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First Committee

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Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands)

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

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chair: The Committee will take up the “Conventional weapons” cluster. We will begin by hearing an introductory statement by the Chairman of the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Ambassador Vlad Lupan, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lupan.

Mr. Lupan (Republic of Moldova) Chairman, the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects: I will be speaking now in my capacity as Chair of the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Later on I hope to have another opportunity to speak in my national capacity.

It is an honour to brief the First Committee in my capacity as Chair of the Second Open-ended Meeting of

Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in June. The Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts had a technical mandate and was aimed at allowing for free discussion of topics among experts on the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action. Thanks to a sponsorship programme supported by the Government of Australia, many experts from capitals were able to attend the Meeting, which considerably enriched the discussion. I was glad to participate in the Meeting.

States agreed that the Second Open-ended Meeting should consider four agenda items: first, the implications of recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design for effective marking, record-keeping and tracing; secondly, practical steps to ensure the continued and enhanced effectiveness of national marking, record-keeping and tracing systems in the light of such developments; thirdly, the transfer of technology and equipment, as well as capacity-building, in particular training, for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; and fourthly, additional issues related to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

At the Second Open-ended Meeting, States considered that recent developments in small arms and light weapons technologies had the potential to both

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positively and negatively impact the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Some new technologies for marking and record-keeping — such as the use of polymers, marking on polymers, the insertion of metal tags, laser marking, the challenges of micropercussion in conjunction with the International Tracing Instrument requirement for visible markings, modular weapons-marking, the use of biometric methods, the Global Positioning System, radio frequencies or Bluetooth for weapons-marking, storage and possible future handler recognition — may prove helpful to States in fulfilling their obligations under the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. Conversely, the three-dimensional printing of weapons now offers the possibility of new forms of craft production, posing new control challenges.

While States noted that there was a technological divide between countries and that new developments in small arms and light weapons technology affect States differently, there was general agreement on the need to together ensure that the international community remains well prepared and even ahead of the curve when it comes to addressing challenges related to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In that context, discussions at the Second Open-ended Meeting also focused on the adequacy of existing voluntary trust fund mechanisms for international cooperation and assistance, including the transfer of technology, as well as how States may wish to engage these for a more effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

I have attempted to capture the main discussions of the Second Open-ended Meeting in a Chair's summary, issued under my own responsibility. It is my hope that the document will be a useful reference for further consideration of these issues at the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action, which will take place in 2016. Hopefully, it will also be helpful later.

The linkage between the need to address the illicit flows of arms and development has now been recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). No development is possible without security — we all agree to that — without respect for international law and without respect for human lives. The United Nations Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument together remain an important global framework at our disposal to tackle the complex issue of the illicit trade in small arms and

light weapons. Let us continue to put our utmost effort into taking steps forward in implementing them.

The Chair: I thank Mr. Lupan for his briefing.

I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion on the introduction we just heard through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 10.05 a.m. and resumed at 10.10 a.m.

The Chair: I will now open the floor for statements on the conventional weapons cluster. I urge all speakers once again to kindly adhere to the time limit of five minutes when speaking in their national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

Mr. Mattar (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am making this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The Group of Arab States expresses its deep concern about the humanitarian, social, economic and political impacts of the illicit trade in small and light weapons, which are extremely dangerous. We call on the international community to combat this dangerous phenomenon. We also affirm our continued commitment to working with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We further affirm the importance of committing to their full implementation.

We express our appreciation for the efforts to conclude the Arms Trade Treaty. In the light of its entry into force, our Group affirms that the implementation of the Treaty must be compatible with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for the legitimate right of all States to defend themselves and preserve their territorial integrity, the right to self-determination of all peoples under foreign occupation, and the non-acceptance of the occupation of lands by force, and the right to produce, import, export and transfer conventional weapons.

The Arab Group emphasizes the special responsibility of the major arms-exporting countries and the importance of balance in responsibilities between exporting countries and importing States. In that regard, the Arab Group wishes to emphasize the

sovereign right of countries to import, export, acquire and keep conventional weapons.

The Arab Group expresses its concern that the unexploded ordnance and mines in its lands — especially landmines left from the Second World War, which are still causing human and material damages — present obstacles to the development plans in some Arab States. The Group calls on the countries responsible for having laid those mines to assume their responsibility to cooperate with the affected States, including by sharing information and maps that show the location of ordnance and landmines, provide technical assistance, bear the cost of removing such mines and compensate those States for any damages suffered as a result of the use of such ordnance and mines.

Technological developments in these lethal weapons compel the international community to give due attention to the challenges and threats emanating therefrom. It is important to discuss the issue in all its dimensions — legal, humanitarian, military and moral — applying in particular the necessary principles and governing rules.

Ms. Moyano (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will read out an abridged version of my statement in order to keep within the time limit. The complete version will be circulated to the membership.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

The States members of UNASUR recognize the contribution and qualitative importance of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in offering a comprehensive and multidimensional response to the problems caused by such illicit activities. However, we remain concerned about the effects of the production, transfer and illicit circulation of firearms and munitions and their uncontrolled spread among civilians, which have had adverse consequences for many countries and are impeding the sustainable development of our societies. We also reiterate our concern about the close relationship between the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and organized crime.

The effective implementation of the Programme of Action is a high and urgent priority of UNASUR. We believe that it is important to continue to promote

strengthened cooperation and international assistance and to create national capacity. While we recognize the contribution represented by the Programme of Action, the States members of UNASUR reiterate that any reference to the issue of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects must include munitions and explosive. We have also reiterated that the non-legally binding nature of the Programme of Action is an obstacle to its effective implementation.

UNASUR member States are of the view that the central role of the Programme of Action regarding small arms and light weapons requires the international community to closely follow up its implementation on an ongoing basis. In that connection, UNASUR member States welcome the outcome of the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action, and hope to continue considering questions related to munitions, marking, tracing and the excessive production of weapons at the next Meeting.

Bearing in mind the key responsibility of States, in 2001, in the framework of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), a working group on firearms and munitions of MERCOSUR and its Associated States was created with the purpose of exchanging national experiences, working to harmonize national legislation on firearms and munitions control, and coordinating the policies in this area. In that connection, the States members of UNASUR welcome the outcome of the meetings of the working group carried out in November 2014 and May 2015.

UNASUR member States underscore the need to address issues related to the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and the need to explore further synergies among international arms-control instruments, the Programme of Action and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. That will enable coordinated and agreed international responses, which is the only way to tackle a transnational phenomenon.

In December 2014, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) entered into force. UNASUR hopes that this first legally binding instrument on the arms trade will help us to offer an effective response to the serious consequences of the illicit and unregulated trade in weapons for many people and many States. We also wish to take note of the first Conference of States Parties to the ATT,

which took place in Mexico in August, where essential decisions were adopted for the effective implementation of the Treaty.

The States members of UNASUR reiterate their support for the efforts of the international community to regulate cluster munitions with the purpose of substantially reducing the humanitarian, social and economic damage caused by the use of those weapons against civilians, in contravention of international humanitarian law. In that regard, UNASUR member States take note of the outcome of the Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions that took place in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

The States members of UNASUR also reaffirm the need to eliminate anti-personnel mines. In that regard, they highlight the efforts and outcomes of demining efforts and assistance to victims of anti-personnel mines in our region, which have been possible thanks to ongoing cooperation among our countries, such as in the case of the joint demining exercises between Peru and Ecuador, Peru and Chile, and Argentina and Chile. We also underscore the international assistance for demining efforts that some countries of the region have provided, such as the assistance given by Brazil in South America and Central America and capacity-building activities carried out in Argentina. UNASUR member States attach importance to cooperation and international assistance within the framework of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

At a special meeting held in Bariloche, Argentina on 20 August 2009, the Heads of State and Government of UNASUR reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the fight and cooperation against terrorism, organized transnational crime and related crimes. In follow-up to that decision, the South American Defence Council decided to establish a mechanism to implement confidence-building and security measures, including the development and improvement of national systems for marking and tracing weapons and active cooperation among the States members of UNASUR in resolving cases of diversion, contraband and illegal use under their custody and from their territory.

With a view to promoting transparency in military spending, in May 2012 UNASUR launched the South American Defence Spending Registry. For the first time, it compiled official data from the 12

UNASUR member States based on a common agreed methodology developed to that end. In that context, it is worth noting the recent opening in Quito of the South American Defence School, which will be a centre for higher studies, and the linking of networks among the national initiatives of UNASUR member States to train civilian and military personnel in the fields of defence and regional security. The establishment of the South American Defence School will help us build a joint vision on defence at the regional level. It will be part of the work of the Centre for Strategic Defence Studies of the South American Defence Council.

Mr. Lupan (Republic of Moldova): It is my honour to take the floor twice in such a short time. I take the opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee, as I did not have the opportunity before, and to wish you every success in leading the work of the Committee. I also would like to congratulate the Bureau members, and let me express our appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, for his efforts as the Chair of the First Committee at the previous session.

The Republic of Moldova aligns itself with the statement on conventional weapons to be delivered by the observer of the European Union. However, given the importance of conventional weapons issues to my country in our regional context, I would like to add several relevant points in my national capacity.

First of all, I would like to mention that the Republic of Moldova ratified the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in May and deposited the ratification instrument on 28 September. My country shares the view that when effectively and widely implemented, the Arms Trade Treaty could make trade in conventional arms more responsible and transparent, reduce the human suffering and contribute noticeably to international peace, security and stability. Currently, we look forward to its implementation by all Member States, and thereby its universalization.

In that context, let me welcome the fruitful outcome of the first Conference of States Parties to the ATT, held in Cancún, Mexico, in August. The substantive and operational decisions of the Conference are paving the path for the effective implementation of the ATT. I would also like to extend our warm greetings to Switzerland on the selection of Geneva for the seat of the ATT secretariat, and to congratulate Mr. Dladla on

his appointment as the interim Head of the Secretariat. My country wishes success to the next Conference of States Parties, to be held in Geneva in 2016.

The ratification of the Treaty by the Republic of Moldova attests to our country's commitment to supporting international efforts to strengthen peace and security at the global and regional levels. The Republic of Moldova has begun to implement its provisions by further developing and strengthening its national capacity-building efforts in the field of arms control systems, in line with the requirements of the Treaty. That refers first of all to the improvement of national legislation in the sphere of export and import control of strategic goods. At the same time, we hope that with the ongoing support of the international community, we will ensure a more efficient system of arms trade procedures.

At this point, I unfortunately must reiterate, word for word, our clear previous understanding on an important element of the Treaty that we underlined forcefully during its adoption and after. There is a strong and repeatedly expressed belief held by the Republic of Moldova that the Treaty should not only ensure transparency and accountability in transfers of conventional weapons per se, but should also help prevent illicit trafficking of such arms, particularly to separatist, unrecognized entities. That is of vital importance to my country and in the current complex regional security context.

Let me touch upon the small arms and light weapons issue. I spoke several minutes ago as Chair of the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We had a very good informal discussion during the Second Meeting. That is probably why there was no need for a question-and-answer session during my presentation earlier, but we should continue such informal discussions in the future because they give us an opportunity to exchange a good number of views on the issue of small arms and light weapons.

The Republic of Moldova recognizes the importance of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as a key instrument to prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at the national, regional and global levels, and remains committed to its implementation. As I was honoured

to brief the Committee earlier today on the work of the Second Open-ended Meeting, which was held from 1 to 5 June in New York, I hope that the Chair's summary from the Meeting will have a positive impact on the preparations for the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action in 2016 and, I hope, will be useful both to experts working on new materials and developments in making, marking, tracing and storing these weapons, and to experts working on small arms and light weapons policy matters in the future. I briefed Member States about the Chair's summary in a concise, general and impartial manner.

However, speaking in my national capacity, I should like to take this opportunity to underline one point, although of course more points deserve to be mentioned. I believe that, in our complex context, we need to further consider an enhanced role for regional and subregional organizations in international cooperation and assistance and the exchange of information as a tool to support our joint efforts as the United Nations. That was one of the recommendations of the Second Meeting of Governmental Experts. In this context, I take this opportunity also to express the appreciation of the Republic of Moldova to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and our Swiss, German and Austrian partners in updating our arms control legislation and implementation of concrete small arms and light weapons storage projects, as well as to Belarus for providing software on small arms and light weapons and ammunition record-keeping and storage. The project was implemented with the backing of the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme.

Since I called earlier for a greater role for the regional and subregional organizations as a tool to support efforts for better, more effective legal arms control in line with international law, relevant United Nations documents and resolutions, and keeping in mind Member States' respect for each other, I will stress yet again the role of these organizations. I am sad to repeat my words from a year ago, calling on us to focus today more than ever on a combination of global and regional arms control arrangements, as our particular situation in Europe demands. Genuine security and progress in arms control and disarmament could be achieved if a complex set of measures were taken at all levels — international, regional and national.

That is why we underline that we would like to see a combination of both legally binding and political

arms control commitments in Europe that would clearly include one principle, in line with the principle of State sovereignty and based, in our case — after more than 20 years of diplomatic conflict settlement — on our proven commitment to peace, reinforcing a principle of host-nation consent to the stationing of foreign military forces. There must be no stationing of troops without the host country's consent. Our Organization should support this principle.

We participated in the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Dubrovnik, which we fully support. The Republic of Moldova welcomes the progress made last year in the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and at the third Review Conference of the Convention and its outcome, the Maputo Action Plan. We are also firmly committed to the principles and the objectives of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, as amended on 21 December 2001m, and its Protocols. We reaffirm our commitment to continuing our engagement on all issues associated with conventional weapons control.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). As I do so for the first time in this Committee, let me warmly congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of our full support.

The proliferation and misuse of conventional weapons continue to cause devastation and have lasting impacts on all our countries. From illicit small arms and ammunition that fuel conflicts within and across borders to explosive remnants of war that maim and kill innocent civilians in many parts of the world, the uncontrolled and unregulated trade of such weapons continues on a daily basis to endanger security and development everywhere. The unrestrained movement of arms facilitates conflict, crime and armed violence and the violation of international human rights and humanitarian law.

The States members of the Caribbean Community believe that the problems that are caused by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and associated ammunition are fuelled by factors largely

external to the region. The Caribbean hosts no arms supplies and imports relatively modest volumes of conventional weapons, yet the region continues to bear more than its fair share of the negative consequences of the unregulated and illicit arms trade.

The transcontinental scope of these flows imposes the need for a coordinated and holistic approach at the global level. CARICOM renews its call for effective international action to stem the unregulated and illicit trade in arms. Such an approach requires the commitment of all States, with the assistance of all international and regional partners. Moreover, manufacturing States, which also engage in the large-scale trade of such weapons, bear an ethical responsibility and should assume a greater role in addressing the negative effects of the trade.

The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was an important milestone in international efforts to address the multiple challenges posed by the possession of, and trade in, arms. CARICOM congratulates the Government of Mexico for the successful hosting of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in Cancún from 24 to 27 August.

The road to the ATT, the first legally binding instrument to establish common international standards for the transfer of conventional weapons, was not an easy one. Member States had varying views on the objectives of such a treaty. Some saw it as a mechanism for transparency and regulation in the legal trade in arms, while others envisioned a mechanism to keep conventional weapons away from the illicit trade and out of the hands of non-State actors, such as criminals and terrorists. For those of us in support of the ATT, the Treaty was a means to facilitate peace and security and to save lives. Establishing the Treaty was a first step in that regard. The next and subsequent steps engage the full implementation of the Treaty and of the decisions adopted by various conferences of the parties, beginning with Conference held in Cancún. We anticipate that the effective application of the normative standards established by the ATT will contribute to a weakening of the illicit arms trade regime.

The successful convening of the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in June, served to reaffirm the international community's commitment to the

implementation of the Programme of Action at all levels. The Meeting allowed for action-oriented discussion on the progress made and the implications and the challenges of recent trends in manufacturing, design and technology and allowed for the sharing of national and technical experiences on the implementation of the Programme of Action. CARICOM takes note of the numerous examples of steps undertaken by States in that regard, as well as ongoing processes at the regional and subregional levels, towards the effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

One of the important issues for CARICOM, as highlighted at the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts, is the widening technological gap between developed and developing countries. As weapons technology advances, it is imperative that developing countries also advance their national marking, record-keeping and tracing systems. Sustained international cooperation and assistance is needed to close that gap. As noted in the CARICOM working paper submitted to the second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts, the transfer of technology and equipment, as well as capacity-building, is a major challenge not just for CARICOM member States, but for developing countries in general.

CARICOM believes that the full and constructive participation in the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts signals a commitment to the successful implementation of the Programme of Action. We view the Second Open-ended Meeting as an important opportunity to deepen dialogue and share experiences on the efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. I take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to the Chair of the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts for his very effective stewardship in that regard.

CARICOM recognizes that the implementation of the Programme of Action remains uneven within and across regions. We call for strengthened international cooperation and assistance in order to reinforce national and regional efforts to ensure its effective and broad implementation.

CARICOM member States have established the requisite mechanisms to support a coordinated regional approach in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Such mechanisms include the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, which is mandated to give effect to the

regional crime and security agenda. The Agency also maintains the CARICOM intelligence-sharing network and has had a leading role in the development of the Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network, to assist in the tracing of firearms. The CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy, adopted at the twenty-fourth intersessional meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM in February 2013, identifies illegal guns as among the tier 1 threats facing the region. The Strategy recognizes that the key to the solution of that problem is a marked reduction in the availability of illegal guns and ammunition and further notes that the region can achieve meaningful results only by working with key strategic partners, in particular States where guns are sourced.

Against the backdrop of a strong political commitment, CARICOM member States have also made strides in implementing the highest international standards for the management, storage and safe disposal of small arms and light weapons. We are grateful for the significant support received from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Organization of American States and our bilateral partners. We remain committed to continuing our collective efforts in that regard.

CARICOM fully supports the aims of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and is pleased with the successful outcome of its first Review Conference, held in September, including the adoption of the Dubrovnik Action Plan. Within the past year, the accession of Belize to the Convention created the world's first subregion free of nuclear munitions — Central America. It also took us a step closer to our own goal of ensuring that all CARICOM members ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible. We look forward to realizing that goal. Given the unacceptable harm to civilians that these weapons cause, we condemn any use of cluster munitions by any actor.

In conclusion, CARICOM reiterates its willingness to work with all Member States in a constructive manner in all efforts to tackle the challenges faced as a result of illicit small arms and light weapons and to eradicate that trade.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). Turkey, the

former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement. I will read out the short version of our statement. The full version will be posted online.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is a landmark instrument that provides for robust and effective standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, making it more responsible and transparent and reducing the illicit trade of arms. The ATT introduces the concept of serious acts of gender-based violence as a factor to take into account when making export assessments.

The European Union welcomes the successful outcome of the first Conference of States Parties to the ATT, held in Cancún, Mexico, which took important decisions regarding rules of procedure, financial and management rules, the seat of the secretariat and the appointment of its Interim Head. It is our responsibility to preserve that momentum for increasing transparency, effective implementation and universalization. The European Union and its member States contribute to that end. A dedicated European Union programme, activated so far in nine countries, can assist third partners in strengthening their arms-control systems.

We want to congratulate Switzerland on the selection of Geneva for the seat of the secretariat and Mr. Dladla, on his appointment as its first Interim Head. We look forward to the Extraordinary Meeting of States parties to decide on budgetary issues and consider the draft proposal on the administrative arrangements. We also look forward to the next Conference of States Parties to concentrate on the substantive work.

We welcome Security Council resolution 2220 (2015), on small arms and light weapons, which calls for increased cooperation on stemming the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and emphasizes their impact on civilians in conflict, in particular on groups in potentially vulnerable situations, such as women and children.

The European Union believes that the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is an important tool to deal with the illicit trade in and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons.

The European Union and its member States remain strongly committed to the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument. We believe that the Chair's summary at the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts represents a solid basis for further consideration. The International Tracing Instrument could be strengthened by taking into account new developments in technology in the marking, record-keeping and tracing of small arms and light weapons. We support further international cooperation in this field. The EU also supports the inclusion of ammunition as part of a comprehensive approach to small arms and light weapons control and synergies with the ATT.

The EU and its member States pursue the objectives of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Significant progress has been achieved, but we are mindful of the remaining challenges to complete the task of ending the suffering and the casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. The successful Maputo Review Conference agreed on concrete political measures and a set of activities to ensure further progress. States parties will have to translate the commitments undertaken in the Maputo Action Plan into tangible results.

The EU is deeply concerned about allegations of use of anti-personnel mines by State parties and appeals to all States and non-State actors to refrain from their use. We are committed to providing resources to fund mine action, including on clearance, and concrete and sustainable assistance to anti-personnel mine survivors, their families and communities. We continue to promote the universalization of the Convention.

The EU supports international efforts to address the humanitarian, socioeconomic and security impact of conventional weapons and halting their indiscriminate use. Respect for the relevant international law is crucial to ensure the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. In that context, the EU and its member States support the humanitarian goal of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We are deeply concerned about the reported use of cluster munitions against and affecting civilian populations. We call upon all actors to refrain from such use and to fully observe the principles of international humanitarian law. The EU is grateful to Croatia for successfully hosting the first Review Conference in Dubrovnik, where State parties took political

decisions regarding the practical implementation of their commitments.

With a view to strengthening international humanitarian law, the EU and its member States remain firmly committed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW).

We believe that those instruments also constitute an effective means to respond to future developments in the field of weapons technology, and represent an essential part of international humanitarian law. Universalization and compliance with the provisions of the Convention and its Protocols are highly important. Where possible, we support the development of synergies as applicable and highlight the linkage with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We welcome the ongoing CCW discussions on several aspects of lethal autonomous weapon systems. We are concerned about the world-wide indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices and their effects, particularly at the national and regional levels, including on civilian populations. We value the substantive exchange of views on this topic in the CCW.

Mr. Ait Abdeslam (Algeria): Under the thematic debate on conventional weapons, my delegation would like to express its views on certain issues in this important area for international peace and security.

Algeria fully associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States and with the statements to be delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States.

Algeria reaffirms that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is an exacerbating factor in armed violence and that it continues to cause devastating humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. Given the severity of those consequences, we believe that this issue should be given due consideration at the international, regional and subregional levels and should be dealt with a comprehensive and integrated manner.

Algeria also believes that such illicit activity continues to threaten peace and stability in many countries and regions. Small arms and light weapons are a constant, major concern for the international community because they continue to fuel terrorism and organized crime. Algeria continues to deploy intensive

efforts to dismantle organized arms-trafficking networks and contributes enormously in fighting the growing scourge of terrorism.

My delegation notes with interest the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/70/183, which provides an overview of the activities carried out by Member States and the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations as part of the implementation of resolutions 69/33 and 69/51, respectively, on assistance to Member States for curbing the illicit traffic and collection of small arms and light weapons and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

My delegation has also taken note of the conclusions and the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and implications for the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons”, issued in June 2014 (A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/1).

On the basis of its national experience, Algeria reaffirms that the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument are more than ever of the utmost relevance. We continue to emphasize the importance of their full, balanced and effective implementation. We also wish to stress that international cooperation and assistance is essential in the implementation of those two instruments. In that respect, Algeria continues to engage with the countries of the Sahel region on measures for security cooperation, as well as through technical assistance programmes, including the training of security personnel and customs services to allow those countries to develop their administrative, technical and operational capacities in the field.

In view of the importance of the implementation of the Programme of Action, and in order to make it more efficient and tangible, my delegation believes that it is fundamental for Member States to regularly submit their national reports so that both the progress made and the remaining challenges may be assessed. For its part, Algeria has regularly submitted its national reports regarding the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

We would like to stress again the importance 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, commonly called the Firearms Protocol.

Recognizing the importance of the international legal framework governing conventional weapons, in May Algeria joined the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its Protocols.

Affected by landmine problems since the colonial era, Algeria continues to devote great efforts to ensuring their total elimination. That is why the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines remains for us the appropriate regulatory framework able to combat the scourge of landmines. We believe that the implementation of the Convention and its universality are necessary steps to eliminate forever the danger of those deadly weapons, or at least to disable them.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): For over a century, the international community has made several efforts to regulate conventional weapons. However, given the complex interplay among the strategic, political, commercial and security interests of States and other actors, global and regional initiatives to control and regulate such arms have so far been only partially successful. There are other factors that inhibit progress towards meaningful regulation of such armaments. They include the pursuit of a partial approach, that is, attempts to separate motivations for arms production from the controls of their trade and transfer; an exclusive focus on managing the effects of the trade in arms without adequately addressing the causes that propel such trade in the first place; and a lack of faithful implementation of existing regional and national commitments and obligations. As a result, those weapons continue to fuel conflicts and destabilize States and societies, inflicting enormous pain and suffering on humankind.

Several worrying trends on the conventional weapons horizon are emerging.

First, after a brief hiatus in the post-Cold War years, global military expenditures are increasing again.

Secondly, the growing military expenditures are accompanied by increasing sophistication in conventional weaponry and technology. Those armaments, and their means of development, are being traded in huge quantities among the like-minded or are exported to those who have the financial means to purchase them. Arms sellers often encourage both sides in a conflict to buy more such arms. The normative and legal force of their national and regional arms-transfer policies seems to give way to irresistible profits that the trade in conventional arms brings to their exchequers.

Thirdly, developing countries are the favoured destination for arms sales. New markets are being explored, with little regard for the destabilizing impact on regional security and stability. The result is a series of regional arms races, mostly in volatile parts of the world, including non-State actors wreaking havoc on civilian populations. While trying to facilitate talks to ease tensions, senior officials of the selling nations have used such occasions to lobby for the sale of sophisticated military equipment produced by their national manufacturers. Those officials market their weapons, even as they seek to mediate peace.

Fourthly, ironically, the weapons that propel and sustain conflicts come from areas that enjoy peace and stability. On the other hand, the demand for weapons emanates from either insecurity or ambition. Some States are seeking to build up their national armed forces on land, in the air and at sea, with the declared objective of emerging as a global Power, often with the self-proclaimed intent to dominate their own regions. Other States affected by the imbalance are then obliged to acquire weapons to ensure a minimum capability to deter aggression and domination.

Pakistan voted in favour of resolution 68/31, by which the General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We believe that the Arms Trade Treaty is not an arms control or a disarmament treaty; the Treaty is about a responsible arms trade. It is about reducing human suffering and saving human lives. Yet the present death and destruction caused by the profit-driven supply and brutal use of conventional weapons in several parts of Africa, the Middle East, Asia and elsewhere are self-evident. The early resolution of issues such as the absence of definitions and the lack of accountability of exporters would be vital in making the ATT effective.

Pakistan remains concerned about the growing transfers of conventional armaments, especially in volatile regions, that are inconsistent with the imperatives of maintaining peace, security and stability. The policy of dual standards towards South Asia, based on narrow strategic, political and commercial considerations, must be eschewed.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has caused havoc all around the world, abetting crime, terrorist activities, narcotics trafficking and, sadly, deaths and disabilities of civilians, including women and children. Pakistan values the contribution made by the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the International Tracing Instrument and the Firearms Protocol in addressing the challenges arising from the misuse or the unauthorized use of such weapons. Pakistan welcomes the revival of consensus as manifested by the successful outcome of the second Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Pakistan has developed the necessary legislative, regulatory, enforcement and institutional mechanisms to address the range of issues relating to conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons. Policy guidelines on the export of conventional arms are in place. We are taking additional measures to strengthen the enforcement regime, which covers both imports and licensing.

The development of new types of weapons, such as lethal autonomous weapons systems, remains a source of concern for the international community. Those weapon systems are by nature unethical because there is no longer a human in the loop and the power to make life and death decisions is delegated to machines, which inherently lack compassion and intuition. The introduction of lethal autonomous weapons systems would therefore be illegal, unethical, inhumane and unaccountable, as well as destabilizing for international peace and security, and would have grave consequences. Therefore, their further development and use must be pre-emptively banned, and the States that are currently developing such weapons should place an immediate moratorium on their production and use.

Pakistan is a party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and all of its five Protocols, including Amended Protocol II.

The delicate balance of those instruments to minimize human suffering without sacrificing the legitimate security interests of States must be maintained. The human suffering resulting from the indiscriminate use of landmines can be minimized if a maximum type and number of States commit themselves to the successful implementation of CCW's Amended Protocol II. Similarly, the CCW provides an ideal platform for dealing with the subject of cluster munitions, since it harmonizes the genuine humanitarian concerns with the security imperatives of States. The CCW provides the most appropriate forum for addressing the issues of improvised explosive devices in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

Finally, the development of new technologies has the potential to protect civilians against the indiscriminate effects of mines. Such technologies can be of immense benefit in preventing the injurious, indiscriminate and lethal effects of mines. The sharing of know-how with other States, particularly by those States in possession of such technologies, will go a long way in minimizing the humanitarian impact of mines, booby-traps and other devices.

Pakistan remains in full compliance with the provisions of Amended Protocol II. Pakistan has incorporated, at all levels, the requirements mandated by the technical annex of Amended Protocol II. Pakistan has made huge contributions to demining efforts, as it is one of the largest contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Buck (United States of America): I will briefly address several separate issues in my remarks.

Since last year's session of the First Committee, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) entered into force and its State parties met in Cancún, Mexico, to operationalize it. To date, 73 countries have ratified the Treaty and 67 more have signed it. That is a start, but we want universality. Although universality is often a recipe for a lowest-common-denominator outcome, in the ATT context it is a recipe for a stronger treaty. The United States will work in the ATT process to keep the door open to States that are not yet ready to join the Treaty, and we will call on those countries that have not signed it to consider doing so as soon as possible. Now that the ATT has entered into force and begun its international operation, we need to remember that it is not a solution in itself to the problems of armed conflict that plague the

world, but it is a tool that States can use, energetically and effectively, to address those problems.

The United States is a high contracting party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and all of its Protocols. We view the CCW as an important instrument that has been able to bring together States with diverse national security concerns. In 2015 the high contracting parties have continued important discussions on improvised explosive devices and lethal autonomous weapons systems. We look forward to the meetings of the high contracting parties to be held in November and to establishing a robust programme of work for 2016 to support preparations for the fifth Review Conference of the CCW.

The United States continues to urge fellow Member States to fully implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. As delegations noted at the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts held in June, more needs to be done. We look forward to continuing that work at the sixth Biennial Meeting of States, to take place in 2016.

The global threat posed by man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) has increased significantly in recent years. Owing to instability in the Middle East and Africa, terrorists have gained unprecedented access to shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, which pose a serious threat to global passenger air travel, the commercial aviation industry and military aircraft around the world. In particular, we are troubled to see advanced MANPADS in conflict zones in Syria and Iraq. In recognition of that risk, the United States is cooperating with partners around the globe to secure those missiles, prevent their smuggling by extremists and protect the targets that terrorists seek to attack.

The United States also established strict export controls over the transfer of all MANPADS many years ago. The United States Government transfers only on a Government-to-Government basis through the foreign military sales system. Additionally, since 2003, the United States has cooperated with countries around the globe to destroy more than 34,000 excess, loosely

secured, illicitly held or otherwise at-risk MANPADS missiles, and thousands more launchers, in more than 40 countries.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the United States has been the world's single largest financial supporter of humanitarian mine action, and it remains committed to eliminating loosely secured or otherwise at-risk conventional weapons and munitions. Since 1993, we have provided more than \$2.5 billion to more than 90 countries for the destruction of conventional weapons, including by clearing landmines and unexploded ordnance, disposing of excess small arms, light weapons and munitions, and improving security for the storage of such weapons.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of France, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.16.

Ms. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): France associates itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union. I would now like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The year 2015 was a turning point for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The success of the first Conference of States Parties to the Treaty should enable us to maintain the very strong momentum the Treaty has shown since its entry into force in December 2014. The Conference enabled us to establish a solid framework of inclusive rules of procedure that protect the rule of consensus, robust financial regulations and an efficient secretariat, supported by a geographically representative management committee. France participated fully in the discussions, including as a facilitator on secretariat issues. Since the Treaty's beginnings, France has worked to ensure that the ATT becomes a genuinely universal standard, and we welcome the continued commitment of civil society throughout the process.

With the firm foundations laid in Cancún, the ATT is entering a new phase. We now have to work on its implementation and establish a responsible partnership between importers and exporters in every region of the world. In particular, in partnership with African countries and regional organizations, France will continue the efforts begun in 2014 to identify assistance needs related to implementation of the Treaty.

Today, small arms and light weapons claim the largest numbers of victims worldwide by far. They have a profoundly destabilizing effect and are a drag

on the development of highly fragile States. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is therefore a crucial instrument. In its national capacity, France is working on projects to secure arms depots and destroy excess munitions in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic, Guinea and South Sudan. Just as vital, in our view, is the International Tracing Instrument, a joint French-Swiss initiative whose tenth anniversary we celebrate this year.

Lastly, this year Germany and France are again jointly submitting the biennial draft resolution entitled "Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus" (A/C.1/70/L.16), which is traditionally adopted without a vote. We urge all delegations to sponsor it and support its adoption.

In 2015, within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), we continued the discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems initiated by France in 2014. This is a subject that concerns us all and demands in-depth consideration by the international community, supported by experts and civil society. Such systems raise very real technical, ethical, legal and operational issues. The discussions held in 2014 and 2015 showed that the CCW was capable of addressing such future challenges. They should continue in 2016, keeping in mind the schedule of the Review Conference to be held in November. In the same context, more specifically the Convention's Amended Protocol II, in 2016 France, together with Moldova, will continue to coordinate the discussions of the informal Group of Experts on improvised explosive devices. Such devices pose a threat not just to civilians and security forces, but to the general stability of the societies affected. The Amended Protocol II Group of Experts has a real contribution to make on the issue. We also fully support Afghanistan's efforts to put the topic on the First Committee's agenda for the first time ever this year.

Finally, with regard to the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions, France and Albania have fulfilled their mandate as coordinators of the Working Group on Stockpile Destruction. We also welcome the success of the recent first Review Conference of the Convention and its adoption of the Dubrovnik Action Plan. The recent allegations of the use of cluster munitions, particularly in Syria, show how vital it is to keep

working towards this instrument's universalization. France is continuing with its efforts to that end and in support of the continued effective implementation of the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

On the subject of Syria, indiscriminate bombing with barrels of explosives has resulted in numerous victims and significant flows of refugees. France condemns these daily indiscriminate attacks by the Syrian regime, which have tragic consequences for civilian populations.

Mr. Foo Khee Loon (Singapore): At the outset, I would like to join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee. We wish you and the members of the Bureau every success in leading the work of the Committee, and assure you of our full support and cooperation.

Singapore aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The world's illicit arms trade remains dangerously out of control. The Secretary-General underscores that message in his latest report on small arms and light weapons (S/2015/289). More than 250 incidences of armed conflict have taken place in the past decade, leading to more than 50,000 deaths every year, record levels of displacement, lost livelihoods and lost opportunities to eliminate poverty. The widespread availability of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, particularly as manifested in the misuse, diversion and illicit circulation of arms and ammunition, has been a key enabler of such conflicts. The international community must not let up in its efforts to address the problem.

Singapore reiterates its commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, which are important platforms for international cooperation aimed at addressing the illicit production, trafficking and circulation of small arms and light weapons. While Singapore reaffirms States' sovereign right to acquire weapons for legitimate self-defence and responsible law enforcement, we also believe that States must comply with their broader responsibilities and legal obligations with regard to the transfer of arms. Singapore is pleased to note

the continuing work of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States in 2014 and the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action in 2015, and in particular their references to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, since they highlight the importance of ensuring women's participation in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Singapore also welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the convening of the first Conference of States Parties to the Treaty in Cancún, Mexico, in August. Singapore has fully supported the ATT since its inception. We believe that enhanced international and regional coordination, coupled with national efforts, will contribute to the reduction of uncontrolled and destabilizing flows of conventional arms to unintended end users. Singapore signed the ATT in December 2014 and is now actively reviewing and assessing the existing national frameworks and legislation that are necessary to full implementation of the Treaty's obligations before we consider ratifying it.

Singapore also recognizes the adverse humanitarian impact of the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and conventional weapons governed under the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. We will continue to support all initiatives against the indiscriminate use of such weapons, especially when they target innocent and defenceless civilians.

Before I conclude, I would like to reaffirm my country's strong commitment to continuing to work within a multilateral framework to achieve legally binding measures for regulating the trade in conventional arms and preventing the diversion of small arms and light weapons into the illicit trade.

Ms. Sehayek-Soroka (Israel): I will read a shortened version of my statement, the full text of which will be available on the QuickFirst site.

Over the course of the past year, the strategic situation in the Middle East has continued to deteriorate, and its stability has become more unpredictable and fragile than ever. Oppressive regimes, terrorist organizations and other non-State actors have continued to wreak havoc and create misery in the daily lives of the region's inhabitants, causing suffering, casualties and large-scale displacement. Regimes weakened through

failed governance have lost all or part of their control over their territories and ceded or abandoned them to terrorist groups. In parts of the region, States have failed to prevent and have sometimes even supported the activities of terrorist organizations that follow radical ideologies. When a State's backing includes the transfer of large quantities of sophisticated weapons — along with other means of support, which may include financing and training — this becomes a threat of an altogether different magnitude.

Weapons are acquired and proliferate in the region by numerous illicit routes and means, such as smuggling, transferring and looting, and may even be locally produced by terrorist groups. They become a source of great concern, since they are used widely and intentionally against civilian populations. We should also be vigilant about the transfer of know-how, technology and expertise, and the continuing transfers by Iran of weapons to terrorist organizations, in violation of numerous Security Council resolutions and international norms. In Israel's view, the threat posed by the proliferation of conventional weapons is dangerous and has the potential for widespread impact. Israel, individually and in collaboration with other stakeholders, is working actively to counter this menace through its implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, international norms and standards and national tools and mechanisms.

The threat of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), short-range rockets, mortars and surface-to-air missiles deserves special attention. The devastating effects of such weapon systems have been clearly demonstrated in recent years, and not only in the Middle East. Such systems, especially MANPADS, have the potential for tragedy, since they can result in terrible consequences, mainly — though not only — for civilian populations, and should therefore be in the hands only of responsible sovereign States under appropriate stockpile-management arrangements. Their transfer to non-State actors should be prohibited and every effort made to achieve that.

The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, together with the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, is an important tool for combating the illicit trade and diversion of arms. Israel welcomes the successful meeting held in New

York in June on the International Tracing Instrument and looks forward to the sixth Biennial Meeting of States, to be held next year.

We welcomed the entry into force in December of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Israel, as a signatory State, supports this important Treaty's goals and purposes and acknowledges the remarkable international developments that have followed its creation. Many of its principles and standards are already embodied in Israel's robust export-control mechanism. We commend Switzerland for hosting the ATT secretariat in Geneva.

Israel considers the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to be an important instrument and the right forum for discussing many challenges in that area, striving as it does to strike a necessary balance between military necessity and humanitarian considerations in applying international humanitarian law. Israel welcomes the work undertaken this year, within the framework of the CCW, on the issue of future lethal autonomous weapon systems, at the meeting in April of the informal Group of Experts, as well as the continuing work on improvised explosive devices, and looks forward to further work on both issues. Both the technical and legal aspects of the lethal autonomous weapon systems issue need further exploration. In the run-up to next year's Review Conference of the Convention it will be important to engage in meaningful and substantive discussions, and Israel is committed to doing so.

Mr. Van Der Kwast (Netherlands): The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) sets the standard for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms. Transparency and reporting on the part of States will be a determining element in the Treaty's eventual success. The Netherlands is willing to do its share both in that area and financially. Via the European Union, as well as nationally, we contribute to assistance and outreach related to the Treaty through the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, the Control Arms Coalition's ATT monitoring project, the sponsorship programme run by the United Nations Development Programme and the Stimson Arms Trade Treaty-Baseline Assessment Project. We look forward to the next Conference of States Parties to the Treaty, to be chaired by Nigeria.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) is one of the success stories of conventional disarmament, and we look forward to assuming the presidency of

the Convention next year. The Dubrovnik Political Declaration underlines the view that cluster munitions should become a thing of the past, and the Dubrovnik Action Plan sets out a forward-looking road map for the next five years, with concrete benchmarks for its implementation. In Dubrovnik, we were able to arrive at a compromise on the financial model for financing the Implementation Support Unit, to which the Netherlands will contribute €250,000 over the next five years.

The CCM's main challenges continue to be strengthening the standards for the non-use of cluster munitions and furthering its universalization. Civil society can play an important role in identifying possible solutions to those issues. We welcome this year's draft resolution on cluster munitions, which may help with the process of universalization. We view compliance with the Convention as fundamental, and in that regard we are deeply concerned about recent reports of the use of cluster munitions in Syria, Yemen, Ukraine and South Sudan. We call on all their Governments to approach such allegations openly and transparently and to take any necessary measures to protect their citizens from cluster munitions. We also call on all States currently participating in military operations in Iraq and Syria to refrain from using such munitions.

The problem of anti-personnel mines has decreased considerably over the past 15 years. However, there is still work to be done. We remain committed to our shared political commitment to clearing all anti-personnel mines before 2025, as agreed on last year in Maputo, thereby effectively ending the threat posed by those horrible weapons once and for all. We will have to work together to help countries with minefields to live up to that commitment. As a major donor to mine-related assistance, the Netherlands is willing to do its share. We fund programmes in Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Mozambique, the Palestinian territories, Somalia and South Sudan.

After two years of discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems, some questions have been answered, but others remain. The discussion is a concerted effort by both States and civil society. To us, it is clear that international law, and international humanitarian law in particular, is the framework we should look at regarding the legality of weapon systems. In order to make progress, we could further focus on deepening our understanding of what is meant by the concept of "meaningful human control". At the upcoming Meeting

of States Parties we would be in favour of establishing a group of governmental experts that could come up with recommendations for further steps on lethal autonomous weapon systems.

Mr. Alajmi (Kuwait), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

Small arms and light weapons continue to require the greatest possible attention on our part. They are still responsible for most of the world's arms-related casualties, and in practice they continue to be weapons of mass destruction. The summary by the Chair of the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects provides a good basis for further discussions in preparation for the sixth Biennial Meeting of States, which will take place in 2016. We would like to see clear references to synergy with the ATT, standards for physical security and stockpile management in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions and arms embargoes, and ammunition and assistance in technology transfers. We should continue to develop the United Nations Programme of Action while implementing the actions we have already agreed to in order to deal better with the continuing threat posed by such weapons.

We welcome the international discussion on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. It should focus on concrete and practical measures aimed at limiting casualties and damage. Much will depend on the exact circumstances in which the weapons are used. What is important is ensuring respect for international humanitarian law.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.39.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): In view of the time constraints, I will limit my remarks to just a few of the issues under this cluster and deliver an abbreviated version of my statement, which has been posted on QuickFirst.

In August, the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was held in Cancún, Mexico, marking a milestone in the progress towards the Treaty's implementation. The ATT sets high norms and criteria for States to adhere to when considering arms transfers and therefore also aims to prevent the illicit trade in conventional arms, which exacerbates conflict

and crime, especially in Africa. Its full and effective implementation will make a tangible contribution to promoting international and regional peace, security and stability, as well as reducing human suffering, by addressing the scourge of armed violence, which much too often is directed at innocent women and children.

The ATT's central pillar is premised on a requirement that prospective States parties should establish effective national transfer-control legislation on conventional arms where it does not already exist, together with the requisite dedicated conventional arms-control systems. In that regard, South Africa's ratification of the Treaty underscores my Government's continued and firm commitment to fulfilling its international role as a responsible manufacturer, possessor and trader of conventional arms. A number of important decisions relating to the operationalization of the ATT were taken at the Conference. South Africa calls on all States that have not yet done so, especially those that are major conventional-arms producers and exporters, to ratify or accede to the Treaty in order to further promote its universalization.

We recognize that there are potential synergies between the ATT and other United Nations reporting mechanisms on conventional arms. For that reason, we strongly urge States that may not have submitted regular reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms recently to do so. States parties to the ATT may also choose to draw on the major elements of their ATT annual reports in order to complete and submit their annual reports to the Register.

South Africa is pleased to announce that earlier this year we became the ninety-second State party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It is a sad reality that suffering on the African continent has often been caused by weapons manufactured elsewhere in the world. We should therefore redouble our efforts to convince and bring into the fold those countries that have yet to accede to the Convention, particularly the major users and producers of cluster munitions.

Informal discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems have been taking place within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons for the past few years. Those informal discussions have given us a better understanding of such systems, but many unanswered questions remain. A key question for South Africa, and one that should be of concern to all of us, is whether such new technologies are compliant

with the rules of international humanitarian law, including those relating to distinction, proportionality and military necessity. Besides that there is also the question of their potential impact on human rights. The concept of “meaningful human control” is something that my delegation supports. In our view, there should always be meaningful human control in questions of life and death.

On the issue of small arms and light weapons, South Africa participated in the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York in June. My delegation remains committed to the full implementation of the Programme of Action as a viable global consensus instrument for combating the illicit trade in these weapons. The Second Open-ended Meeting was very technical in nature, focusing on new technologies for marking new weapons that States are producing, among them non-traditional small arms held by developing countries. South Africa was pleased with the emphasis placed on the issue of international cooperation and assistance, including the transfer of technology in terms of the latest developments, and the expressed need for continued interaction among States, particularly in affording developing countries the opportunity for greater access to the challenges that such modern technologies pose for them.

During this year’s session of the First Committee, South Africa has the honour to introduce, on behalf of Colombia and Japan, the two other main sponsors and co-authors, the annual draft resolution entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” (A/C.1/70/L.39). It is our hope that the First Committee will again adopt it by consensus.

Mr. Quinn (Australia): Over the past year we have seen encouraging progress in conventional weapons control. Notably, the Arms Trade Treaty has entered into force and some 120 States, along with regional organizations, civil society and industry groups, came together for the successful first Conference of States Parties to the Treaty in Cancún in August. Australia, in close collaboration with Ghana, co-facilitated the adoption in Cancún of financial rules for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) secretariat and Conference, which will contribute to establishing a strong, effective and efficient framework for the Treaty’s implementation.

We continue to promote the ATT’s universalization and welcome the Pacific island nation of Tuvalu as the newest State party. Australia continues to work closely in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond to encourage and assist with wide accession and strong implementation of the Treaty. In August we announced a further commitment of \$A400,000 to that effort. We have also contributed A\$2.2 million to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, which provided funding for the recently released useful report on arms and ammunition in Oceania. The Australian Mission will host a side event on this initiative tomorrow.

Small arms and light weapons continue to pose a grave threat to civilians, especially women and children, as well as to peacekeepers, humanitarian workers and civil society organizations. Australia remains firmly committed to curbing this threat through the implementation of Security Council resolution 2117 (2013), the adoption of which Australia helped secure as Council President in 2013. At the national level, Australia strengthened our regulation of the private use of firearms in 1996. The results are measurably clear in reducing homicides and suicides in our community. Australia looks forward to the recommendations of the Chair’s summary report from the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action being taken forward at next year’s sixth Biennial Meeting of States.

Australia remains committed to all protocols of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). We strongly support the need for continued international efforts to reduce the suffering caused by inhumane weapons. We therefore encourage the sharing and demonstration of best-practice use of all legal weapons so that civilian casualties are minimized. All States must also be held to their obligations to uphold international humanitarian law.

As a core supporter of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Australia congratulates Mozambique on its landmark achievement of final, total clearance of remaining anti-personnel landmines in that country. We see an urgent need for a renewed international commitment to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Notably, it is vital for States parties to

pay their financial dues. Australia has been pleased to be a key contributor to the voluntary Sponsorship Programme of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which helps mine-affected States to send representatives to the meetings of the Convention.

Australia continues to play a constructive role in the international efforts to eliminate cluster munitions. We were pleased to participate in the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in Dubrovnik in September, and to see the adoption of the Dubrovnik Action Plan. Australia continues to make a particular contribution to the work of the implementation of the Convention through our role as coordinator of victim assistance for 2015-2016. Australia will continue to play a very significant role in sharing the burden of clearance of land mines, unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war in contaminated areas across the world. Our Pacific neighbourhood is a particular ongoing priority for Australia in that regard.

In conclusion, let me affirm that Australia takes very seriously the threat posed by the proliferation and misuse of conventional arms. We are all diminished by violence, which hampers development and threatens our stability, security and well-being. Addressing those challenges requires a common commitment and a common vision to reduce the scourge of armed violence.

This is an abridged version of my statement, the long version of which appears on the website.

Mr. Balek (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. Therefore, I will limit myself to a few points that I want to add in my national capacity.

The Czech Republic welcomes the outcomes and success of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in August in Cancún, Mexico. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is a success story in the development of internationally agreed standards to regulate the still unregulated global trade in conventional weapons. This success story must continue through the process of universalization and implementation of the ATT. The Czech Republic is ready to play its part and to contribute actively, both through the work of the Management Committee and through active outreach and assistance across the globe.

The Czech Republic reiterates its strong support for the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). The universal accession to the CCW and its Protocols remains one of our highest priorities. In that regard, the Czech Republic has carried out — including when serving as the President of the eighth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V, held in November 2014 — bilateral consultations, intensive dialogue or diplomatic démarches via our missions abroad. The Czech Republic welcomes the new drive in the discussion on autonomous weapon systems. We believe that the international community must establish an assured set of international norms on how autonomous weapon systems must perform in order to comply with international humanitarian law and other relevant legal regimes as the technology continues to develop.

The Czech Republic welcomes the substantial progress achieved since the latest Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention. Taking into consideration that there is still work to do, the Maputo Action Plan 2014-2019 sets up an ambitious road map for the implementation of the goals in all areas of the Ottawa Convention over the next five years. Despite the tremendous achievements in the past 15 years, the clearance of anti-personnel mines in all contaminated areas remains a considerable challenge. There are still more than 10 million mines across the world, which continue to pose a threat to the civilian population. The Czech Republic is one of the most engaged and dedicated donors in the field of demining activities, especially in the Western Balkans and the Middle East. Let me add that since 1999, the Czech Republic has provided more than \$1.4 million to support international projects in many parts of the world.

The first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in Dubrovnik in September, confirmed and highlighted once again the noble goals of the Convention, namely, the prohibition of the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions, the clearance of contaminated land, the destruction of stockpiles and victim assistance. We welcome the adoption of the new guiding documents: the Dubrovnik Action Plan and the Dubrovnik Declaration. We also welcome all the decisions that have been taken in order to further strengthen institutional support for

the Convention and its universalization — one of the key goals I cannot fail to mention.

Each year, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition cause the deaths of and injure hundreds of thousands of people, including women and children. Their illicit trade and excessive accumulation adversely affect regional and international security and stability. The Czech Republic remains committed to working with all Member States in addressing those challenges within the framework of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

At the same time, the Czech Republic continues to support measures to ensure adequate marking and recordkeeping and to strengthen cooperation in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. The Czech Republic co-sponsored Security Council resolution 2220 (2015), initiated by Lithuania in May. We share the opinion that emerging technologies offer new opportunities for the improved marking, tracing, record keeping and control of small arms and light weapons and their ammunitions and should be further considered in the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Mr. Vukašinović (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, let me convey my congratulations to Ambassador Van Oosterom on his election as Chair of the First Committee at its seventieth session, and to other members of the Bureau for their respective elections. I would like to assure them of the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union, and I now wish to deliver several additional remarks in my national capacity.

Today's conflicts are aggravated by a complex combination of factors, including weak State institutions, ethnic strife, transnational crime, terrorism and extremist threats, as well as serious humanitarian and public health crises. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) fuels conflicts, undermines peace initiatives and lingers long after conflicts end, thereby having an adverse impact on restoring and keeping public peace in post-conflict countries. The illicit transfer and misuse of SALW and

their ammunition affect local and regional security and stability, causing human suffering, especially for the most vulnerable groups of the population: displaced persons, returnees, women and children. On the basis of our experience, we strongly support the full implementation of the international humanitarian and human rights laws that protect the rights of the aforementioned vulnerable groups in armed conflict, whatever its international or regional nature, and in situations where armed conflicts do not exist.

The globalization of the arms trade has allowed the production and assembly of SALW throughout the world with little control. We stress the importance of the well-regulated and transparent trade in all conventional arms, particularly SALW. The best way to address the issue is through the full implementation of the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Security Council resolution 2117 (2013) confirmed the ATT as a significant contribution to international and regional peace, security and stability, reducing human suffering and promoting cooperation. Bosnia and Herzegovina deposited its instrument of ratification on 25 September last year, contributing to the required number of 50 ratifications that allowed the ATT to enter into force last December. We underline the importance of the first Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, which was held in Mexico in August, and call upon all States that have not done so to become parties to the ATT.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a post-conflict society, faces a number of challenges with regard to the control of small arms and light weapons. In order to improve the level of internal security, the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina have taken measures and actions to improve all aspects of SALW control, based upon the principles of efficiency, transparency, merits and professionalism. The coordination board for SALW control in Bosnia and Herzegovina has developed a strategy for small arms and light weapons control in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This document was developed through a comprehensive process of consultation with all stakeholders in SALW control and is based on the international commitments of Bosnia and Herzegovina and best practices.

During the implementation period, the relevant institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina achieved results evident in the advancement of SALW control in the following fields: improving the legal framework, setting up electronic registers, enhancing control

mechanisms for both the internal and foreign trade in weapons, destroying surplus weapons and ammunition, collecting and destroying weapons possessed by civilians, and conducting awareness campaigns, as well as meeting the requirements for regular reporting to international organizations, namely, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Those reports contribute largely to achieving transparency in the relevant processes.

Finally, although significant progress has been made, the need remains for educational, financial and technical assistance with regard to training and educating personnel, equipping and providing locations and storage space for SALW, as well as locations for the destruction of SALW.

Mr. Sano (Japan): I would like to begin my statement by congratulating the Mexican presidency on the success of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), in Cancún in August. It is a sign of major progress that basic frameworks for the implementation of the Treaty were agreed there, including the establishment of the Management Committee, which is important to the efficient functioning of the secretariat. I would like to commend Ambassador Lomónaco's able guidance and strong leadership as President.

The administrative arrangement of the ATT secretariat and reporting mechanism remain central issues to be addressed in the coming year. That arrangement should comprise a small and efficient secretariat, and it is essential that we agree on that arrangement at the extraordinary session of the Conference of States Parties to be held early next year. Japan believes that a reporting mechanism is conducive to ensuring transparency. Moreover, the universalization of the Treaty is an important challenge, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Japan will work to achieve wider adherence to the Treaty, in cooperation with other States and civil society. International cooperation should be strengthened for States in need in order to facilitate their capacity-building efforts to implement their Treaty obligations.

With respect to small arms and light weapons, Japan appreciates the useful discussions that took place at the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in June,

concerning the implications of recent developments in the manufacture, technology and design for effective marking, record-keeping and tracing. I commend the Chair of the Meeting, Ambassador Vlad Lupan of Moldova, for his excellent stewardship. I would like to note that the outcome document of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States, held last year, gives emphasis to the enhancement of stockpile management, international cooperation and assistance, and the role of women. It also includes various measures as a way forward. Japan is dedicated to working closely with other States and civil society on those important issues. In that connection, I call on all Member States to extend their support for the annual draft resolution on small arms and light weapons (A/C.1/70/L.39) drafted by Colombia, South Africa and Japan, so that it will be adopted again by consensus.

Japan attaches importance to mine action programmes and has donated approximately \$622 million to 50 countries and regions since 1998. Japan will maintain its support with an emphasis on the clearance of unexploded ordnance, risk reduction education, and especially the role of women.

Japan congratulates the Croatian President on the success of the first Review Conference of the Cluster Munitions Convention, in Dubrovnik in September. It will be important to implement the Dubrovnik Action Plan steadily over the next five years. Japan attaches particular importance to the universalization of the treaty and international cooperation and assistance.

Lastly, Japan recognizes the growing interest of the international community with regard to lethal autonomous weapons systems and commends the leadership of Ambassador Biontino of Germany in the second informal meeting of experts, which deepened our understanding on that issue through an interactive exchange of views. Japan supports further discussion at the fifth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, to be held in 2016, aimed at further deepening our understanding of the main themes, including the definition of lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Mr. Laggner (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Conventional weapons remain the primary tools of violence in armed conflicts and, given their particular importance with regard to disarmament and international security, they must retain our full attention. Although many challenges remain, we have

noted a number of positive developments over the past twelve months.

Switzerland welcomes the prompt entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. The Treaty is an important milestone, establishing for the first time global standards that regulate the international arms trade with the purpose of reducing human suffering. The first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in August, enabled States parties to take a number of key procedural and administrative decisions for the proper functioning of the Treaty. States parties are now in a position to focus on the Treaty's substance.

First and foremost, effective implementation of its provisions will be required. This will necessitate, in particular, the development of a common approach on how to faithfully implement the provisions of the Treaty and the establishment of appropriate national structures. While further work is needed to finalize the provisional reporting templates, they will nevertheless ensure that States parties can start reporting on their implementation of the Treaty. Universalization is another major objective for States parties so as to ensure that the norms of the Treaty serve as an internationally recognized basis for assessing arms exports. That is why my delegation calls on all Member States to join the Treaty.

The outcome of the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held last month, and in particular the Dubrovnik Action Plan adopted on that occasion, is another positive development. The Dubrovnik Action Plan provides an essential road map for the coming five years, including guidelines and measurable results, as well as ambitious yet pragmatic objectives in all relevant fields of the Convention. As shown by the use of cluster munitions in a number of recent conflicts, many challenges remain. Switzerland will continue its engagement in support of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in particular, and humanitarian mine action in general, as we believe it to be our duty towards those affected by those weapons. Notwithstanding diminishing budgets, Switzerland appeals to all Member States to remain committed to reducing the humanitarian effects of those weapons systems.

While artificial intelligence and robotics present both challenges and opportunities, the possible weaponization of such technologies — namely, lethal autonomous weapons systems — raises fundamental

ethical, legal, operational and political questions. We welcome the broad consensus among the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), as well as among Observers, that international humanitarian law applies to all weapon systems, including lethal autonomous weapons systems, and must be respected in all circumstances. The international community should now focus on the possible development of weapons systems that acquire and attack targets without appropriate human involvement.

The dialogue begun in the context of the CCW and other expert meetings on the implementation of legal reviews of new weapons, means and methods of warfare, in accordance with article 36 of Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and customary international law, comes at a welcome time to address the issue of lethal autonomous weapons and to ensure compliance with international law. Without prejudice to other topics, in-depth discussions on the effective implementation of lethal autonomous weapon system reviews seem warranted. Finally, we believe that the CCW, as an important treaty that regulates the means and the methods of warfare, is the appropriate forum to further address the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We support a more robust mandate in the CCW, which can lead to concrete results and ensure that the challenges posed by lethal autonomous weapons systems will be adequately addressed.

Over the past decade, an ammunition storage site has exploded every two weeks on average, killing and injuring people working at or living in the vicinity of those sites. Additionally, munitions held in Government stockpiles are repeatedly diverted, ending up in the hands of criminal groups, rebels, terrorists and other armed non-State actors, fuelling criminal activities as well as conflicts. Ensuring the proper management of Government munitions stockpiles is therefore of critical importance to resolving this security challenge.

In that context, Switzerland will host a Consultative Meeting on Safe and Secure Management of Conventional Ammunition on 16 and 17 November, in Geneva. The meeting will provide Member States as well as international and regional organizations with the opportunity to take stock of current challenges, measures and initiatives in order to establish a common understanding of requirements for sustainable action as well as the universal application of standards and procedures for the life-cycle management of

ammunition. Finally, it will enable participants to discuss the potential way forward in this area. Interested States are welcome to approach the members of my delegation for further information.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Senegal aligns itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Senegal is pleased to participate in this thematic debate on conventional weapons, which, I should stress, comes at an interesting time, given the major advances that have been made in conventional disarmament and arms control. Among these, we note the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Cancún, Mexico, in August. We reiterate our call for the universalization of the Treaty and appeal to States that have not yet done so to join the 77 States parties and 55 other signatories.

The Arms Trade Treaty is the first international convention specifically intended to regulate the international arms trade with the aim of putting an end to the disastrous consequences of the illicit transfer of conventional weapons between countries. Therefore all States parties should implement norms for international weapons transactions, including the adoption of systems to prevent the weapons from being used to commit war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Having raised the promotion and defence of human rights to the level of national priority, Senegal strongly welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. In fact, with the support of the majority of exporting and importing States, the implementation of the norm thus defined for the international transfer of conventional weapons will ensure arms control with a view to preventing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Today, Senegal is in full preparatory phase for the implementation of the Treaty, which will soon be integrated into its national legislation.

The proliferation, illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons continue to threaten international peace and security and have devastating effects on people in conflict and post-conflict situations — periods in which civilians, particularly women and children, are the main victims. That is why we must also focus on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Similarly, the success of

the 2005 International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons depends not on the provisions of those instruments, but on the ability and willingness of Governments to follow through on commitments made.

With respect to the fight against anti-personnel land mines, Senegal is convinced that the implementation of the Ottawa Convention must remain a priority if we want to rid the world of these weapons that indiscriminately bring death. It also seems sensible, in the context of bringing technical and financial assistance to affected countries to help them carry out their demining programmes, to pay particular attention to the socioeconomic rehabilitation of victims. At the same time, the Senegalese Government is intensifying its efforts to help affected areas in the south to recover, with the support of international cooperation. Senegal's National Centre for Anti-Mine Action is the most concrete example of these efforts.

In our opinion, the non-possession or destruction of cluster munitions is the best way to meet the standards set by the Convention relating thereto, whose entry into force was a significant step towards the protection of civilians and the strengthening of international humanitarian law. We welcome the success of the Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in Dubrovnik in September, and stress the vital importance of the full and effective implementation of and total compliance with all provisions of the Convention as well as of the Dubrovnik Action Plan.

Ms. Al-Nadawi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): We align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and with that to be delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We realize that the challenges arising from conventional weapons are similar to those arising from weapons of mass destruction, with the same catastrophic effects. It is therefore up to all of us to take responsibility and intensify international efforts to achieve universality of relevant international instruments and contribute to international peace and security. Iraq has joined many of these instruments, most recently the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and its Protocols. We are

fulfilling our obligations and are regularly submitting national reports in accordance with the provisions of these instruments. We have also submitted two reports pursuant to the second and fifth Protocols of the CCW.

The indiscriminate proliferation of small arms and light weapons, together with the illicit trafficking in and stockpiling of such weapons, continues to be a cause for concern for localities, States and the international community as a whole, given their destabilizing effects and their impact on security. This is true despite the fact that 13 years have passed since the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects with a view to eliminating such weapons. We affirm the importance of implementing the Programme of Action in all its aspects. Assistance and technology transfer must be provided to developing countries, including my country, Iraq, in order to strengthen our capacities to eliminate all manner of threat associated with these weapons.

The proliferation of anti-personnel land mines, explosive remnants of war and cluster weapons is a fundamental issue, due to the weapons' negative impact on the environment and economic development. It is well known that Iraq is the country most seriously affected by these weapons as a result of the vast number of land mines planted there. The more than 25 million land mines buried in various parts of our territory have had serious consequences on the lives of our citizens. These weapons have hindered people's access to basic services, when they have not been killed or mutilated by them, and they prevent the return of displaced persons to their homes.

Our burden has been made even heavier by rise of terrorist groups, in particular the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. These terrorist groups have a strategy consisting of burying land mines and explosive devices in the vast areas of the country under their control in order to impede the advance of the Iraqi forces into these zones to liberate them. We call on the international community to increase its assistance to Iraq with a view to overcoming this problem and eliminating it once and for all.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese Government attaches great importance to conventional weapons-related issues and is dedicated to addressing the humanitarian concerns caused by the indiscriminate use of certain conventional weapons.

China is of the view that humanitarian concerns and the legitimate military security needs of each nation should be addressed in a balanced way. China has constantly been promoting the implementation and strengthening of international legal mechanisms relevant in the field.

As the main legal framework addressing humanitarian issues in the field of conventional arms control, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) has played an irreplaceable role in addressing the humanitarian concerns caused by the indiscriminate use of certain conventional weapons. As a full contracting party to the Convention and its five Protocols, China has devoted sizable human resources and funds to strict compliance with obligations under the Convention and its Protocols. We have actively engaged in international exchanges and cooperation, submitted national reports on implementation in a timely manner, and actively participated in the work of the Group of Experts under the Protocols. Through these efforts, we have made the contributions necessary for enhancing the effectiveness and universality of the Convention.

While working hard to promote domestic implementation, China has actively devoted itself to international humanitarian demining assistance. Since 1998, China has provided humanitarian assistance worth nearly ¥90 million to more than 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the form, inter alia, of donated demining equipment, technical training and victim assistance. More than 500 professional demining technicians have been trained. This year, China hosted demining training courses for Myanmar and will soon deliver assistance to Cambodia for victims of mines and cluster munitions. Currently, China is hosting demining training courses for Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, the Sudan and Zambia. On 28 September, Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, announced at the United Nations Peacekeeping Summit that in the coming five years China will train 2,000 peacekeepers from various countries and carry out 10 de-mining assistance programmes, which will include training and the provision of equipment.

In recent years, against the backdrop of the worrying trend of high-tech arms races, the humanitarian concerns caused by the indiscriminate use of lethal autonomous weapons systems have been on the rise. China supports continued and in-depth discussions on the issue within

the appropriate arms-control framework in order to enhance understanding and consensus and to address the legal and security challenges brought about by lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have increasingly become a major tool of terrorist, extremist and other criminal organizations to spread fear and cause chaos. This worrying trend calls for heightened international attention. With a view to safeguarding domestic and regional peace and security, China has been exercising strict control over civil and military explosives and other dangerous chemicals that could be used to produce IEDs. China supports, and takes an active part in, the relevant international discussions.

At present, terrorism and extremism are ever more rampant, causing horrific upheaval, displacing millions of civilians and exacerbating the humanitarian situation in some regions. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) and certain countries' irresponsible transfers of SALW to non-State actors have further aggravated the situation. China is of the view that a holistic approach should be taken to address both the root causes and the symptoms.

First, the key to addressing the problem involves strengthened international cooperation, with the United Nations as the main channel, and the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons and other international instruments on SALW.

Secondly, each State should assume the primary responsibility for eradicating the illicit trade in arms. The international community should adhere to the non-interference principle, resolve disputes through political and diplomatic means and maintain regional and international peace and security. Meanwhile, the international community should provide the affected countries with support for economic development and social stability, so as to eradicate the root causes of terrorism and organized crime and to create conditions for successful resolution of SALW problem.

Thirdly, the transfer of weapons to non-State actors should be forbidden. Such a prohibition should be adopted and accepted as a general principle, as it could serve as a fundamental guarantee for the

non-proliferation of SALWs and the maintenance of regional and international peace and security. That in turn would serve the interests of the international community at large.

China supports international efforts to regulate the international arms trade and to combat the illicit trade of weapons. China actively and constructively participated in the negotiations of the Arms Trade Treaty and made efforts and contributions towards its conclusion. In support of the purposes and principles of the Treaty, China participated in the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty as an observer. To strengthen the universality of the Treaty, China believes that the concerns of many countries should be addressed in any future version, which would enable us to improve the Treaty so that it can play a more effective role in the efforts to eradicate the illicit transfer of arms and to establish a just order in the international arms trade. China stands ready to work with the international community in efforts to root out the problem of the illicit trade in conventional arms.

China attaches importance to transparency in military expenditures and is committed to enhancing mutual trust among countries in the military field. In recent years, China has submitted annual reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and has taken an active part in the work of relevant Group of Governmental Experts in the hope of enhancing the universality and effectiveness of the Register. China will continue its efforts in that regard.

Ms. O'Brien (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. I would like to add these remarks in my national capacity.

Last month, the international community adopted an ambitious and creative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Among the targets set by our leaders was a significant reduction in death from violence and in related deaths everywhere. Another relevant target for the work of the First Committee was to achieve a significant reduction in illicit arms flows by 2030. To achieve those objectives, we must all work to strengthen the existing conventional arms treaties and instruments and to make them universal. We must also focus on making them fit for purpose, as technology, weapons and warfare evolve in ways unimaginable to those who originally drafted the instruments.

The Arms Trade Treaty is ground-breaking in its recognition of the gendered impact of illicit arms proliferation. We must show leadership in also recognizing women's agency as a powerful force for change in disarmament. Ireland has been a strong supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty, and we warmly welcome its early entry into force and the firm footing on which it is now established. We ask all States to consider acceding to this new and innovative instrument for curbing illicit arms flows. Ireland regards transparency as an essential tool for the effective implementation of the Treaty and looks forward to the adoption of agreed, publicly available reporting templates.

Most casualties from the use of conventional arms are caused by small arms and light weapons. Ireland is a strong supporter of Security Council resolution 2117 (2013) and of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We support proposals that seek to integrate, and address gaps, in the control of such weapons flows, including through the development of international tracing procedures. We firmly believe that ammunition must also be included in control systems. The Arms Trade Treaty, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction all represent what States and civil society, working together, can achieve in conventional arms control. Ireland welcomes the new accessions to those humanitarian instruments, the normative force of which continues to gain widespread acceptance. We welcome the Dubrovnik Declaration, the Maputo Action Plan for the period 2014-2019 and Mozambique's recent declaration of its mine-free status.

The Chair returned to the Chair.

Ireland has been a major contributor to mine clearance in affected countries for many years. We are heartened to see tangible progress in reaching the goal of a world free of those inhumane and indiscriminate weapons and of other explosive remnants of war. However, much remains to be done, as discussions on improvised explosive devices (IEDs) this week have shown. The use of depleted uranium continues to deserve further research, and we look forward to the informal meeting on mines other than anti-personnel

mines to be held in Geneva on 5 November. We also urge all States to accede to Protocol V of the CCW, on the explosive remnants of war. While welcoming the undoubted progress on those issues, we have been appalled to hear well-substantiated reports of the recent use of cluster munitions in Libya, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen and South Sudan. We ask that all parties to those conflicts cease using those weapons, which a growing number of States have now recognized are both inhumane and indiscriminate.

The mandate of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols is at the heart of our debate on how to control and regulate the use of conventional weapons. Again, we would urge all States to accede to the Convention and to its Protocols. We are encouraged by the active consideration that has been given to the question of lethal autonomous weapons systems at the CCW. We support a strengthened mandate for the CCW to explore this serious emerging challenge for conventional arms control, as recognized by the many side events and briefings on the issue convened during this session. Ireland supports the establishment of an open-ended working group on the issue, which could prepare for the fifth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, to be held in 2016.

Ireland also remains consistent in its view that the use of drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles, must be in accordance with international law, including international human rights law and humanitarian law. We welcome the continued discussion of this topic, including the relevant principles and norms of international law across both CCW and human rights spheres. Ireland would like to acknowledge the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, an essential support to the Member States in providing us with quality research and analysis into these difficult issues.

The harm caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide area of impact in populated areas is another emerging challenge for the international community. Ireland is concerned about the escalating civilian casualty rates and the damage to essential infrastructure from the use of those weapons in populated areas. Ireland was pleased to participate in the recent meeting in Vienna on the topic, and we support calls for urgent further consideration of all aspects of the question, including possible gendered impacts.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to the crucial role played by civil society. They have contributed so much in recent times, helping us to make progress on these old and new challenges in conventional arms, which — in the words of those who drafted the CCW and its Protocols — continue to trouble the conscience of humankind.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Croatia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.49.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): As this is the first time that I take the floor at this session, allow me to begin by sincerely congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair. You and all the members of the Bureau can be assured of the Croatian delegation's strong support.

Croatia formally aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. I would like to add the following in my national capacity.

In our view, the uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons poses a significant threat to security and stability but also to development in many parts of the world. For that reason, the issue of disarmament and arms control remains high on Croatia's agenda. Croatia's commitment to conventional arms treaties is based on the fact that those treaties make a tangible difference on the ground and demonstrate the impact that a multilateral approach can have on disarmament. We will continue to be proactive in our efforts to address the challenges we face through those frameworks. We stand ready to share our experience in that field.

We are particularly committed to the region of South-East Europe. Together with bilateral security cooperation with our partners, we are equally active in regional multilateral security engagements. We are proud to host the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre, which facilitates and promotes dialogue and cooperation on security matters in South-East Europe.

We would also like to take this opportunity to stress the important role of civil society in the context of disarmament and arms control. Croatia cooperates closely and successfully with groups and members of civil society in this field, and we wish to express our appreciation for their efforts and all their hard work.

Traditionally, Croatia has been actively engaged in global humanitarian disarmament. This year we hosted and presided over the first Review Conference of the

Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in September in Dubrovnik. The Dubrovnik Declaration underlines the commitment of the States parties to get rid of cluster munitions, while the Dubrovnik Action Plan lays out a comprehensive five-year plan of how to achieve that noble goal. We look upon the successful outcome of the first Review Conference with pride and hope that it will pave the way for further strengthening of the Convention, its universalization and, ultimately, a world without cluster munitions.

As one of the steps forward, Croatia took the lead and put forward a draft resolution, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions", to be considered during this session of the General Assembly under the agenda item "General and complete disarmament". I would therefore like to take this opportunity to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.49, soon to be distributed, which is already co-sponsored by 35 Member States.

The draft resolution urges all States outside the Convention on Cluster Munitions — and there is not a small number of them, because the Convention on Cluster Munitions to date has been signed by 118 States and ratified by 98 States — to join the Convention as soon as possible. The draft resolution also expresses strong concern with regard to recent allegations, reports or documented evidence of the use of cluster munitions in different parts of the world. The goal of the draft resolution is to contribute to universalization of the Convention and to raise the level of implementation of its provisions on a global scale. I take this opportunity to invite those Member States that wish to do so to join the list of co-sponsors and to extend their support to the draft resolution, which is steadfastly putting cluster munitions on our disarmament agenda as a separate item.

Let me conclude the part of my speech on cluster munitions by saying that we welcome the fact that all Central American States have joined the Convention. We hope that all countries in our part of the world will follow that example so that South-East Europe will also one day become a cluster-munition-free-area.

When it comes to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention — another issue of particular importance for Croatia — despite significant progress achieved in landmine clearance, we fear that emplaced mines continue to threaten lives and instil fear in communities. In Maputo we agreed to clear all anti-personnel land

mines by 2025. However, some States' requests for extensions on article 5 obligations imply that a long way is still ahead of us, and we must do more than just acknowledge the difficulties some countries have in that respect. We should continue our efforts by systematically exploring possible opportunities for States that are not yet parties to the Mine Ban Convention to adhere to at least some of its individual norms, and effectively implement concrete measures to that end.

Croatia believes that mine action should be better integrated in the overall development agenda, as it can promote the economic integration of communities through making new means available. It can also tackle humanitarian difficulties such as restricted access for disabled people and inaccessibility to land or water due to minefields.

The arms trade is the single biggest global trade in terms of value, with strong detrimental consequences not only to security but to the larger development agenda, including respect for human rights. By establishing robust and effective common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, the Arms Trade Treaty will significantly contribute to international peace and security. Following the conclusion of the productive first Conference of States Parties, held in Cancún, it should be the duty of all State parties to promote the universalization of the treaty, along with its effective implementation by the countries involved.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Italy fully aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union. I would like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity. I shall read a shortened version of the statement. The full version will be posted online.

During the past decades, the international community has become increasingly aware of the pernicious consequences of illicit, unregulated or irresponsible transfers of conventional arms for peace, security, safety, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as socioeconomic development. The adoption and swift entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) finally gave us a means to curb those negative phenomena and to bring responsibility, accountability and transparency to the conventional arms trade. Italy firmly supported the ATT process from the outset and was one of the first States to ratify the treaty. We are now ready to engage

with all the relevant partners for its implementation and universalization. We welcome the successful outcome of the first Conference of States Parties, held in Cancún in August.

We are fully committed to international efforts to address the humanitarian, socioeconomic and security impacts of conventional weapons. We welcome the Dubrovnik Political Declaration and Action Plan adopted by the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We also strongly support the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention and the Maputo Action Plan adopted last year. We have consistently worked at national and international levels to implement both Conventions. I am indeed pleased to announce that our cluster munitions stockpile destruction process will be completed at the end of this month, five years ahead of the deadline established by the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) provides a unique forum to address issues relating to conventional weapons use and international humanitarian law. We welcome the CCW discussions on improvised explosive devices, whose growing political and humanitarian impact, particularly on civilian populations, is a cause of great concern. We also greatly appreciated the meeting of experts' debates on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, which started to shed light on the multiple technical, legal, ethical and military aspects that such weapons involve.

Since 2001, Italy has supported mine action through a special fund that has to date disbursed a total of €45 million. We have also provided technical and material assistance, including training, and have conducted direct demining activities. We support the creation of partnerships at all levels and the involvement of civil society in the implementation of mine-action programmes. We view mine action as part of States' development efforts, rather than as a strictly humanitarian concern. Therefore, the full realization of victims' political rights, their economic inclusion and adequate social protection must be promoted together with mine action.

Gender is a central theme for us. The specific needs of women must be taken into consideration when addressing the impacts of cluster munitions, mines and explosive remnants of war. More broadly, we must

ensure that the relevant gender and all diversity aspects are taken into account.

Small arms and light weapons remain primary in each of today's armed conflicts. Italy therefore remains committed to the effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the International Tracing Instrument and the United Nations Firearms Protocol.

Mr. Mattar (Egypt): At the outset, I would like to associate Egypt with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and with the statement to be made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States. We also align ourselves with the earlier statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and I am honoured to present the following brief remarks in my national capacity.

This session of the First Committee is the first to take place after the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which was adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 67/234. I take this opportunity to reiterate that Egypt is well aware of the effects of the illicit trafficking in conventional weapons. We are fully committed to exerting all efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in arms. We urge all the countries that decide to accede to ATT to implement it in good faith in order to achieve its purpose and goals.

Through its efforts, the international community should continue to fill in the remaining gaps. We continue to call for addressing the elements of overproduction and the ever-increasing stockpiles of conventional weapons by major arms exporters and producers. We still believe that every effort must be exerted to bring production and stockpiles in major arms-producing States under international scrutiny. International accountability is the only guarantee against the possible abuse of the existing imbalance between major arms producers and the rest of the world.

In that regard, there is no more profound threat to peace and stability, to international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and to the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations itself than crimes of aggression and foreign occupation that employ conventional arms arsenals to threaten and dominate peoples and deny them their most basic human rights. The gaps are spreading with the advancement in conventional weapons. Egypt reiterates that technology should not overtake humanity.

The actual and potential development of lethal autonomous weapons raises many questions as to whether they comply with international humanitarian law, as well as issues of warfare ethics. Regulations should be put into place before such systems are developed or deployed.

While the sophistication of such weapons is an added challenge, the ever-present threat posed by the illicit traffic in small and light arms is one that should be addressed adequately. Egypt is fully committed to the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): All Member States that wish to advance human security and humanitarian outcomes will welcome the fact that 2015 has been a year in which there have been a number of important milestones in the field of conventional arms. It is of some relief to us that there is considerably less stagnation in this field than on other topics on the First Committee's agenda.

We draw satisfaction, first and foremost, from the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the successful convening in August of the first Conference of States Parties. New Zealand remains strongly committed to the Treaty and is proud to be a member of the ATT community. We are grateful to Mexico for having provided the Treaty's provisional secretariat over the past many months and, most recently, for its successful leadership of the Cancún Conference. The decisions taken at the Conference have positioned our Treaty well to reap for us all the human security and development outcomes expected to flow from it.

We look forward to working with the Nigerian presidency of the second Conference of States Parties, including pursuant to New Zealand's role as a vice-president. More generally, we remain committed to working to advance the universalization of the Treaty and hope that our ATT model law can be useful to that end and to promoting its implementation.

Those of us placing a premium on standard-setting — whether framed within or outside of the United Nations — in addressing the protection of civilians will have been pleased, too, at the passage of another successful milestone, that is, the convening of the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). We congratulate the Croatian Government on its successful hosting of the

Conference and welcome the adoption there of a number of important outcome documents. We congratulate Ms. Sheila Mweemba on having now taken up the role as Director of the Convention's Implementation Support Unit.

We are grateful to our Dutch next-door neighbours for taking on the presidency of the Convention and are confident that, with them, the treaty is in very safe hands. New Zealand looks forward to playing its part in stewardship of the CCM, both through our ongoing role as coordinator of national implementation measures and through our new project in Africa, providing assistance to countries that require new legislation to ratify and implement the Convention. Our continued condemnation of all or any use of cluster munitions — or of anti-personnel mines, pursuant to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, known as the Ottawa Treaty — is aimed at enshrining international humanitarian law's emphasis on the protection of civilians in the specific context of these inhumane and indiscriminate weapons.

There are other specific contexts in which the standards of international humanitarian law for the protection of civilians must be fully applied and protected. Just last month, Austria hosted useful discussions in Vienna focused on the harm that civilians face in many conflicts from explosive weapons used in densely populated areas. We must explore ways, as the Secretary-General has said, to address this issue and minimize this harm.

We share the concerns of many with regard to the complex legal and political challenges posed by the possibility of lethal autonomous weapon systems. Given the pace of technological advances, the international community must ensure that decision-making and accountability in the development and use of such systems remain within the boundaries of international law, including in particular international humanitarian law. With a view to the convening next year of the Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), we support a strengthened mandate for further work on the issue within the CCW.

In the context of all those issues, and indeed in so many other weapon- and conflict-related areas, my Government remains immensely grateful for the unstinting commitment of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to the advancement of

international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians and others in conflict situations. Member States' own National Societies for the Red Cross and Red Crescent do hugely valuable work to back up the ICRC in a range of contexts. In this, the centenary year of the New Zealand Red Cross, I place on record the value we attach to their work.

Mrs. Dominguez Sol (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country aligns itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

While it is said that there are not sufficient resources to address the serious economic and social problems facing the world, paradoxically military spending has attained astronomical sums. The methods and means of warfare are seemingly without limits. Every day, the destructive power of conventional weapons is increased to make them more sophisticated and deadly. In international forums, priority is given to the discussion on certain categories of conventional weapons, such as small arms and light weapons, at the expense of discussions on other, more sophisticated weapons that have significantly more devastating effects. There is a great imbalance between industrialized and developing countries when it comes to the production, possession and trade of conventional weapons. Given their more considerable production, possession and trade in conventional weapons, industrialized countries also have the greatest responsibility.

Cuba defends the legitimate right of States to manufacture, import and possess small arms and light weapons to meet their legitimate security and defence needs, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time, we advocate the adoption of more effective measures for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in such weapons. In that regard, we reaffirm the full applicability and importance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The international community had before it a historic opportunity to help collectively and effectively combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons while negotiating the Arms Trade Treaty. However, the Treaty, which was adopted by a divided vote, was not commensurate with the just demands and needs of States. The ambiguities, imbalances and limitations that characterize the Arms Trade Treaty undermine

its effectiveness and efficiency. It is an unbalanced instrument that favours conventional arms-exporting States, setting up privileges that are detrimental to the legitimate interests of other States, including on defence and national security. Similarly, the established parameters for the evaluation of transfers are subjective, and therefore easily manipulated. In Cuba's opinion, a treaty that claims to regulate international arms transfers while simultaneously legitimizing, rather than barring, arms transfers to unauthorized non-State actors — precisely the primary source of the illicit arms trade — cannot be effective.

Cuba attaches high priority to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons for the significant contribution it has made to the development of the rules of international humanitarian law and for the adequate attention that it dedicates to the security interests of States. We favour the adoption of a legally binding instrument within the framework of the United Nations or the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to ban autonomous weapons, even before they are in use. We have serious doubts that compliance with and enforcement of the rules and principles of international humanitarian law can be ensured when lethal autonomous weapons are in use.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Cuba firmly supports the prohibition and total elimination of cluster munitions and condemns their use as being incompatible with the principles and standards of international humanitarian law. Our country is carrying out the required constitutional processes necessary for our accession to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We hope that the internal legal prerequisites for Cuba's accession to the Convention will be completed in the near future.

Mr. Varma (India): India associates itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The illicit transfer of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, to terrorists and non-State actors remains a major threat to international peace and security and an impediment to the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Although there is no global and comprehensive instrument to address that challenge, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects outlines a realistic approach

to address the problem through cooperative efforts at the national, regional and global levels. India supports taking forward the Programme of Action on the basis of consensus among all Member States.

India is party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its five Protocols and remains committed to the CCW objective of progressively strengthening the role and principles of international humanitarian law while striking a balance between addressing the humanitarian concerns and military necessity of States. India will contribute to the success of the CCW meetings this year and the Review Conference next year.

India supports the vision of a world free of the threat of landmines and is committed to the eventual elimination of anti-personnel landmines. India participated as an observer at the third Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention, held in Maputo in 2014. We support the approach enshrined in the Amended Protocol II of the CCW, on anti-personnel land mines, which addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States with long borders. India has discontinued the production of non-detectable anti-personnel landmines and observes a moratorium on their transfer. We are also contributing to international demining and rehabilitation efforts. Amended Protocol II is a useful framework for addressing the issue of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which are increasingly being used by terrorists and illegal armed groups. We appreciate the initiative taken by Afghanistan to introduce a new draft resolution on IEDs at the First Committee this year.

India supports continued discussions in the CCW on lethal autonomous weapons systems, as per an agreed mandate. We feel that such systems should be assessed not just from the viewpoint of their compatibility with international law, including international humanitarian law, but also on their impact on international security, if indeed such weapon systems are disseminated.

India supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures and submitted its national report for this year.

India has strong and effective national export controls governing the transfer of conventional weapons that conform to the highest international standards.

India continues to keep the Arms Trade Treaty under review from the perspective of our defence,

security and foreign policy interests. India raised concerns during the negotiations on a number of gaps that remained in the final text. It remains to be seen if the entry into force of the Treaty will have a meaningful impact on the ground, in particular with regard to correcting the imbalance in the rights of exporting

and importing States and halting the flow of arms to terrorist and non-State armed groups. Perhaps it is too early to draw definitive conclusions, but current trends do not offer much hope.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.