other countries, it submitted to the General Assembly the first draft resolution on the

subject. At the regional level, we were active participants in the negotiations on the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, a legal instrument whose importance is widely acknowledged by the international community. Lastly, as I have already mentioned, we presided over the recent United Nations Conference, the only global process that has been undertaken in this field.

Now, speaking as a member of the Security Council, I wish to state that Colombia stands ready to help this organ to fully assume its responsibility and make a true difference in the treatment of the question of small arms and light weapons in those situations that are under the Council's consideration.

I will offer some preliminary ideas to add to those already presented and to those that will be expressed during the course of this debate, all of which will be very useful for advancing the Council's actions in this area.

My first recommendation concerns the need for an effort to be made to systematize significant experiences that exist in the fulfilment of international commitments related to the question of small arms and light weapons. This should be done with a view to compiling the best practices in such a way that they can be used as a reference by the Security Council or by the Secretariat. The difficulty of obtaining accurate information on the availability of small arms in situations of conflict that engage the Council's attention means that any positive documented experience would be of great value. The Council may wish to invite the Secretary-General to coordinate such an effort in order to draw upon the opinions of staff members in the field and of interested States that are willing to share their own experiences.

It is also essential for the Security Council to complement and reinforce regional initiatives. My second recommendation goes in this direction. The Council should promote a continuous dialogue with regional organizations, particularly those in Africa, to mutually support their work in this field. The declaration by the Economic Community of West African States of a moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of light weapons in West Africa is a case that illustrates this need. The region is making a tremendous effort to prevent the proliferation

of small arms and light weapons, but the mechanism could be made even more effective if the Council helps to prevent arms suppliers from violating the moratorium.

A third recommendation concerns the need to provide the Security Council with accurate information on the question of small arms and light weapons whenever it considers a particular situation. The Secretary-General should be given a clear mandate to include in his reports a detailed section on the question of small arms so that it can be considered as an integral part of the treatment of conflicts. It is therefore of critical importance to develop a methodology that allows the Council to react to this phenomenon, for it is a principal source of political instability and a direct and real threat to the civilian population.

It is also necessary to emphasize the transnational character of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which knows no territorial, political or ideological frontiers. Consequently, as a fourth recommendation, and bearing in mind that many of these weapons originate in countries and regions where armed conflicts have been overcome, it is a matter of urgency that the Council assist in halting this trend by adopting strategies to thwart the activities of traffickers and criminals.

The fifth recommendation has to do with the need for closer cooperation among States for the destruction of surplus weapons in the possession of States, the voluntary collection of small arms and the confiscation of illegal weapons. This cooperation may include border control operations involving both police and customs authorities.

Lastly, as a country affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Colombia wishes to express its solidarity with Africa, the region of the world that is most severely affected by this scourge, and to pay it a well-deserved tribute for the role that it played during the just-concluded Conference.

We have highlighted the growing concern of the international community over the consequences of uncontrolled proliferation for peace, security and the social and economic development of many countries and regions, and for the well-being of their peoples. I therefore appeal to all Member States of the United Nations to join the fight against this scourge by fully implementing the principle of shared responsibility, and in particular to the Security Council to forge ahead

in the decisions that should be adopted in this area in connection with matters that are within its competence.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Peru. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Valdez Carrillo (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like first to say a few words of welcome and congratulations on behalf of Peru to the Republic of Colombia on having assumed the responsibility of presiding over the Council for this month. Peru is particularly pleased to take part in this dialogue under the leadership of a country so deeply committed to the establishment of a regime of control and cooperation to eliminate the current threats to security arising from the traffic in small arms and light weapons, as it demonstrated by its skilful conduct of the recent United Nations Conference on this subject. My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation for the document prepared by Colombia, which constitutes an important contribution and a useful basis for determining the role of the Security Council as regards small arms.

For Peru, this issue reflects a political and moral imperative that requires joint international action at all levels. For more than 10 years, the flow of small arms and light weapons in my country sustained terrorist movements, including those financed by drug-trafficking networks, which left in their wake more than 30,000 dead and billions in material losses.

On the basis of the reports of the Secretary-General for 1995 and 1997, it was possible to ascertain the broad and multidimensional scope of this problem that involves numerous participants at various levels. The multifaceted nature of the problem was recognized by the Security Council itself, through its presidential statement of 24 September 1999.

A conclusion shared by the aforementioned documents has been the recognition of the important role the United Nations, and in particular its main bodies, is called upon to play in this matter, both in setting and developing strategies for action and in disseminating information on, increasing awareness of and alerting people to the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of these arms, a recognition that places this matter as a priority on the current international agenda.

The Security Council, in the evolution of its duties, has taken on specific tasks with respect to small arms. It has done so on the basis of its own thinking, as in the open debate that took place two years ago. However, there has been no interactive dialogue with other bodies of the United Nations and it does not reflect a general, coordinated and unanimous vision belonging to the membership as a whole.

In this sense, Peru feels that the Security Council and other bodies of the United Nations, the General Assembly in particular, share a particular responsibility in this area. Precisely because of the overlap in their functions, this affords a splendid opportunity, through careful coordination, to effect an assignment of specific roles by engaging mechanisms created for that purpose and through the coordinated work of their respective presidents.

The Programme of Action adopted at the Conference on small arms and light weapons, despite the incomprehensible deficiencies apparent in its adoption, rightly provides the general direction that was lacking, above all at the regional and global levels, and constitutes the fundamental international framework for dealing with this problem. It recognizes, among other levels of action, the specific responsibility of the Security Council in underscoring the profound impact of these arms on the duration and intensity of armed conflicts and their effects on the most vulnerable sectors of society. To address this situation, the Programme of Action also underscores the importance of the role of regional and subregional mechanisms.

Peru considers that the Security Council should establish appropriate permanent channels of communication to enable it to gather the opinions of regional organizations on the particular circumstances of each conflict. This information should be taken into account before the Council incorporates into its mandates or recommends for inclusion in peace agreements such measures as arms embargoes; moratoriums on the import, export and manufacture of such arms; the control of borders; and programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

We believe that representatives of these regional organizations and of the countries involved should be invited before the Security Council prior to the elaboration and adoption of such measures. Furthermore, their presence would serve to provide the

sanctions Committees with the latest information on the implementation of arms embargoes previously imposed by the Security Council. Another way in which these organizations and participants can express their points of view on this matter is through the representatives of the Secretary-General in the field, who can forward these opinions and include them in the reports of the Secretary-General.

With respect to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, the Security Council should play an important and essential role by incorporating the appropriate measures included in the Programme of Action into the mandates of peacekeeping operations and by implementing them. In this area, more detailed studies could be made of the experience gained in cases in which the voluntary surrender of arms was carried out on the basis of non-monetary compensation, as has been successfully done in such countries as Albania, El Salvador and Panama. These exchanges of weapons for farming or building implements, or for the construction of schools and clinics, provide a viable and imaginative alternative that can be used in diverse conflicts, based on a case-by-case analysis.

The need for coordination is also clear with respect to the United Nations role in promoting technical and financial cooperation to encourage an effective presence of the donor community in programmes including information on best practices for, *inter alia*, the collection, destruction and safe storage of arms stockpiles, which is simply another way of contributing to the prevention of conflicts.

With respect to the need to send Security Council missions to study the issue of small arms in the affected countries, Peru considers that the current fact-finding missions of the Organization, such as that which it recently sent to Kenya to determine the scale of the proliferation of these arms, carry out this function in a way that duly reflects the multidisciplinary nature of the problem, involving representatives of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme. They should therefore be sustained. In any event, the Security Council can certainly incorporate concerns involving the issue of small arms into the missions it is currently undertaking in various regions and conflicts.

Finally, Peru wishes to express its complete confidence that the United Nations and its principal bodies will, at their respective levels of action, provide adequate responses to national, regional and subregional expectations that have arisen today regarding this matter of profound moral concern.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Peru for his kind words addressed to me and my delegation.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): I would like to thank you, Sir, for your initiative in holding this open debate in a very timely manner. It is indeed encouraging that the Security Council remains engaged with this important issue, which has such profound implications for international security.

I would also like to express our appreciation to the Government of Colombia, and particularly Ambassador Camilo Reyes, for the constructive role they played in leading the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to the adoption of the Programme of Action.

The Japanese Government has actively participated in international efforts to address the issue of small arms ever since former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali first brought the problem to the attention of the international community in 1995. Building upon the recommendations of the Panel of Experts and the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, both of which were chaired by Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki, the Japanese Government introduced the General Assembly resolution that led to the convening of the Conference on small arms. The Conference on small arms yet again impressed upon all those associated with it the tragic suffering that small arms have inflicted upon people all over the world and reaffirmed the urgent need to halt the excessive accumulation and illicit transfer of these weapons.

The Programme of Action adopted at the Conference will certainly prove to be an historic first step in addressing the complicated issue of small arms, although we are aware that not all of the participating countries are fully satisfied with the measures

contained in it. In this context, we would like to take this opportunity to recognize the significant contribution that African countries made to the success of the Conference, both at the preparatory stage, under the able leadership of Ambassador Dos Santos of Mozambique, and, most importantly, at the closing moments of the Conference, when they displayed the commendable political will to agree to a painful compromise in order to ensure the adoption of the Programme of Action by consensus. It is now incumbent upon the international community to make the Programme of Action truly meaningful for the countries in Africa severely affected by small arms.

I must hasten to add that the countries suffering from the scourge of small arms are not confined to Africa. As Japan's Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Seiken Sugiura, stressed at the Conference, it is the responsibility of the international community to extend support and assistance in response to the aspirations and will of the people in all the affected countries and regions.

It is now up to all of us to ensure that the Programme of Action is effectively implemented and to foster even greater international cooperation to free the world from the threat of small arms. The Japanese Government, for its part, plans to host a meeting of experts at the beginning of next year with a view to furthering cooperation with countries that are committed to resolving this issue. The Japanese Government is also planning to expand, possibly in cooperation with other donor countries and United Nations agencies, weapons-for-development projects to Africa, the Balkans and the Asia-Pacific region, based upon the pilot project Japan has developed with the European Union in Cambodia. Furthermore, we are planning to conduct research on past small arms collection projects with a view to establishing guidelines for future efforts. Japan's additional contribution of \$900,000 to the trust fund of the Department for Disarmament Affairs is aimed at promoting such projects for resolving problems related to small arms.

I would like to add that, for the purpose of ensuring the effective implementation of the Programme of Action and of further improving the regime, it is important that a review conference be convened within the next several years.

In closing, I would like to call upon the Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to pay particular attention to the issue of small arms when it considers concrete conflict-prevention measures. The mandates of peacekeeping operations established by the Council address small-arms issues in various ways, such as the collection and storage of weapons. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts too have become typical features of recent peacekeeping operations. More important, the establishment of peacekeeping operations provides the international community with valuable opportunities to improve and develop the way it deals with the issue of small arms.

That issue must inevitably be addressed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the local conditions involved. In that context, due consideration

should be given to the issue of small arms when the Security Council sends a fact-finding mission to an area of conflict.

Because the Council can be a driving force in efforts to overcome the threat of small arms, we encourage it to remain mindful of its responsibilities and to continue to pay careful attention to activities undertaken by various countries and organizations to the same end.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Japan for the kind words he addressed to me.

A number of speakers remain on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the agreement of members, I intend to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.