



# General Assembly

Seventieth session

## First Committee

17<sup>th</sup> meeting

Monday, 26 October 2015, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom ..... (Netherlands)

*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.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 continue with its rolling list of speakers on the “Conventional weapons” cluster. All speakers are reminded of the time limits of five minutes when speaking in the national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of a Group of States.

**Mr. Isnomo** (Indonesia): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on the topic of conventional weapons.

NAM reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs. NAM expresses its concern about unilateral coercive measures and emphasizes that no undue restriction should be placed on the transfer of such arms.

NAM remains deeply concerned over a wide range of security, humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). NAM calls on States, in particular major producing States, to ensure that the supply of SALW is limited only to Governments or to entities duly

authorized by them. NAM also underlines the need for a balanced, full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, and in this regard stresses the key importance of international cooperation and assistance.

NAM recognizes the significant imbalance in the production, possession and trade in conventional weapons between the industrialized and non-aligned countries, and calls for a significant reduction in the production, possession and trade of conventional weapons by the industrialized States with a view to enhancing international and regional peace and security. NAM notes the adoption, by vote, of the Arms Trade Treaty by the General Assembly on 2 April 2013 (resolution 67/234 B, annex). The Movement also notes that the Treaty, which aims at regulating trade in conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, entered into force on 24 December 2014.

NAM calls for the Treaty’s balanced, transparent and objective implementation, in strict accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and the inherent right of each State to security and to individual or collective self-defence. The Movement also underscores that its implementation should in no way affect the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs.

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NAM continues to deplore the use, in contravention of international humanitarian law, of anti-personnel mines in conflict situations aimed at maiming, killing and terrorizing innocent civilians. NAM calls upon all States in the position to do so to provide the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance to land-mine clearance operations and the social and economic rehabilitation of victims as well as to ensure full access of affected countries to material equipment, technology and financial resources for mine clearance. NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction reiterate their commitment to the full implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014 and invite those States that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Convention.

NAM States parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its Protocols encourage States to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols. Recognizing the adverse humanitarian impact caused by the use of cluster munitions, NAM also expresses solidarity with the cluster-munitions-affected countries and calls for providing the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance to unexploded-cluster-munitions clearance operations.

Regarding the explosive remnants of the Second World War, particularly in the form of land mines, which continue to cause human and material damage and obstruct development plans in some non-aligned countries, NAM calls on the States primarily responsible for laying these mines and leaving explosives outside their territories to cooperate with the affected countries and provide mine-action support, including information exchange, maps indicating the locations of mines and explosives, technical assistance for mine clearance, defrayal of the costs of clearance and compensation for any losses caused by mines laid.

In closing, NAM stresses the importance of the reduction of military expenditures, in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, and urges all States to devote the resources made available from there to economic and social development, in particular for the fight against poverty.

**The Chair:** I call on the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.57.

**Mr. Sarki (Nigeria):** It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States. The Group aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The African Group remains deeply concerned over the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons, and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly in Africa. The Group continues to underscore the importance of a balanced, full and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Accordingly, the Group welcomes the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action, the most recent event to take place in the context of the Programme of Action, which was held from 1 to 5 June 2015. The Group views the full 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 as key elements in promoting long-term security and for creating conditions for security and sustainable development in Africa.

African States have indeed been guided by the efforts to address the menace of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on the continent, within the framework of the Programme of Action. The African Group wishes again to highlight the extensive work done in addressing the subject of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons since the Bamako Declaration of 2000 and subsequent declarations such as the adoption of the African Union Constitutive Act and the 2002 Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. We also wish to refer to the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, which was adopted in Sirte in 2004. In addition to the aforementioned, we would note the Nairobi Protocol, the Southern African Development Community Protocol of 2004, the Economic Community of West African States Convention of 2006, and efforts undertaken in the framework of Community of Sahel-Saharan States and the Arab Maghreb Union and other relevant subregional initiatives aimed at addressing the issue in Africa.

Similarly, African Heads of State and Government have, on numerous occasions, expressed concern over the impact of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially in undermining peace and security and fuelling conflicts in Africa. Despite these efforts on the African continent, we, the African Group, continue to stress that international assistance and cooperation on a broader scale remains an essential ingredient in the full implementation of the Programme of Action. In view of this, the African Group wishes to call on States Members of the United Nations with developed economies to provide cooperation and more technical and financial assistance to developing countries in the realization of the overall objectives of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, with a view to eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Group also believes that such efforts will promote national and regional initiatives and assist efforts at the global level. We also urge all States to continue to fulfil their obligations in regard to the reporting of technological transfers and by ensuring the unhindered flow of international cooperation and assistance, as mandated by the United Nations Programme of Action.

A veritable confidence-building measure would be the actual reduction of military expenditures by major arms-producing countries, in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest levels of armament. In that regard, we urge those countries to devote their resources to global, economic and social development and, in particular, to the fight against poverty and disease.

The African Group acknowledges the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 24 December 2014, as well as the successful Conference of States Parties, held in Cancún, Mexico, from 24 to 27 August 2015. The Group urges appropriate implementation of the ATT as the only legally binding instrument on the international transfer of conventional arms in a balanced and objective manner that protects the interests of all States and not just the major States involved in the international production and export of arms. The Group reaffirms the sovereign rights of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional weapons, conventional arms and their parts and components for their legitimate self-defence and security needs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The full implementation of the Treaty is practically achievable with the cooperation of all States. The Group acknowledges that unregulated conventional arms transfers fuel the illicit trade and further urges major arms suppliers to ratify the Treaty and promote its implementation. The African Group also seeks to raise the lingering question of the manufacture of lethal autonomous weapons systems as a threshold that raises ethical, legal, moral and technical questions and issues in relation to international humanitarian and human rights law. The Group notes the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in providing assistance to African States on the elaboration of the various multilaterally agreed conventions and for the control of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and all parts and components. Such efforts should correspond with those rendered to its counterparts in other regions.

The Nigerian delegation would like to seize this opportunity to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.57, entitled “United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa”, on behalf of the African Group. The draft resolution has already been circulated to delegations. We note with satisfaction the overwhelming support for this text at past sessions of the General Assembly and we call on all delegations to continue to give it their support. The presentation of the draft resolution is to ensure, among other things, the redoubling of efforts on disarmament, education and support for African States to address the challenges of arms proliferation.

Finally, the Group wishes to restate the critical importance of political will and transparency in addressing international disarmament and security issues. The Group believes that deliberations in the coming days under your effective chairmanship, Sir, should be guided by the need to advance the work of the First Committee and to enhance the course of peace.

**Mr. Vadhanasindhu** (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Thailand reiterates its concern over the notion that small arms and light weapons are the real weapons of mass destruction. It is clear that these are the weapons that continue to kill and maim alarming numbers of civilians worldwide. They remain problematic not only for peace and security, but also for development prospects, since they hinder economic and social

progress and opportunities for a better quality of life, particularly for those in greatest need. Thailand is committed to working, especially as a bridge-builder, towards coherent action across all levels, from local to global, and for inclusive approaches on the part of Government, civil society and others to address this global threat.

The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in December 2014 exemplifies international success in this arena, and we are optimistic about its contribution to effective arms control and to mitigating the consequences of the illicit arms trade. Having signed the ATT in November 2014, Thailand fully supports the object and purpose of the Treaty and is working on the necessary processes for ratification. Meanwhile, we have been participating in relevant conferences under the Treaty framework, and that will continue. We are pleased to see the swift developments achieved at the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Cancún, Mexico, in August. We also congratulate Switzerland on being chosen as the seat of the ATT secretariat, and commend Trinidad and Tobago and Austria for their generosity and leadership.

Thailand looks forward to engaging more deeply under the ATT framework and stresses that transparency and the involvement of as many States as possible across all regions will be key to its success. We also reaffirm our 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 are of the view that the ATT and the Programme of Action should complement and strengthen, without duplicating, each other.

As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Thailand is committed to its mine-clearance obligations. Despite some unforeseen difficulties, we are doing our utmost to reduce mine-affected areas within our extended deadline. In that regard, we commend in particular the Governments of Japan, Norway and the United States for their continuing support to our ongoing efforts.

Thailand accords high priority to pushing forward the victim assistance agenda. During our membership this year on the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance, Socioeconomic Reintegration and Mine Awareness, we hosted the Bangkok Symposium

on Landmine Victim Assistance, under the theme “Enhancing a Comprehensive and Sustainable Mine Action”. The Symposium was aimed at realizing the victim assistance section of the Maputo Action Plan. We discussed the way forward for victim assistance through empowerment and rights-based approaches, based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, while stressing that international cooperation and assistance, including through South-South partnership, remain central.

Thailand notes the striking gender and age element in the conventional weapons agenda, where the numbers of women and children who fall victim are overwhelmingly disproportionate. We urge all victim assistance efforts to take that into account and to include victims’ voices and perspectives in decision-making processes when relevant. Thailand hopes to further explore holistic and integrated approaches to this important subject matter, and looks forward to sharing experiences and best practices with our friends and partners.

We remain engaged in the framework of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). Thailand is pleased to note the successful first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held last month, as well as the adoption of the Dubrovnik Action Plan, marking the fifth anniversary of the Convention’s entry into force. Thailand recognizes and supports the humanitarian principles, as well as the object and purpose of the CCM. We are in the process of verifying scope and meaning under the CCM, with a view to possible accession in the future. Nevertheless, our overall efforts on mine clearance and victim assistance will continue to be strengthened in the meantime.

In conclusion, Thailand stands ready to share and to cooperate with partners and friends, endeavouring to make any contribution we can to a mine-free and safer world.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

**Mr. Alokly (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*):** Hostilities in Libya during the revolution that followed the demise of the previous regime, and which continue to date, led to a huge security vacuum. We are still suffering from that and from the proliferation of arms and ammunition among the people, which is compounded by the arsenals of weapons available inside and outside Libya.



Conventional weapons are the most common and popular arms used in armed conflict and the cause of a terrifying number of victims and much hardship and suffering. The lack of a framework for regulating that kind of trade for so many years has contributed to the eruption of conflicts. The entry into force on 24 December 2014 of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as hugely important to the creation of an environment that is more conducive to controlling commerce and prohibiting illegal trafficking in conventional weapons. Libya is a signatory to the Treaty, a demonstration of our support for such international instruments in preventing the spread of conventional weapons to areas of conflict around the world. We believe that the ATT has the potential to reduce illicit trafficking in conventional weapons, while we emphasize the sovereign right of all States to control and regulate trade in such weapons in accordance with their domestic legislation.

We would also like to emphasize the importance of implementing 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 we should continue to build on the results that have been achieved so far.

Like the rest of the international community, we are concerned about the issue of landmines, which continue to do enormous environmental damage and hinder development. Libya has been suffering from the problem of this type of weapon since the end of the Second World War, and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention should be playing a central role in arriving at a solution to it. However, the Convention has ignored the damage inflicted on countries that became theatres of war between external countries, and neither has it provided for any compensation to countries that continue to be plagued by the legacy of landmines. It has not addressed the issue of colonial Powers that have not lived up to their commitments to eliminating and clearing the landmines they have laid.

We share the concerns of most States about the use of weapons with indiscriminate effects. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which is designed to regulate them, does not take into account domestic concerns, which can result in the same effects when not part of an international framework. The Protocols to the Convention do not allow for the concerns of countries such as Libya.

**Ms. Vladulescu (Romania):** Romania fully aligns itself with the statement delivered in the previous meeting on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.16). I would like to add a few points in my national capacity.

Romania considers the legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) an essential milestone in the development of internationally agreed standards regulating the global trade in conventional weapons. We welcomed the Treaty's entry into force in December 2014 and the success of the first Conference of the States Parties to the ATT, held in Mexico in August. We thank the Mexican Government for its gracious hospitality. My country was one of the 67 States parties participating in the meeting and helping to forge a solid path forward towards the effective implementation of the Treaty. Romania has a robust national export-control system, and we participate in the various international export-control regimes, including the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies. We therefore stand ready to contribute our experience to further developing the ATT's infrastructure, and in particular to continue to work for the Treaty's universalization and to contribute to its effective implementation worldwide.

We strongly believe that if we do not adhere strictly to our legal commitments, we risk undermining the international security architecture. Romania is determined to continue to be a factor in regional stability and security and to participate constructively in regional and international efforts aimed at preserving peace and security. We would like to emphasize that in the context of ballistic missile proliferation and the increased interest of State and non-State actors in acquiring such technology, the NATO ballistic missile defence capability, which will include a site in Romania, will in fact contribute to international security and stability.

A statement made in this year's general debate claimed that the missile defence facility in Romania would seriously challenge the international security environment. We will take every opportunity to highlight the exclusively defensive nature of that capability and its use for legitimate self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We emphasize once again that this ballistic-missile defence system is aimed at countering threats from outside the Euro-Atlantic area. Furthermore, according to the provisions of the agreement signed in complete

transparency between Romania and the United States, and contained in a public document, the system's features cannot be changed and it cannot be used for purposes other than those stipulated in the agreement.

The need for furthering confidence-building efforts among countries, in particular in the field of expenditures related to military enhancements, is one of Romania's priorities. During this year's session of the First Committee, the draft resolution on military expenditures will once again be submitted by Germany and Romania. It has been adopted without a vote for more than a decade, and we hope that will be the case this year as well. We continue to support States parties' full compliance with all their obligations under existing treaties, agreements and mechanisms in the area of disarmament and arms control, while promoting the universalization and implementation of those legal instruments.

We remain firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols. We believe that discussing important issues related to the use of weapon systems and learning from one another's national implementation activities provides a significant and real benefit, including from a humanitarian perspective. In that regard, we see merit in the expert discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems within the framework of the CCW.

**Mr. Kmentt** (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union earlier in this discussion (see A/C.1/70/PV.16). Today I would like to highlight a few issues that are priorities for Austria.

The prevention of human suffering and assistance to victims of armed conflict and violence must remain at the heart of our efforts. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) was the first to address the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women. Since then, international awareness and response to the gender implications of weapons, armed violence and armed conflict has developed, but much remains to be done. The gender implications of specific types of weapons, including conventional weapons, are issues that deserve more attention and focus in research and in the political debate. A gender perspective should be incorporated into all disarmament, arms-control and non-proliferation efforts. We should ensure the full and equal participation of women and men at all stages and levels of decision-making.

As one of the first States to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Austria welcomed its speedy entry into force in December. The first Conference of States Parties to the Treaty, held in Cancún, Mexico, in August, defined the institutional framework for its effective implementation and universalization. We believe firmly that it will make an important contribution to human security and human rights and development, and will also contribute significantly to countering gender-based violence.

The indiscriminate effects and unacceptable humanitarian consequences of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions have led to their banning. Such indiscriminate weapons nevertheless continue to claim human lives and cause human tragedy, underlining the importance of achieving full universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Austria wishes to emphasize the fact that the obligation to protect civilians from unnecessary harm applies to all States.

The first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions provided an opportunity for taking stock of the Convention's successful first five years, now numbering as it does almost 100 States parties. Through its adoption of a political declaration and the Dubrovnik Action Plan, the Conference created important guidelines for future work in the framework of the Convention. As a co-coordinator with Chile of the Conference, Austria was pleased to be able to contribute to advancing effective cooperation and assistance between all relevant stakeholders and across regions. At the same time, we remain seriously concerned about reports of the continued use of cluster munitions in a number of countries. We call on all actors to refrain from the use of such indiscriminate weapons.

Austria would also like to specifically highlight its concern about the use of explosive weapons in populated areas as a major cause of harm to civilians in many countries, a concern shared by an increasing number of Governments. Civilian casualties from explosive weapons in urban settings amounted to more than 40,000 deaths and injuries worldwide in 2014 alone, a figure dramatically higher than that of military casualties. This is an extremely grave humanitarian problem and a severe challenge to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, as stipulated in international humanitarian law. Nor is it a problem that can be limited to a small number of conflict zones. The growing numbers of refugees currently leaving their war-torn home regions

testify to that fact. Many are desperate to find shelter abroad specifically because of the violence and the use of explosive weapons in their countries of origin and the lack or breakdown of protection for civilian populations.

Recently, Austria and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs jointly convened a meeting of international experts on this problem in Vienna, with representatives from about 20 States, the International Committee of the Red Cross, various United Nations agencies and civil society. The meeting highlighted the importance of raising awareness by continuing with the collection and dissemination of data, as well as sharing and promoting States' good practices in using explosive weapons. Participants also expressed significant support for a proposal to start working on an international political declaration aimed at preventing harm to civilians through the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. In his latest report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2015/453), the Secretary-General encouraged States to engage constructively in such an initiative.

Before I conclude, I would like to put on record one more of my country's concerns — the prospect of the development of lethal autonomous weapon systems. While that may seem a more distant threat by comparison with those just mentioned, technological innovation is moving fast. We risk crossing a very dangerous threshold with such technological developments. We should be very careful to make sure that the application of such technology is consistent with ethical, political and legal imperatives. That is why we are with those who are in favour of not only continuing but deepening and intensifying the ongoing international debate about lethal autonomous weapon systems.

**Mr. Kim Young-moo** (Republic of Korea): Small arms and light weapons have emerged as the real weapons of mass destruction of our era, posing grave challenges to all humankind. The international community can and must do more to address them. There are reportedly more than 900 million small arms in circulation worldwide, and they are involved in almost all the armed conflicts threatening international peace and security today. The vast majority of the more than 500,000 violent deaths that occur every year are attributable to the use of small arms in armed conflicts. The illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of such weapons have deep, cross-cutting ramifications for all three pillars of the

United Nations — peace and security, development and human rights. Above all, the flows of small arms into conflict zones have fuelled violence and undermined peacebuilding efforts, and have had a catastrophic humanitarian impact on civilians, especially women and children.

Last year, the international community took a momentous step by putting the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) into force. The landmark Treaty establishes, for the first time, a comprehensive and legally binding norm aimed at preventing arms transfers that lead to serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. It is crucial to ensure that the international community focuses its efforts to achieve the ATT's universality and its full implementation. The Republic of Korea welcomed the productive discussions at the first Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty, held last August in Mexico, and we hope that its outcome will lay a solid foundation for further strengthening the implementation of the ATT. For its part, the Republic of Korea is taking steps to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

Full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the International Tracing Instrument, is an equally crucial task. The Republic of Korea welcomes the timely discussions, held at this year's Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action, on the implications for the Programme of Action's implementation of recent developments in small arms and light weapons technology, and hopes that they will contribute substantively to the success of next year's sixth Biennial Meeting of the States.

With its legally binding arms embargoes and peacekeeping missions, the Security Council can also play an important role both in preventing flows of small arms to conflict regions and assisting countries in their arms stockpile management. In that regard, the Republic of Korea welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolutions 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015), which have paved the way for the Council's enhanced role in tackling the challenge of small arms and light weapons. We look forward to their robust implementation.

For the past three decades, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) has continued to adapt to a changing environment while striking a

balance between international humanitarian principles and States parties' legitimate security concerns. The ATT's recent entry into force may be able to contribute to further enhancing the CCW's regime by creating synergy between the two. The Republic of Korea supports the universalization of the CCW and calls on States that are not party to the Convention, especially those in Asia, to join it.

The Republic of Korea welcomes the extension of the mandate for addressing the issue of lethal autonomous weapon systems within the CCW framework, and supports international efforts to clarify and better understand the development of technology and its implications for implementation of the Convention. We would also like to highlight the importance of addressing the impact of improvised explosive devices and the uncontrolled usage of anti-personnel mines and other types of mines. Given the fast pace of technological development, it is crucial that we take flexible and realistic approaches to addressing those issues within the framework of the CCW.

As we head towards the Fifth Review Conference in 2016, we should focus our efforts on strengthening the Convention. Careful deliberations for adequately addressing emerging issues of conventional arms control will be one of the keys to the successful outcome of the Review Conference. The Republic of Korea looks forward to continuing constructive discussions with the States parties to achieve this goal.

**Mr. Samounty** (Lao People's Democratic Republic): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/70/PV.16).

The Lao People's Democratic Republic attaches great importance to the humanitarian concerns caused by the use of conventional weapons. Therefore, we strongly support the efforts of the international community to address this issue by actively participating in the work of the international conventions on conventional weapons. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a State party to major international instruments in this field, such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and four of its protocols and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). The Lao People's Democratic Republic also supports the spirit and objective of the Mine Ban Convention, as evidenced by our continued voting in favour of the General Assembly resolution

on the Mine Ban Convention, despite the fact that my country is not yet a State party to that Convention. In the meantime, we welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. We are currently studying its text with the aim of joining the Treaty in the future.

Although conventional weapons do not have the same level of effect as that of the weapons of mass destruction, the widespread use of such weapons, including explosive remnants of war, continue to cause long-term consequences. Explosive remnants of war not only inflict serious humanitarian consequences on the civilian population, but also become major obstacles to the social and economic development of areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war in many countries, including my own country.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is therefore concerned about the wide range of security and humanitarian impacts arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. To address this problem, countries need to work together. To this end, my delegation supports the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in tackling this issue.

As the Committee is aware, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is one of the countries most heavily contaminated by unexploded ordnance in the world, as over 2 million tons of bombs were dropped on Lao soil during the war from 1964 to 1973. Although the war ended four decades ago, explosive remnants of war continue to kill or maim innocent people, including women and children, to this day. Furthermore, explosive remnants of war continue to hamper our national development, especially in the agricultural sector, and the livelihoods of rural people, the development of infrastructure and other investment projects in the areas contaminated by unexploded ordnance, by which 14 out of 17 provinces of my country continue to be affected.

The clearance of unexploded ordnance will take a long time and require a huge amount of resources. We therefore express our sincere thanks to the friendly countries, international organizations and others for the support and assistance that have been extended to us and once again call on them to provide increased funding and technical assistance to support our efforts to clear the unexploded ordnance in our country.



As one of the most heavily affected countries, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has been actively promoting the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in order to prevent further victimization of humankind by unexploded ordnance by, inter alia, hosting the first meeting of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and active participation in the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions held in Croatia in September this year. We therefore welcome the adoption of the Dubrovnik Political Declaration and Dubrovnik Action Plan. We also look forward to participating in the sixth meeting of States parties to the Convention, which will be held in Geneva in 2016.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic takes this opportunity to congratulate once again those countries that have already ratified the CCM and encourage those countries that have not done so to ratify or accede to the Convention.

**Mr. Luque Márquez** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing my delegation's endorsement of the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (see A/C.1/70/PV.16).

Ecuador would like to express its full support for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Therefore, we welcome the outcome of its first Review Conference, which was held in September in Dubrovnik, Croatia. We also welcome the fact that this year Canada, Colombia, Slovakia, the State of Palestine, Iceland, Mauritius, Paraguay, Rwanda, Somalia and South Africa deposited their ratification or accession to the Convention.

On account of the horrible wounds that these weapons can inflict, without distinguishing between soldiers, farmers or children, even years after being deployed, Ecuador unreservedly condemns their use by any party and wherever that may be. There are no justifications for their continued use, not even military justifications, and that is why we make an urgent appeal to call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention.

By the same token, Ecuador would like to express its full support for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In that regard, my country underscores its goal of making its

borders places of effective union and secure integration through specific development projects shared with neighbouring countries. That is why the humanitarian mine-clearance programmes that Ecuador is carrying out with Peru on their common border are extremely important.

My country believes that the international community should further the discussion about unmanned aerial vehicles and fully autonomous armed robots. The high number of indiscriminate casualties that the use of drones in civilian areas has caused and their use for extrajudicial killings, as well as the serious ethical and legal questions that have been raised by the development of new military technologies that exclude the participation and responsibility of human beings in decision-making, makes it urgent to have a serious discussion about these new problems in the framework of conventional weapons. In this regard, my delegation supports the need to deepen this discussion in preparation for the next review conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in 2016, during which we should consider prohibiting lethal autonomous weapons. In the meantime, States should refrain from developing these weapons.

In the area of small arms and light weapons, my delegation wishes to stress the importance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, as the main international framework to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit traffic in these weapons. At the same time, we would like to underscore our commitment to the application of provisions at the national, regional and global levels and to the agreements related to implementation over the next six years, which derive from the 2012 Review Conference. It is in that spirit that Ecuador is preparing for next biennial meeting, to be held in 2016.

In conclusion, Ecuador takes note of the development and conclusions of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and reiterates that its authorities continue to carefully examine the way these decisions will be implemented, in particular by the countries that produce and export arms and that promoted the adoption of the Treaty in order to determine whether its implementation will be carried out in an objective and transparent manner, avoiding politicization and complying comprehensively and without discrimination with the provisions included in

the Treaty in order to make a final decision on Ecuador's accession to this instrument.

**Ms. Saggese** (United Kingdom): At the outset, allow me to align my comments with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (A/C.1/70/PV.16). I am delivering an abridged version owing to time constraints, the full version of which will be posted on line.

This has been a momentous year for international action on conventional arms control. In August this year, Mexico hosted the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. Hopes and expectations for this Conference were high, and we are delighted that the Conference was successful, under Mexican chairmanship, in laying the foundations for effective operational support of the Arms Trade Treaty. As one of the Vice-Presidents of the Conference, the United Kingdom was proud to have played its part.

One of the key decisions taken at the Conference was the selection of the seat of the Treaty secretariat. The United Kingdom considers the choice of Geneva as particularly fitting, given the wealth of relevant expertise located there. We know that Switzerland will make every effort to enable the Treaty to live up to the ambitions invested in it.

The United Kingdom looks forward to an effective extraordinary conference of States Parties early next year to finalize budgetary and administrative arrangements. Our ambitions for the Arms Trade Treaty should focus on the potential of the Treaty to enhance peace, security and prosperity. The full universalization and effective implementation of the Treaty are paramount to this.

We continue to offer technical expertise and financial assistance, where possible, to States looking to accede to the Treaty and develop their export-control systems. Over the past year the United Kingdom funded £350,000 worth of projects in support of Arms Trade Treaty implementation through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Counter-proliferation Programme Fund, with projects focused specifically on ratification, accession and effective implementation. The United Kingdom encourages all States here that have not yet done so to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty as soon as possible. The world's first legally binding Treaty regulating the trade in conventional arms is now in force, proving how much we can achieve when we work together and cooperate.

The misuse of small arms and light weapons, fuelled by their illicit trade, is responsible for more human rights violations and other heinous crimes than any other type of weaponry. The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects remains a vital tool in our efforts to address this and to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The United Kingdom continues to believe that the Programme of Action should maintain its relevance as an important instrument in its own right. We thank our Finnish colleagues, the Mines Advisory Group and the Small Arms Survey who joined us in leading a side event at the second meeting of Governmental Experts to explore synergies between the Arms Trade Treaty and the Programme of Action and hope that this opened a constructive dialogue between the two instruments.

The United Kingdom remains committed to the humanitarian goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and played an active role in its first Review Conference in Dubrovnik in September this year, where an ambitious work plan was agreed for the coming five years. The Plan rightly addresses every area of the Convention's work for the implementation of the CCM. The United Kingdom wants to see the Convention on Cluster Munitions become universal and actively encourages States to accede to the Convention, including at the ministerial level.

The United Kingdom also supports the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and continues to support the fundamental humanitarian goal of this treaty to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

For over 20 years, the United Kingdom has supported some of the worst-affected countries around the world in clearing landmines and explosive remnants of war after conflict. The United Kingdom's funding in this area from March 2014-2015 totalled some £8.4 million, that is, \$12.2 million. The United Kingdom prioritizes funding to countries affected by cluster munitions, mines and other explosive remnants of war where the needs are the greatest. Its assistance has benefited seven countries in 2014-15: Cambodia, Viet Nam, Laos, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Just as its aid focuses on repairing the legacy of past conflicts, the United Kingdom is ready and willing to discuss potential future challenges. For that reason, the

United Kingdom took part in the productive informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems in April this year at the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). We thank Germany, and Ambassador Biontino in particular, for leading the discussions. This important issue sits well within the remit of the CCW, and we support continuing in this vein next year.

**Mr. Sandoval Mendiola** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): This year we have made significant progress in the field of disarmament and the non-proliferation of conventional weapons. Mexico successfully hosted the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) from 24 to 27 August and recognizes the commitment and political will of States, international organizations and civil society in contributing to the success of the Conference, which adopted key decisions for the institutional and procedural development established by the Treaty.

Now that this first step has been taken, it is essential to continue advocating for the effective implementation of the ATT in order to comply with the spirit of the Treaty and to achieve a responsible trade in conventional weapons, avoid their improper use or diversion to the illicit market and armed violence, and promote national, regional and international peace and security.

It is also time to cooperate for the dissemination of the international standard promoted by the ATT, which enacts and reforms laws that reflect its provisions in the area of the transfer of conventional weapons and provides support to the less developed nations to help them develop a legal framework that enables them to respond for the benefit of their society to the commitment adopted in the Treaty. In this way, all nations can learn from each other and become stronger.

The Government of Mexico commends the 72 States from all regions of the world that, together with my country, have ratified the Treaty, as well as those countries that have signed it, thereby demonstrating the commitment of the international community to this instrument. Mexico also expresses unqualified support for Nigeria, which will preside over the work of the second Conference of States Parties in 2016.

We need to strengthen the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That is one of the main instruments to

combat the trafficking of small arms and light weapons. In that regard, and as part of the review cycle of 2014-2018, Mexico considers that considerable progress was made in the process of the Programme of Action at the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts, which took place at Headquarters from 1 to 5 June, by addressing, for the first time, issues related to the technological advances in the manufacture and design of small arms and light weapons and their implications for national marking, registration and tracing systems.

However, in the light of the work of the Programme of Action, we should begin to discuss the expansion of measures, including above all effective control over intermediaries, and examine the effectiveness of border controls and establish a mechanism for analysing national reports in order to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Programme at the national level and at the international level, which will help us determine the causes of weapons trafficking and seek ways to more effectively combat it. Mexico will participate in the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2016 and will continue to promote the inclusion of these issues, as it is aware of their relevance to the strengthening and the impact of the Programme of Action.

On the topic of cluster munitions, we convened the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which took place in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in September. Since its entrance into force, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) has proved to be a strong, effective and invaluable international instrument, as well as the singular legal framework appropriate for the stigmatization and the elimination of this type of weapon with indiscriminate effects. We welcome the achievements attained in the five years since the entry into force of that important Convention, which has also focused attention and aid on the victims for their complete reintegration into their families and communities.

Of the 117 signatory countries, there are currently 95 States parties to the Convention, so we are approaching the goal of 100 members. The recent accessions of Canada, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, Palestine, Paraguay, Rwanda, Slovakia and South Africa to the Convention demonstrates the vitality and power of the regime, which prohibits the use of such weapons

with indiscriminate and inhumane effects. While the progress achieved to date demonstrates the strong commitment of the States parties to complying with the Convention, we recognize the need to step up efforts to achieve its universality, finalize the destruction of cluster munitions around the world, decontaminate the countries affected, promote and improve coordination in the matter of care and assistance, draw on lessons learned and share experiences in this area.

The Dubrovnik Declaration and the Dubrovnik Action Plan, adopted by consensus at the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, are a platform for the activities that we will implement during the next five years in order to achieve the universality and full implementation of the Convention at the national level, with a particular emphasis on care and assistance to the victims of those inhumane weapons with indiscriminate effects in order to achieve their reintegration into society.

Under the multilateral disarmament agenda, we have begun to discuss the topic of lethal autonomous weapons at the initiative of various organizations and civil society, which have expressed their concerns about the trend towards the development of military technologies and military doctrines that attempt to grant greater autonomy to unmanned weapons of war. With no deadline yet established to end discussions, debate has centred on the definition of “meaningful human control” of autonomous weapons. Mexico strongly believes that such weapons, contrary to the principles of international humanitarian law and given their intrinsic characteristics, cause indiscriminate, unnecessary and inhumane damage and should be prohibited and eliminated.

**The Chair:** I apologize to the representative and ask for his kind cooperation in the interests of all of us in sticking to the agreed time limit.

**Mr. Sandoval Mendiola** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Finally, I acknowledge the valuable and indispensable contribution of civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation for the establishment of a world free from the effects of inhumane and indiscriminate weapons.

My full statement can be found on the web page.

**Mr. Ahsan** (Bangladesh): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, for successfully steering this

thematic discussion on conventional weapons. Let me take this opportunity to express our deep sadness at the loss of lives and the destruction caused by the deadly earthquake in Afghanistan, Pakistan and neighbouring regions earlier today. I offer our sincerest condolences to the Governments and the peoples of the two countries and sympathy for the affected families.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Weapons of mass destruction, both nuclear and non-nuclear, continue to pose a major threat to global peace and security, but it is conventional weapons that seem to stir people’s minds with their increasingly deadly effect. The horrific consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons endanger many societies. We believe that international consensus on the regulation of conventional arms is indeed the key to ensuring the peace and security of millions of people around the world. This can best be achieved through cooperation and consultation and by enhancing mutual trust between parties.

Bangladesh considers disarmament to be an instrument for enhancing international security. In the area of conventional weapons, we are a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). As a member of the Security Council for two terms, in 1979-1980 and 2000-2001, Bangladesh reaffirmed its strong commitment to the adherence to international disarmament treaties and instruments. That commitment flows from our constitutional obligations to the goal of general and complete disarmament.

It is unfortunate that the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the only multilateral forum on disarmament, has remained deadlocked since 1996 and unable to undertake substantive work. All State parties are required to demonstrate the necessary political will so that a balanced and comprehensive programme of work can be adopted and the CD can carry out its noble mandate effectively.

Bangladesh deplores in the strongest terms the use of anti-personnel mines in conflict situations, thereby killing, injuring and terrorizing civilian populations. As a State party to the Mine Ban Treaty,



Bangladesh has accepted certain obligations, including the destruction of existing stockpiles, reporting compliance and enacting national legislation banning the use, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines (APMs). By the deadline of 1 March 2005, nearly 190,000 APMs were destroyed. A total of 15,000 mines of different categories were retained under article 3 of the Convention for training purposes, and specifically to assist and prepare the Bangladesh Armed Forces contingents for United Nations peacekeeping missions. Bangladesh continues to report annually under article 7 of the Convention.

We call on all non-signatories to accede to the Convention at the earliest possible time, and the States parties to adhere strictly to the full implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014. In that regard, we also underscore the importance of extending financial, technical and humanitarian support to landmine clearance operations, the rehabilitation of victims and the full access of affected countries to technology and finance for mine clearance.

*Mr. Adejola (Nigeria) took the Chair.*

Convinced of the importance of the universalization of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and as the President of the ninth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V, we call upon those Member States that are not yet parties to join the Convention and its protocols. The drafting process for Protocol VI on cluster munitions is indeed encouraging, as is the coming into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in December 2014. As a signatory, we hope that the Treaty would put an end to the illegal trade in, and illegitimate use of, conventional weapons. Bangladesh welcomes the outcome document of the first State Party Conference, held in Cancún, Mexico, in August.

However, we support the position of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that States have the sovereign right to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their components, as required for security and self-defence. We align ourselves with the NAM call for balanced, transparent and objective implementation of the ATT, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and the inherent rights of self-defence and security of all States. No unilateral coercive measure should be taken on the transfer of such arms. Considerable imbalance already exists in the production, possession and trade in conventional weapons between developed and

developing nations. That needs to be addressed through unilateral disarmament measures by the industrialized countries in order to minimize threats to global peace and security.

In order to correct the existing imbalance, military expenditures should also be reduced, and industrialized nations should lead the effort. Resources should rather be utilized towards achieving the economic and social progress of our peoples. We must work together to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Goal 16, the promotion of peace and justice, is directly relevant to addressing the challenges of disarmament and international security. Multilateralism must play its due role in that regard. Bangladesh remains committed to this endeavour.

**Ms. Perišić (Serbia):** My country aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.16). Allow me to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Serbia is a party to most major international instruments in the conventional weapons domain and has taken extensive legislative, regulatory and practical measures at the national level for the implementation of the obligations it has assumed. Serbia ratified the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in October 2014 and actively participated in the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in Cancún, Mexico, in August this year. We think that the Conference succeeded in creating the needed framework for reaching the objectives established under the ATT, and we welcome its important, substantial and operational decisions.

We continue to attach great importance 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 remain strongly committed to its full implementation as a matter of high priority. A strategy on the control of small arms and light weapons (SALW), adopted by the Government of Serbia — as a major accomplishment culminating from its efforts to formulate a holistic approach towards SALW control on the basis of the best international practices — provides the framework for the activities of relevant governmental and non-governmental actors to prevent and combat the unlawful production, and possession of and trade in SALW. Its overall goal is to establish a national system for the effective control of SALW, ensuring the reduction of weapons in illegal

possession, as well as the number of abuses committed with legal weapons.

As for arms export control, all the criteria of the European Code of Conduct on Arms Exports are incorporated in Serbia's new law on the export and import of arms and military equipment. Adopted by the Serbian National Assembly in October 2014, it fully corresponds with the relevant standards of the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and, together with enhanced border and customs control measures, plays a pivotal role in strengthening surveillance and combating the illicit arms trade. It is also an indispensable instrument for preventing the destabilizing accumulation of SALW and for reducing the ability of unauthorized non-State actors to acquire exported arms in an illegal way. Another draft law on the implementation of international restrictive measures is currently undergoing review in our National Parliament, and we expect that it will be adopted very soon. In February, the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted a new law on arms and ammunition, which shortly after having entered into force contributed to the legalization of a significant number of arms and ammunition in Serbia.

Serbia recognizes the important role of international cooperation and assistance in the area of capacity-building. There is no doubt that sharing relevant information, national experiences and lessons learned, as well as appropriate international financial, expert and technical assistance, can vitally contribute to consolidating and strengthening institutional capacities and practices for the suppression and eradication of the illicit trade in SALW. Regional and subregional organizations and civil society can make a significant contribution in that regard as well — for example, by developing model legislation, practical guidelines and coherent regional implementation standards, assisting States in the process of assessing their needs, or carrying out training, regional meetings and similar activities.

In that context, let me mention that the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which is the regional organization mandated by the United Nations Development Programme and the Regional Cooperation Council, has its headquarters in Belgrade. Its arms transfers control programme in the Western Balkans has contributed to a significant increase of transparency in arms transfers, as well as to

regional confidence-building, knowledge transfer and information-sharing among the States of our region.

Although we have witnessed several important and welcome developments in the area of conventional arms control, much remains to be done if we are to address the challenges we face in a comprehensive and effective manner. Serbia continues to support all the activities that the United Nations carries out in that field, and also uses its current chairmanship-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to address those issues.

**Mr. Herráiz (Spain)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain fully aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union.

Every year, more than half a million people die throughout the world as a consequence of firearms violence. In that regard, conventional weapons in their various forms undoubtedly constitute the largest category of weapons of mass destruction for human beings. Those weapons, and especially small arms and light weapons, constitute the primary tools of belligerence in conflicts today, with terrible consequences for civilians and claiming more casualties annually than any other type of weapon. We therefore need to act.

Over the past year, there have been positive developments in that area. The entry into force of Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in December was a milestone in the area of the responsible control of the legal arms trade. Spain thanks Mexico for organizing the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and commends the Conference for having met its goal of endowing the Treaty with the necessary administrative resources and support for its implementation. It is also a source of satisfaction to note that, at present, 130 States have signed and 77 others have ratified the Treaty. The universalization and effective implementation of the ATT should prevent conventional weapons from being used in the service of threatening the security and stability of States and regions and of violating human rights and international humanitarian law.

Spain collaborates decisively in various initiatives to promote outreach and support for the implementation of the Treaty at the bilateral level and in close collaboration with the European Union or the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and

has contributed for years to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation.

We would be remiss in not mentioning the importance of Security Council resolutions 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015), which specifically focus on small arms and light weapons. Spain shares with many other States the view that the approach to controlling firearms should be carried out simultaneously at two levels by responsibly regulating legal trade and combating illegal traffic, while improving, where appropriate, the coordination of United Nations actions against illicit trafficking.

Spain therefore attaches great importance to the development and full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. In turn, we are committed to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

I wish to emphasize the importance of an issue that is often put on the back burner — the need to strengthen the control of the trade in ammunition. It is a key issue that should be included in the core of the Programme of Action. Spain strongly encourages measures of confidence-building, transparency and mutual predictability in the area of conventional weapons. We highly value the adoption of mechanisms in that area, such as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and other transparency mechanisms, such as the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures and the report on legislation on the export of military and dual-use equipment, and other regional reports.

In 2015, Spain chaired the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies, a forum focused on promoting transparency and greater responsibility in the transfer of conventional weapons and dual-use technologies. In recent years, important steps have been taken in the area of humanitarian disarmament through the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions. The Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their

Destruction, held in Maputo in 2014, was important in relaunching our efforts. Spain wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the Maputo Action Plan and to the goal of the universalization of the Convention.

Spain is strongly opposed to the use, development, production, acquisition and stockpiling of cluster munitions. We believe that the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held recently in Dubrovnik, Croatia, was a success with the adoption of the Dubrovnik Declaration and Action Plan, which will guide our activities over the next several years. We commend Croatia for submitting the draft resolution on this issue, of which Spain is a sponsor.

Finally, in promoting the principles and purposes of humanitarian disarmament, on 29 July Spain approved the new Law No. 27/2015, fully banning anti-personnel mines and similar weapons, giving the same legal treatment to all weapons that cause unacceptable suffering to civilians, thereby promoting synergies among the Oslo Convention, the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, while optimizing cooperative efforts and universalization.

Aware that there is a long road ahead, we welcome the progress made and reiterate our call for renewed political momentum and for moving forward in fulfilling a task in which the international community shares responsibility.

**Mr. Mwewa (Zambia):** My delegation aligns itself with the statements made earlier on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of African States, respectively, on the conventional weapons cluster.

I would like to begin by commending the United Nations membership for the bold steps taken so far in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects since its adoption in July 2001. The tools under the Programme, when used in conjunction with the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), could reduce and prevent the illicit trafficking in and indiscriminate use of small arms and light weapons (SALW).

My delegation notes the various international efforts to undertake arms control through instruments such as the ATT, the United Nations Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation and

Security Council resolution 2117 (2013) of September 2013, which deals with gun registration in the context of illicit transfers. Zambia also takes note of Security Council resolution 2220 (2015), of May 2015, which aims at strengthening United Nations coordination with respect to small arms in order to promote effective implementation of United Nations arms embargoes. It remains a concern, however, that, despite all these efforts, very few achievements have been made, especially in conflict regions of Africa and the Middle East.

My delegation also welcomes initiatives such as the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action, which took place in New York in June 2015, which examined emerging trends in technologies related to small arms and light weapons, with implications for sustaining effective marking, recording and tracing of illicit weapons. This notwithstanding, the trend where more women and children are being used as exacerbating tools in the use of small arms and light weapons, especially in conflict zones of Africa and the Middle East, is a sad and worrying development.

Zambia believes that the biggest challenge that the international community currently faces with regard to SALW is the silence in the face of the global production of these weapons. Little is said out loud regarding regulating the manufacturers of these weapons. Africa bears the brunt of the negative effects of small arms and light weapons despite contributing little to their manufacture. It is for this reason, therefore, that the ATT should cut across the length and breadth of small-arms and light-weapons production.

In this connection, my country, Zambia, has not been spared the effects of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are usually used by criminal syndicates to terrorize innocent citizens. The fact that most weapons used in such acts have been traced to the liberation struggles and armed conflicts in the Great Lakes region points to a reality that past interventions have not been fully successful and that the time has come for reigniting multilateral disarmament efforts.

My Government has joined the international community in its efforts to eradicate the illicit trade and trafficking in small arms and light weapons by proposing such safety measures as establishing an amnesty programme for those who surrender their weapons voluntarily. Zambia is also part to the Southern

African Development Community Programme on Small Arms and Light Weapons through the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperating Organization, which has been in existence since 1995.

Another additional measure put in place regarding illicit arms control is the Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System, which is an INTERPOL tool that enables security wings to track stolen, lost, recovered, trafficked or smuggled firearms. Zambia security services also employ the Automated Ballistics Identification System in fighting this scourge. Further, Zambia is a member of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, whose objective is to promote arms control and disarmament through regional conventions as well as political instruments.

In conclusion, Zambia remains fully committed to the fight against illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. To curb this scourge, however, we call upon all international players, including non-State actors, to comply with institutions regulating all aspects of small arms and light weapons.

**Mr. Turesin** (Turkey): Turkey aligns itself with statement made by the observer of the European Union on conventional weapons (see A/C.1/70/PV.16). In our national capacity, we wish to add the following views.

Conventional weapons, with their widespread use and accessibility, constitute the category of arms that cause the most substantial number of casualties and gross suffering in all conflict areas across the globe. Within this category, we would like to particularly highlight small arms and light weapons (SALW), as they are easily available and simple to use, allowing individuals with minimal or no training to wield them and consequently multiply casualties.

This issue can be taken up from two broad and distinct, yet closely interrelated dimensions: first, from an international, regional and national security perspective, making it a disarmament issue; and secondly, from the human-life, safety and socioeconomic perspective, making it a humanitarian and development issue. In this context, the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation, uncontrolled spread and misuse of small arms and light weapons poses a significant and palpable threat to peace and security as well as to the social and economic development of many countries.



There is a well-documented relationship between their illicit trade, terrorism and organized crime. Until transfers of small arms and light weapons are effectively controlled and regulated, the human cost and the repercussions for long-term development will continue to be devastating. As such, Turkey welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in December 2014. From the outset, Turkey supported and actively participated in the process. We would like to reaffirm Turkey's intention to ratify the Treaty at the earliest possible date.

The first Conference of States Parties, held in Cancún, Mexico, in August, was an important achievement. We are looking forward to the next Conference of States Parties, which will take place in 2016 in Geneva. Turkey will continue to actively contribute to all efforts within the United Nations and other forums for the establishment of effective norms and rules aimed at eradicating the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects.

We remain committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, we welcome Security Council resolution 2220 (2015), on this issue. Confidence-building and transparency play an important role in our efforts to strengthen global peace and security. In that context, we value and support instruments such as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures. We are among the countries that report regularly, and we invite all States to do the same. We also support the inclusion of SALW as a mandatory category of the Register.

Turkey is committed to the full implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Convention. We actively participated in the third Review Conference, held in Maputo in June 2014, and confirmed our commitment to achieve a mine-free world.

Turkey is also a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and views it as an important body where many aspects of conventional weapons are discussed, especially with respect to the protection of civilians. We welcome the recent discussions held in CCW meetings on various aspects of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We are deeply concerned about the indiscriminate use of improvised

explosive devices. We value the discussions and the substantive exchange of views on the topic held in the CCW as well.

Turkey also fully shares the humanitarian goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and strongly condemns their use against civilian populations. In the face of fast-paced technological developments, our approach to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control needs to be forward-looking. We need to be able to react to such advances and take advantage of them by incorporating them effectively into our various instruments, arrangements and regimes.

Turkey is party to all international non-proliferation instruments and export-control regimes and wishes to see their universalization and effective implementation. Their faithful observance and full implementation are among the fundamental principles of Turkey's defence policy and doctrine. In that regard, Turkey favours universal disarmament and supports all efforts towards sustaining international security through those mechanisms. The peaceful settlement of disputes, the non-use or threat of use of force, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, and development, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, are vital to promoting regional and global peace and security, and to providing a safer world for ourselves and for future generations.

**Mr. Ružička** (Slovakia): I wish to begin by congratulating the Chair on assuming his duties and by wishing him great patience and success in his endeavours. I would also like to reiterate the full support of my country for the work of the First Committee and for his chairmanship.

Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.16). However, allow me to make a few points in my national capacity.

Slovakia considers the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to be a remarkable milestone in our long-term efforts. Robust and effective common international and legally binding standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, as well as the creation of effective, responsible and transparent tools that contribute to the fight against the illicit arms trade, should be a cornerstone of our endeavours. We join other delegations in welcoming the successful outcome of the first Conference of States Parties to the ATT, held in Cancún. We thank

Mexico for all its efforts in organizing and hosting the Conference, as well as the provisional secretariat of the ATT. We need to intensify our efforts to further increase the number of ratifications of the Treaty, promote its universalization and ensure its effective implementation worldwide. Let me congratulate Switzerland on the selection of Geneva as the seat of the ATT secretariat, and Mr. Simeon Dumisani Dladla on his appointment as the first interim head of the secretariat.

We are happy to announce that, this year, Slovakia acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and will become a full-fledged member on 1 January 2016. Let me stress that, even before the Slovak Government decided to provisionally implement the most important obligations of the Convention, we halted the trade in cluster munitions and ordered that the Slovak defence forces no longer use them. Any manipulation of cluster munitions was prohibited, with the exception of the training of pyrotechnicians and explosive-ordnance experts. Slovakia has always stood by the development and promotion of international humanitarian law. Guided by the strong conviction that all cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians must be banned, Slovakia actively participated in the Oslo process from its very beginning. Finally, Slovakia joined the consensus on the text of the Convention, adopted at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference. We are deeply concerned about the reported use of cluster munitions and its effect on civilian populations in different parts of the world. We call upon all actors to refrain from such use and to fully observe the principles of international humanitarian law. Slovakia is committed to promoting the universalization of the Convention and calls upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the CCM.

The small arms and light weapons process and protocols remain a very complex issue as the international community continues to develop appropriate policy responses at all levels. The 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects laid the foundation for action to counter the illicit trade and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons at the national, regional and international levels. We would like to emphasize the importance that Slovakia attaches to the continued full implementation of the Programme of Action and the outcome document of the fifth Biennial Meeting of

States, held in New York in 2014. We call upon all States to implement the International Tracing Instrument.

Last but not least, we wish to recognize the important contribution of the Security Council to international efforts in this area, in particular the adoption of the crucial resolution 2117 (2013), on small arms and light weapons, and the subsequent resolution 2220 (2015), on small arms, which Slovakia proudly co-sponsored.

**Miss Richards** (Jamaica): Jamaica aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Guyana (see A/C.1/70/PV.16) on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). However, I wish to make the following additional observations.

Jamaica is pleased to participate in this thematic debate, in particular in recognition of several positive developments at the global level to regulate and monitor conventional weapons since the previous session of the First Committee. Nevertheless, we continue to urge robust and sustained efforts to address urgent issues in this area, as undoubtedly the greatest incidence of injury and loss of human life result from those weapons.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their diversion into the illegal trade continue to have a destabilizing impact on our region. The violent effects of that are most tragically evident in conflict zones and areas of fragile peace, such as the ongoing conflict in Syria, growing instability in Afghanistan and recurring crises in Africa, among many other areas of conflict. Our concern about the situation is heightened by the increased flow of weapons channelled to non-State actors. The irresponsible trade in conventional weapons, which leads to their diversion to unauthorized recipients in conflict zones, and the direct equipping of non-State actors not only pose a risk to the peace and security of the affected countries but add to the growing instability around the world.

Jamaica was therefore pleased to welcome the rapid entry into force of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), on 24 December last year. We were proud to have participated in the first Conference of States Parties to the ATT, held in Mexico in August. We did so mindful of the tremendous efforts undertaken by the international community, including civil society, to ensure the early entry into force of the Treaty. We are satisfied that the first Conference laid the foundation for the effective implementation of the Treaty, but are mindful that universal participation and robust implementation

in the Treaty will be the true measure of the success of our action. Consistent monitoring and effective public reporting will be essential in that regard.

We recognize the efforts of the States, international organizations and civil society groups that have been providing support and technical assistance for the implementation of the ATT in States that lack the institutional capacity to do so. In relation to our own situation, Jamaica greatly appreciates the valuable assistance being provided by the European Union within the framework of its activities to support the implementation of the Treaty. We are also working with CARICOM to develop ATT legislation based on the model developed by New Zealand, supported by funding provided by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation.

The ATT and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects are mutually reinforcing. The Programme of Action, which remains the focal point of our efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, requires our support now more than ever. While we welcomed the successful conclusion of the second Meeting of Governmental Experts, held earlier this year, which focused on considering new technologies, we must now look towards setting an ambitious agenda for the sixth Biennial Meeting of States. In that connection, we will need to ensure that our efforts at reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action do not become a rote exercise of adopting an outcome document solely for the sake of it.

We are conscious of a growing cynicism, among Member States and civil society alike, with regard to the degree of progress we have collectively been making towards the full implementation of the Programme of Action. As Member States, we need to ensure that we are making real progress in the domestic implementation of the Programme of Action, even as we strengthen the measures for inter-State cooperation and capacity-building. Those efforts must also be matched by a meaningful and substantive consideration of the issue at the United Nations to ensure that the mechanisms we develop remain relevant to a changing global security environment. As we move towards the third Review Conference, in 2018, Jamaica looks to the sixth Biennial Meeting of States as an important opportunity to reinvigorate the Programme of Action process. We would support therefore placing a

meaningful discussion on a legally binding instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons on the agenda of the Biennial Meeting, as well as the explicit incorporation of ammunition in the Programme of Action framework.

As a signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, we welcome the first Review Conference, held in Croatia this year, and the adoption of the Dubrovnik Declaration and Plan of Action. We are currently working to ensure our ratification of the Convention at the earliest opportunity.

We are mindful of the importance of regional and subregional efforts in assisting Member States to fulfil their obligations and effectively implement the relevant instruments. In that regard, my delegation commends the indispensable role played by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Mr. Yermakov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The limited amount of time allows me to speak only on some of the most important items.

Many delegations have noted, rightfully, that the indiscriminate use of conventional weapons leads to unacceptable humanitarian losses. I would like to draw attention to the fact that the key phrase here is “indiscriminate use”. The weapons themselves, at the State level, pose no humanitarian risk at all. For the past few years, we have heard words of amazement about the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) from the lips of many different speakers at the various forums. However, any serious expert could tell you that the document we produced, despite all of its positive potential, does not — and cannot — solve the main issue facing the international community in this area, namely, the irresponsible and massive transfer of weapons to non-State actors. And, as a result, the worst violations of the norms of international humanitarian law occur.

We do not have to look far afield for examples. Let us recall that not long ago Iraq, Libya, Syria were stable countries with a high level of social and economic development. They were successful at preventing terrorist threats. What do we have now? We know perfectly well who was sending weapons, when and in what volume, so as to eliminate the statehood of those countries. As a result, we have had bloody wars and hundreds of thousands of victims among the civilian population, as well as hundreds of thousands of refugees. I would like to recall that Russia called for the

ATT to include a clear ban on the transfer of weapons to non-State actors. What was the response of our most respected partners? The response was very open and very cynical: that would not happen, as it would hinder the ability of so-called influential subjects — I will not say who — to wipe out the regimes they dislike in other countries. Therefore, without undermining the value of the Treaty, I would like to ask our partners to evaluate the real, rather than the mythical, value of the ATT.

I would like to raise another issue here, one that might not be quite within the context of what we are discussing today, but which is of extreme importance in order to understand the essence of what we must do here. The overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations are calling for measures to be taken to prevent conventional weapons from being placed in outer space. During last year's session, as members are aware, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/32, entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space", which is both easy to understand and implement. All that we had to do was begin a dialogue on the issue. It seemed that everything could move forward in a positive manner. What happened? In response, one State launched a powerful campaign to combat all the Member States of the United Nations calling for a ban on the arms race in outer space. Think about that. That took place here in the First Committee, which is called upon to solve — not create — problems in the area of disarmament. It is sad, but true. Our partners, States from the European Union, for whom preventing an arms race in outer space was always a priority, gave in to the pressure. As a result, they lost their national sovereignty and they abstained — or, to be more exact, by being influenced by one country, they positioned themselves against a United Nations dialogue on the issue of no-first-placement of weapons in space.

I would like to call on all members to pay attention to the fact that we are working in the First Committee — the Committee in which States are called upon to deal with issues of disarmament, and not to create problems or barriers to disarmament, or to cynically change the topics to be discussed into issues that are not within our mandate, such as space debris, which is a matter to be dealt with by other United Nations bodies.

**Mrs. Pobee** (Ghana): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, which adequately convey our position

on the range of issues covered under this thematic debate. Owing to time constraints, I will limit my remarks to a few issues.

The illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons remains a major threat to stability and security. The negative impact of their circulation and trafficking in Africa continues to pose serious humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges in many parts of the continent. In West Africa, the proliferation of illicitly acquired conventional weapons has fuelled the increase in terrorism and other forms of armed violence, transnational organized crime, corruption and the menace of drugs. Consequently, small arms and light weapons are a matter of serious concern for Ghana, and their devastating impact on women and children compel us to urgently address the issue.

However, we are encouraged by the commitment to addressing this challenge demonstrated by the international community. We have reason to hope that our continuing engagement and concerted efforts at national, regional and global levels will lead to significant achievements in the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In that regard, we urge the international community to pursue the discussions already begun on forging synergies and complementarities among the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons of the Economic Community of West African States, the Arms Trade Treaty and 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 their effective implementation in West Africa.

The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the successful convening of the first Conference of State Parties in Cancún, Mexico, are indeed positive developments with regard to raising global consciousness and the effort to win the fight against the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Ghana was pleased to collaborate with Australia to co-facilitate the adoption of the financial rules for the ATT secretariat and Conference of State parties necessary to ensure an efficient framework for the implementation of the Treaty. It is expected that, *inter alia*, the ATT will help end the flow of arms to destinations where they could potentially fuel conflict or undermine national and regional peace.

For its part, Ghana ratified the Treaty on 13 May, in accordance with its constitutional requirements,



and is making arrangements to deposit its instrument of ratification soon. We look forward to the convening of the extraordinary meeting of the ATT early next year. We reiterate the call for enhanced international cooperation and assistance at the national, regional and international levels to ensure the Treaty's successful implementation.

Ghana wishes to echo the appeals made to arms-producing countries to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited only to Governments and entities duly authorized by them. We cannot but belabour the point that the illicit transfer of such weapons to non-State actors continues to pose a grave threat to the peace and security of many countries in Africa.

We welcome the convening 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, held in New York in June. Ghana notes with satisfaction the key outcomes of the meeting, which included the need to strengthen the International Tracing Instrument by taking into account new developments in technology to enhance weapon marking, record-keeping and tracing. We also wish to reiterate our support for the strengthening of mechanisms for the provision of assistance under the Programme of Action, as well as controls over 3D printing technology to prevent illegal applications of that technology. It is our expectation that the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, scheduled for next year, will dispassionately deliberate on those issues, among others, in order to promote human security and development.

*The Chair returned to the Chair.*

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to call on all Member States to take the necessary action towards the implementation of Goal 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which calls for a significant reduction in illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons by 2030. Posterity will not forgive us if we fail to meet that goal. We also call for a fundamental review of the nexus between disarmament and development and the current excessive global military spending, in favour of meeting SDG Goals 1 and 2, on ending poverty, hunger and inequality.

**Ms. Kamara (Liberia):** Let me congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau on your elections to preside over the deliberations of the First Committee. I assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full support for a successful outcome.

My country associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States, as well as by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

While the continuous calls for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction reflect a serious and legitimate priority among the non-nuclear-weapon States, including Liberia, the devastating impact of a poorly regulated trade in conventional weapons and their use to fuel conflicts across the regions of the world remain equally serious threats to global peace, security and socioeconomic development. The world is now witnessing the unprecedented use of illicit small arms and other conventional weapons in conflict zones by terrorist groups, other non-State actors and authoritarian regimes. Such uses wreak havoc on innocent civilians, especially the most vulnerable members of societies, including women and children. Those practices are unacceptable and should not be condoned in the twenty-first century.

Liberia welcomed the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), on 24 December 2014. As a State party to this landmark Treaty, we are of the strong conviction that the ATT will help States in their efforts to curb the illicit trade in conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. The ultimate objective of such efforts, as underlined in the Treaty, is to strengthen the legal framework for the conventional arms trade and thereby prevent the diversion of weapons to unauthorized recipients. To that end, we call on all States that have not ratified the ATT to do so as soon as possible.

As part of its national efforts to curb the proliferation of conventional weapons in the country, Liberia is working in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union and the United Nations to strengthen the capacity of security personnel to increase patrols at our border posts. As part of that effort, a pilot project has been launched in several counties in Liberia aimed at the recovery of illegal weapons. The goal is to prevent unauthorized persons from gaining access to such weapons.

Another important development is the passage into law by our national legislature a few days ago of the Liberia firearms and ammunition control act of 2015, which establishes the legal framework for regulating the possession and the use of small arms and light weapons in the country. In that regard, Liberia supports the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Aspects. The Programme of Action is a useful tool and a key multilateral framework for assisting States with stockpile management and the marking and tracing of weapons and other goals, including those set out in the ATT. The Programme of Action also helps to fill the existing technical and capacity gaps that could otherwise pose serious challenges to the full implementation of the ATT and other small arms-related measures. To that end, strengthening State and civil society partnerships and increasing international assistance could play a catalytic role in ensuring success in addressing the global problem of illicit weapons.

Liberia appreciates and supports the work of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which is based in Lomé. Despite its many challenges, the Centre continues to offer valuable assistance to Member States, especially in the areas of training and stockpile management. We urge more international support to strengthen the capacity of the Centre to fulfil all aspects of its important mandate.

**Mr. Gumende (Mozambique):** As this is the first time my delegation takes the floor at this session, allow me to preface my remarks by warmly congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau on your respective elections to preside over the work of the First Committee. I assure you of the full support and the cooperation of the delegation of Mozambique in the discharge of your noble duties.

Mozambique associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States, and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The misuse and the illicit trafficking and circulation and trade in small arms, munitions and light weapons continue to be a matter of great concern for Mozambique owing to their negative political, economic and social impacts. Recognizing those devastating impacts, Mozambique continues to be deeply engaged in the

implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as a fundamental normative framework to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at all levels. Our approach to the matter is a holistic one and involves all the relevant stakeholders, namely, Government ministries, cooperating partners and civil society organizations. As a consequence of that approach, we are achieving positive results through the setting and the implementation of legislative, institutional and operative measures that are reinforced by the strengthening of cooperation with neighbouring countries.

However, the commitment of the international community, under the leadership of the United Nations, must be renewed and strengthened to better respond to goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. By doing so, we are also contributing to translating into practical and tangible actions the observations and conclusions of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them; and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" (A/70/183), which was submitted for consideration by the First Committee. I commend the report, which reflects the main activities carried out by Member States, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations between August 2014 and July 2015.

Draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.50, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", submitted for consideration by the First Committee, is in line with the report of the Secretary-General. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to request the support of all Member States for the draft resolution.

The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the positive outcome of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Mexico from 24 to 27 August, are clear demonstration of the common political will to promote peace and security. The first Conference of States Parties laid the foundations for a robust ATT regime by adopting the rules of procedures, financial rules and a reporting framework and by establishing the Treaty secretariat. It is our firm conviction that the ATT will complement

the ongoing actions under the Programme of Action framework and, as a consequence, will contribute to regulating the transfer of conventional weapons in order to promote responsible trade and prevent their diversion to the illicit market and non-State groups. Mozambique was among the first signatory countries of the ATT, and we hope to ratify it as soon as internal procedures for that purpose are concluded.

As members may well be aware, Mozambique was for a long time one of the countries of the world most affected by anti-personnel mines. As a demonstration of its commitment to promoting international peace and security and recognizing the importance of demining to promote national peace, security, safety and development, Mozambique became a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. As a State party, Mozambique developed a national demining programme to fulfil its obligations under that Convention.

I am proud to inform the First Committee that Mozambique has cleared all known mined areas, and on 17 September was officially declared a country free of land mines. In that connection, I would like to conclude my intervention by thanking our cooperation partners, humanitarian demining organizations, United Nations agencies and civil-society entities for their kind and generous support, which made it possible for Mozambique to achieve that important landmark.

**Mr. Tajjerramt** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the congratulations of the delegation of Morocco on your able conduct of our work at this session.

The delegation of Morocco aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier today on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, as well as with the statement delivered at the 16th meeting on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The uncontrolled circulation and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, beyond the suffering and human tragedies that they create, pose a genuine challenge to the stability, the security and the development of States, in particular in Africa. Morocco is of the view that regional and subregional cooperation represents an essential lever to combat illicit trafficking in small weapons and light weapons. The current worrying situation in the Sahelo-Saharan region owing to the increase in illicit trafficking of

all types, including light weapons, and the existing connections between weapons-trafficking networks and terrorist groups require that we ramp up our efforts more than ever to strengthen cooperation among States and the region on the basis of an inclusive approach.

Morocco is guided by the conviction that the security of border areas must necessarily include revitalizing relations with neighbouring countries and international partnerships in the framework of regular, positive dialogue. In that context, in July 2015 Morocco hosted the inaugural conference of the border security initiative developed by Morocco and the United States, in collaboration with the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. That conference relied on the conclusions of the second regional ministerial conference on border security, held in Morocco in 2013 with the participation of countries from North Africa and the Sahelo-Saharan region, as well as regional and international partners.

It is in that spirit that the Kingdom of Morocco strongly supports the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Morocco calls for the implementation of the recommendations of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States Parties to the Programme of Action and the continuation of a dialogue on issues raised at the second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action.

The delegation of Morocco takes this opportunity to welcome the efforts of the Chair of the Meeting, the representative of the Republic of Moldova. We must deepen our consideration in order to develop consensus on issues identified in the Chair's summary. The first issue is strengthening capacity-building and the transfer of technology and materials in the light of the importance of assistance and international cooperation for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. In that regard, we await with interest the report of the Secretariat on financing and the establishment of training programmes. The second issue pertains to occurrences in the recent evolution of the idea of small arms and light weapons and marking in the light of interesting proposals made during the second Open-ended Meeting of the Group of Experts. The sixth Biennial Meeting of States Parties on the Programme

of Action must be prepared to reach specific measures on those issues.

Morocco congratulates the State parties to the Arms Trade Treaty on the success of the first Conference of States Parties to the Treaty and the launching of a process for the institutional strengthening of the Treaty. For that instrument to be able to achieve its goals, Morocco remains convinced that it is essential to ensure transparent and fair implementation while respecting in full the legitimate right of States to obtain the means to defend their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Restrictive and abusive interpretations will damage the credibility of the Treaty and its goals. With regard to lethal autonomous weapons, Morocco calls for a review of all human and legal aspects, including their implications for human rights law and international humanitarian law.

**Ms. Maja** (Finland): Let me first say that Finland fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.16).

Finland was one of the original co-authors of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), therefore the Treaty will always play a special role in our foreign and security policy agenda. We commend the role of civil society, non-governmental organizations and industry in the Treaty process, and we welcome the fact that more than 70 countries have now ratified the ATT and that many others are implementing its provisions in practice. The effective implementation of the Treaty is also the best guarantee to get others involved in it.

Many wonderful events have taken place over the past year: the ATT entered into force and the very successful first Conference of States Parties to the Treaty took place in Cancún, Mexico. We wish to express our warmest and sincere congratulations to Ambassador Jorge Lomónaco and the entire Mexican team. With their skillful guidance, the Conference took important substantive and operational decisions that will provide a sound basis for the smooth implementation of the Treaty. We wish to congratulate Switzerland on the selection of Geneva as the location for the secretariat, and we warmly welcome Mr. Simon Dladla's assumption of his responsibilities as the first interim Head of the secretariat in December.

Work is far from finished. There are two elements that I want to stress with regard to our future work. One is the role of national implementation and national export control systems, and the other one is the

universalization of the Treaty. That substantive work will be at the core of the second Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty under the Nigerian presidency. In its capacity as one of four Vice-Presidents, Finland stands ready to support the Nigerian presidency in the run-up to a very successful second Conference of States Parties to the Treaty. We welcome State parties, signatory States, observers and civil society in playing their part in that important work. Let us begin here in New York by co-sponsoring and supporting the Nigerian draft resolution on the ATT.

In conclusion, as we know, the consequences of an irresponsible and unregulated arms trade are multiple. We rest assured that, with the ATT, we can take steps to reverse that. We are committed to reach that goal with other partners.

**Ms. Haile** (Eritrea): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/70/183) on this important issue.

Eritrea fully aligns itself with the statements made earlier by the representatives of Nigeria and Indonesia, respectively, on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Eritrea strongly believes that the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons continues to endanger peace, fuel violence and impede economic and social progress in many parts of the world, including our region, the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. Organized transnational criminals, such as terrorists and traffickers, are intrinsically intertwined with the unrestricted flow of illicit arms in the region. The challenge all of us face is complex and transnational in nature. No single country can address on its own the challenges posed by illicit small arms and light weapons. Hence, the balanced implementation of, and cooperation in the context of, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as other international and regional commitments, cannot be understated.

Eritrea is cognizant of the need for an effective international instrument to deal with the issue of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Since independence, my Government has introduced stringent national measures with regard to the possession, manufacturing, trade and trafficking in arms. Most of the conventional weapons in the hands of the Eritrean defence forces and law-enforcement agencies were



acquired during the 30-year war of independence and the 1998-2000 border conflict with Ethiopia. They are under different marking systems, as they were made by different manufacturers. Hence, standardized marking has been a major challenge. Eritrea has introduced electronic marking machines and a computerized database for stockpile management to address the issue.

Eritrea attaches great importance to the international instrument to ban landmines and is a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. A large landmine-contaminated area, a lack of sufficient resources and security challenges along its borders with Ethiopia have hindered Eritrea from achieving its mine-clearance deadline. Despite its successful efforts to clear contaminated areas, the humanitarian impact of mines still persists. However, Eritrea will continue to galvanize its national resources to achieve a mine-free State status by 2020.

In conclusion, while regulating conventional weapons and eradicating the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons is important, a durable solution can be achieved only by addressing the root causes of conflicts and instability. Respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and respect for international law and treaty obligations must be fully implemented. No nation, big or small, should be allowed to occupy the territory of any other country.

**Mrs. Jakubonė** (Lithuania): Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its member States (see A/C.1/70/PV.16).

Every year, the violence caused by small arms takes the lives of over half a million people, including nearly 60,000 women and girls. The illicit trafficking in and destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and their ammunition prolong conflicts, increase the risk of relapse, hamper humanitarian assistance and impede growth and development.

This year, following the publication of a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (A/70/183), Lithuania initiated a process that led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 2220 (2015), which established measures aimed at more concrete action by the Security Council to tackle the devastating effects of illicit arms trade. Resolution 2220 (2015) has a sharp focus on the human cost of small arms and underlines the need to protect victims. It also speaks loud and clear on the

essential role of women in tackling small-arms-related problems. The text includes significant new language that recognizes the importance of preventing illicit transfers and sales of weapons and ammunition to armed groups and criminal networks that target civilians and civilian objects. It also underlines that such transfers could exacerbate conflict or facilitate the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. Furthermore, it aims at making the various tools of the United Nations — peacekeeping operations, special political missions, country teams and sanctions committees — work more closely together to fight the illicit trafficking in and the misuse of arms. Areas where the United Nations contribution could be particularly useful include assisting in weapons collection, enhancing stockpile management, destroying collected weapons and developing national export- and import-control systems. The text also includes extensive new provisions on supporting capacity-building and assistance to affected countries. Finally, the resolution recognizes the important contribution that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) can make to international peace, security and stability, in particular through increased transparency in arms transfers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all 57 Member States that sponsored the text and recognized its importance in their national statements here at Committee.

Mutually reinforcing efforts to combat illicit trafficking in small arms were also under way in the framework 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. Lithuania welcomes the holding of the second Meeting of Governmental Experts, which focused on recent developments in small-arms and light-weapons technology, conducted under the skilful chairmanship of the Republic of Moldova.

Lithuania welcomes the convening of the first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Cancún, Mexico, which made important progress in making the Treaty fully operational. Yet a lot more remains to be done, as the Treaty's full potential can be reached only if it is universally applied and robustly implemented. In particular, Lithuania will continue to underline the need to make national reports on arms transfers available to the public. In that regard, we warmly welcome the launch of the 2015 *ATT Monitor* report. We remain convinced that it will evolve into

an important reference tool and contribute to a more transparent arms trade.

In the light of the international community's efforts to achieve a more responsible and transparent arms trade, we cannot disregard the persistent violations of international law in the east of Ukraine. The latest report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights again notes that the continuing presence of foreign fighters and the reported influx of heavy and sophisticated weaponry from the Russian Federation remain the major impediments to achieving a peaceful solution. We reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to stop the flows of weaponry and equipment into the sovereign territory of Ukraine, secure its borders and urgently end all support to illegal armed groups.

**Mr. AlAjmi** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/70/PV.16) and with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has always been an exceptional yet broad challenge to international peace and security, given its serious impact in the humanitarian and socioeconomic fields. My country calls on all States Members of the United Nations, in particular those that produce and export this category of weapons, to make every effort to contain this serious scourge. In that regard, we reiterate our commitment to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and to the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Our commitment was recently demonstrated in a campaign in my country to collect unauthorized weapons, which involved allowing a period of time for all resident citizens to turn in their small arms and light weapons. The campaign included an educational programme on the destructive impact of such weapons, their ability to cause instability and the role they play in criminality. The campaign enjoyed a far-reaching response in the form of the large quantity of weapons and ammunition that was collected. We are not going to be lenient in dealing with illicit brokering activities related to small arms and light weapons, and we

are developing educational programmes and legal frameworks to deal with those weapons.

We welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, which has been important in regulating this category of weapons. We stress that its implementation should be in line with United Nations principles, respect for the right to self-defence, the maintenance of territorial integrity, opposition to the illegitimate occupation of the territory of others, and the right to produce, import and transfer conventional weapons, as well as the removal of unjustified restrictions on the transfer of such weaponry.

Recently, the development of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) has become a cause for concern. Their potential to have a serious humanitarian and security impact is great, given the gaps in the international disarmament machinery for dealing with this emerging issue. All the legal, military, humanitarian and moral dimensions of the issue need to be addressed in order to establish appropriate regulations for the development and use of LAWS.

**Ms. Thunborg** (Sweden): Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/70/PV.16). I shall now make some additional points in my national capacity.

The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), in 2013, was a landmark in the establishment of robust and effective common standards for the international trade in conventional arms. The first Conference of States Parties to the ATT successfully moved forward the implementation of this important treaty. The ATT is the fruit of political will and international commitment. It demonstrates that tangible results can also be achieved in difficult areas.

Sweden has long been a strong proponent of the Arms Trade Treaty, and it remains a Swedish political priority. We continue to actively support the efforts made towards the Treaty's universalization and effective implementation, and thus towards its contribution to the strengthening of human security and international humanitarian law.

The ATT also represents progress in more specific ways. For the first time, gender-based violence was included as a factor to be taken into account in the field of export control at the international level. The use of weapons affects women and men and boys and girls differently. It is of paramount importance to address

the male social roles that in many cases shape armed violence, and the increased levels of violence against women that follow in its wake. This issue will continue to be a Swedish priority.

The destructive use of small arms and light weapons continues to cause fear, suffering and death, undermines international peace and security and undercuts efforts aimed at development. Without ammunition, such weapons are inoperable. Sweden will therefore continue to work hard to make sure that international instruments that aim to control such weapons take into account the control of ammunition.

The United Nations Programme of Action remains our most important forum for addressing these issues and developing effective solutions. Sweden looks forward to a successful Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action in 2016.

This year's Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions set important goals in the Dubrovnik Action Plan. At the Review Conference, we were pleased to announce that Sweden had completed the destruction of its cluster munitions five years ahead of the deadline set forth in the Convention. We fully share the goals of the Convention in banning this inhumane weapon. For the ban to become effective, it is important that the world's largest manufacturers and users of cluster munitions also join the Convention.

The Ottawa Convention sets a world norm for the non-use of anti-personnel mines. One important theme of last year's Review Conference, held in Maputo, was that the goal of a mine-free world was possible to achieve if efforts were sustained. The example of Mozambique itself has shown that is a real possibility, as the country recently was able to declare itself to be mine-free. Sweden is proud to have contributed to that achievement. All in all, Sweden has contributed over €100 million to mine action worldwide over the past decade.

Sweden remains firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its protocols. We very much appreciated the opportunity at the second Meeting of Experts, held in April, to take a further look at the questions concerning lethal autonomous weapon systems. As a starting point, Sweden has underlined that humans should not delegate to machines the power to make life-or-death decisions. As States, we have an obligation to assess the

legality of new weapons, and we therefore welcome a continued discussion of the issue within the framework of the CCW.

Let me conclude by making an observation of key importance to my Government. Without the full participation of women in discussions on disarmament and arms control — in line with the women and peace and security agenda — effective and lasting results cannot be achieved. In that vein, Sweden will continue to support women's organizations and their participation in cooperation with civil society and through the United Nations. I would like to take this opportunity to especially thank the many civil-society organizations that are with us in the room today and that are participating throughout the meetings of the Committee for their significant contributions and hard work.

**Mr. Pourmand Tehrani** (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is at the forefront of the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and drug trafficking in the region. We have been actively engaged in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and continue our strong support for the full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. In our view, both instruments continue to provide the main international framework for cooperation and coordination in dealing with the challenge posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The excessive production of arms by major producers with the aim of exporting them to other countries is a matter of serious concern. Without addressing that concern, international efforts to prevent the illicit trade in conventional arms will fall far short of accomplishing the established objectives. Major arms-producing countries need to take responsibility and make appropriate arrangements for reducing their arms production. If huge amounts of weapons are produced, they will definitely find their way to markets, particularly in conflict-stricken regions.

The irresponsible export of arms to the Middle East region is a clear example in that regard. The flow of sophisticated weapons into the volatile region

of the Middle East continues unabated. Given recent developments, its negative implications for the region's security and stability are not hard to recognize. An unlimited amount of offensive of weapons continues to be transferred to the Israeli regime. Such transfers fuel the pursuit of expansionist, aggressive and destabilizing policies in the region by the regime's war machine. Even well-documented United Nations reports on the various war crimes committed by the Israeli regime state that such exports are in violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran actively participated in the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty with the expectation of negotiating and concluding an effective, robust, balanced and non-discriminatory treaty aimed at reducing human suffering resulting from the illicit trade in conventional arms. However, the end result of that process was a legally binding instrument with legal flaws, loopholes and other deficiencies.

**Mr. Wensley** (South Africa): I will be brief, as my delegation already made a statement under this cluster (see A/C.1/70/PV.16).

At the outset, I align myself fully with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

I would just like to make a clarification. We, as a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty, especially now that it has entered into force, will fully implement our obligations as set out in that convention. No one else is going to prescribe to us how to do so. We will determine if it is implemented in a balanced, transparent and objective manner in terms of our obligations under the convention.

**The Chair:** I shall now give the floor to speakers in the exercise of the right of reply.

**Mr. Ibrahim** (Syrian Arab Republic): I would like to respond to the fallacies regarding my country in the statement made by the representative of France (see A/C.1/70/PV.16).

In accordance with its constitutional obligations, the Syrian Government is assuming its full role to protect its people from the crimes that have been committed by terrorist groups all over Syria for more than four years. The paradox is that some States, including France, deny the right of the Syrian State to fight terrorism in its territory, while those same States have joined

alliances under the pretext of fighting terrorism in the Syrian territory, which is thousands of miles from their countries.

We emphasize that, in the context of its fight against terrorism, the Syrian army is committed to international law and is doing everything to avoid casualties among civilians, whom terrorist groups are deliberately using as human shields. Like other armies of the world, in the fight against terrorism, the Syrian army is using the same conventional weapons used by the armies of the countries that are making those baseless allegations. We cannot understand why the French representative, who wrongfully accused my country, did not mention the acts that are being committed daily by armed terrorist groups in Syria — massacres, beheadings, mutilations and the destruction of archaeological and historical sites, including looting those sites and trafficking in artefacts in exchange for funding to buy weapons from Members of this Organization. Nor did she mention how certain Member States are providing weapons to terrorists in Syria, in violation of all United Nations resolutions and international instruments related to countering terrorism and preventing arms transfers to various groups. Furthermore, the French representative entirely disregarded the daily mortar shelling and rocket launches by terrorist groups against Syrian civilians in many cities around Syria, which is the main reason for the displacement of the Syrian citizens.

Against that background, I would like to highlight that the delegations making unfounded allegations against my country are depending on amateur bloggers and videographers. Among them is a very famous British citizen named Eliot Higgins, whose online postings about the situation in Syria are frequently, yet mistakenly, adopted by many media outlets, as well as Governments. According to Wikipedia,

“when Higgins began blogging the Syrian civil war, he was an unemployed finance and admin worker who spent his days taking care of his child at home;

“Higgins’ analyses of Syrian weapons ... began as a hobby out of his home in his spare time;

“Higgins has no background or training in weapons and is entirely self-taught, saying that ‘Before the Arab Spring I knew no more about weapons than the average Xbox owner. I had no knowledge beyond what I’d learned from Arnold Schwarzenegger and Rambo.’”



Yet some Member States still depend upon such biased and unprofessional sources as Mr. Higgins and others like him.

It is in our common interests to unite our efforts in fighting terrorism in Syria, before the fire spreads further and burns more innocent human beings around the planet. It is also essential to support a political and peaceful Syrian-led solution to the situation in Syria in a way that safeguards the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I would like to take issue with remarks made earlier by my Russian colleague regarding Russia's no-first-placement proposal. The no-first-placement proposal, as I have said many times, is a flawed proposal. It does not define what a space-based weapon is. There is no mechanism for confirming that a State is indeed complying with

its political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space. It also does not meet the criteria outlined by the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. In short, it is the wrong proposal at the wrong time.

Let me add that I would agree with my Russian colleague about the need to be responsible with regard to arms transfers. My Government has growing concerns about weapon transfers to regimes that support international terrorism in the Middle East and indiscriminately kill their own people. We also have concerns about those who provide weapons and training to non-State actors to destabilize the legitimate and democratically elected Government in Ukraine.

*The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.*