



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

First Committee

20th meeting

Monday, 29 October 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga. (Romania)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 93 to 108 (continued)

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

The Chair: The Committee will now hear the remaining speakers on the cluster “Conventional weapons”. Sixty-seven speakers remain on the list. I therefore kindly urge all speakers to observe the established time limit.

Mr. Syrymbet (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I would like to reiterate that Kazakhstan is deeply committed to contributing to the cause of international peace and security and investing every effort into further promoting cooperation on disarmament and non-proliferation in the international community.

I also bring to the First Committee’s attention the fact that Kazakhstan fully meets all its international arms-control obligations and continues to adhere to its policy of strengthening security at both the regional and international levels. At the same time, my country takes every measure to strengthen its national system and foster security cooperation across the Central Asia region.

Our commitment is further demonstrated by our accession to the relevant international instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All

Its Aspects. The full and effective implementation and universality of the ATT will contribute to promoting international peace and security by reducing the human suffering caused by armed violence.

Kazakhstan reaffirms its commitment to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and supports the humanitarian aspect of the Convention, since we share the common aspiration of the entire international community to protect civilians from any effects of such inhumane weapons. Kazakhstan currently does not produce, and has no intention or plans to produce, incendiary munitions that are covered by the CCW.

On the other hand, Kazakhstan has developed an effective arms export-control system and a dual-use goods system. The Government is on the path to instituting preventive mechanisms and measures, strictly in accordance with international requirements. Kazakhstan is therefore serious and solemn in its responsibility to prevent the spread of such weapons. We would like to remind and urge all States parties to the CCW to fulfil their financial obligations, so that the Convention can be effectively implemented.

We also supported the creation of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. We believe that was a turning point in the discourse on giving serious thought to those emerging weapons. The significance and importance of the Group of Governmental Experts has therefore been considerable in finding ways to arrive at a common understanding and definitions of lethal autonomous arsenals.

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The consequences of the development of new technologies can be highly dangerous, despite their dual-use purpose, and it may be safer to overestimate rather than underestimate the perils that they pose. Leaders of many States, as well as of international organizations, are aware of the influence and impact of artificial intelligence on the future of countries and the entire world.

The need to prepare and adopt certain forms of regulation in the sphere of lethal autonomous weapons systems seems to be obvious and should be followed from their design and production to their practical implementation. At the same time, it is obvious that machines should not be permitted to make decisions to target or kill humans. It is clear that the discussion on lethal autonomous weapons systems is just beginning and that further work is required to help shape our understanding of that future technology. Kazakhstan believes that it is important to continue discussions in 2019.

Ms. Keobunsan (Lao People's Democratic Republic): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), and of Viet Nam, on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (see A/C.1/73/PV.17). However, I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has had traumatic experiences of the humanitarian and development effects of the use of conventional weapons. Therefore, the Lao Government strongly supports and actively participates in the work of the international community on conventional weapons control and disarmament. That is why the Lao People's Democratic Republic has joined major international instruments in that field, such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and four of its Protocols and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), and also supports the letter, spirit and objectives of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which it demonstrated by voting in favour of resolution 64/56, despite the fact that we are not yet a party to the Convention.

Although conventional weapons do not have the same effect as weapons of mass destruction, their extensive use can also have a harmful humanitarian impact, with long-term consequences. Explosive

remnants of war are a good example of that, as they create humanitarian problems long after a conflict ends.

As the Committee is aware, explosive remnants of war, including unexploded ordnance, continue to have a major negative impact on the livelihoods of people and hamper development in affected countries. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a case in point, as most parts of the country have been heavily littered with unexploded ordnance, making it one of the countries in the world most contaminated by such weapons.

During the Indochina war, more than 270 million cluster sub-munitions were dropped on most parts of the country, and up to 30 per cent of them failed to detonate upon impact. Therefore, explosive remnants of war have been a daunting challenge to the socioeconomic development of, and poverty-eradication efforts in, our country. In order to continue tackling that challenge in a systematic way and address the problem caused by unexploded ordnance, the Lao People's Democratic Republic went the extra mile by adopting a national version of Sustainable Development Goal 18, entitled "Lives safe from unexploded ordnance".

Against that backdrop, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has been actively promoting the universalization of the CCM in order to prevent the further victimization of humankind caused by unexploded ordnance. We commend the countries that have shown their commitment by joining the Convention and take this opportunity to call upon countries that have not yet acceded to it to consider doing so in order to achieve a world free from cluster munitions. The Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomed the outcome of the eighth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention last September in Geneva, and looks forward to the ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, next September.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is concerned about the wide range of security and humanitarian effects arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, because those weapons are widely used by criminals and drug traffickers. Therefore, 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 that issue.

In conclusion, I reaffirm the Lao People's Democratic Republic's commitment to continue actively

promoting the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions by working closely with all States parties and the international community, so that we can achieve a world free of cluster munitions together.

Mr. Groome (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.18) and will add the following in our national capacity.

The interrelationship among disarmament, peace, security and sustainable development is irrefutable. That interrelationship is recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and now forms a central thread of the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament. Ireland supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to integrate disarmament more explicitly into the work of the United Nations, and we are encouraged by the priority assigned to the focus on disarmament as saving lives.

Ireland remains gravely concerned about the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which not only exasperate tensions and prolong conflicts but also fuel organized crime and overwhelmingly contribute to gender-based violence. The control of illicit flows of small arms and light weapons is a prerequisite for stability and conflict prevention, which is critical to achieving the mutually reinforcing goals of sustainable peace and sustainable development, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

My delegation strongly 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 and its International Tracing Instrument. We welcome the renewed international commitment to counter the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as demonstrated by the successful outcome of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action earlier this year.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) forms a cornerstone for efforts to tackle illicit proliferation and provides States with the basis for effective and responsible export-control systems. We look forward to welcoming more States parties as efforts towards universalization continue. We recall that the ATT was the first arms-control instrument to include a provision on gender-based violence and, while the inclusion of a provision on gender-based violence in the ATT was groundbreaking, implementation is most important. That requires thoughtful approaches and the continuous

examination of export-control procedures. To support the implementation of that provision, Ireland was pleased to be able to provide arms-control funding to produce a practical guide to assess the risks of gender-based violence under the ATT. That practical guide offers a step-by-step approach, designed to support the development of more robust export-control procedures and ensure that gender-based violence forms a key part of export-risk assessments.

We remain gravely concerned about the humanitarian harm being caused during active hostilities in populated areas, and in particular about the use of explosive ordnance and other explosive weapons, the effects of which extend beyond the immediate areas of legitimate military objectives that are located within or close to concentrations of civilians. Those weapons have a devastating impact on civilians and civilian objects around the world. We must act to enhance compliance with international humanitarian law in order to ensure the protection of civilians during armed conflict. That is an obligation shared by all parties involved in armed conflict. We welcome the important work of civil society and the International Committee of the Red Cross in continuing to raise awareness and addressing the challenges of such weapons.

We must also be conscious of the potential risks posed by new weapons technologies, such as lethal autonomous weapons, which present a variety of challenges — from legal, to security, to ethical. We are encouraged by the progress made during the meetings this year of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, most notably on the agreed emerging guiding principles that reaffirm that international law applies to autonomous weapon systems and that any future weapons must remain under human control. It is our firm belief that such weapons must always remain under human control and that only human accountability can ensure full compliance with international humanitarian law. Much work needs to be done towards fulfilling our agreed mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts. However, the inability today to converge and agree on a working definition or characterization of lethal autonomous weapons systems should not hamper our efforts to comprehensively address the challenges posed by them. The fast pace of current technological developments presents a compelling incentive for us to accelerate our efforts next year.

Ireland's cooperation and assistance programmes for humanitarian demining are directly linked to and support Ireland's commitments under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Ireland has maintained a long-standing commitment of support to humanitarian mine-action programmes designed to clear contaminated land and contribute towards long-term economic development. So far this year, we have allocated €2 million to those programmes.

It is now 10 years since the international community met in Dublin to adopt the CCM, and Ireland is proud to have played a leadership role in the negotiation of that historic Convention. While we welcome positive developments and the implementation of the Dubrovnik Action Plan, as reported at the eighth Meeting of States Parties in Geneva this year, we remain deeply concerned about the reports of continued use of cluster munitions in different parts of the world.

The issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines remains of humanitarian urgency. We are greatly concerned about the humanitarian impact arising from the use of those weapons. We continue to believe that the limited provisions in amended Protocol II have not proved adequate in addressing the concern arising from their use, and we continue to support efforts, in line with many other States, to continue consideration of that issue within the CCW framework and elsewhere.

Ireland also remains consistent in its view that the use of armed drones or armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) must be in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law. Ireland joined the 2016 United States initiative with regard to the adoption of a joint declaration on the export and subsequent use of armed UAVs, and we welcome the ongoing efforts by States, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and civil society to promote continued discussion of that topic.

The Chair: Before proceeding further, I would like to remind the Committee that the decision to suspend at noon discussions on the cluster under consideration applied only to last week. Therefore, this week the Committee will exhaust its list of speakers under each cluster before moving onto the next one. We will also have to schedule additional meetings this week, and

the Secretariat will inform Committee members once rooms are confirmed.

Mr. Frimpong (Ghana): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to speak under this cluster.

We associate ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Morocco on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16) and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.18), respectively. We wish to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

Ghana is committed to good practices, codes of conduct and standard operational procedures that have been developed within the context of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the International Tracing Instrument, the Firearms Protocol, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and other regional instruments that prevent the illicit transfer, diversion, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of conventional weapons.

We remain concerned about the escalating human suffering, global death toll, destruction to communities, forced migration and armed violence and attacks caused by the proliferation of conventional weapons in certain parts of the world, especially in Africa. As we struggle to deal with the devastating effects of those weapons, in conflict and non-conflict settings, the disarmament and arms-control regime remains in peril at the regional, national and local levels. It is therefore critical to enhance our international response to the illicit flows of conventional weapons in order to effectively address armed conflicts and their negative impact on civilian populations.

In that context, we reaffirm our support for the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, which is intended to save lives from the harm inflicted by venom of those conventional weapons. We welcome the fact that the tenets of the Secretary-General's agenda promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and also run in tandem with the flagship initiative of the African Union (AU), Agenda 2063, to silence the guns and end all wars in Africa by 2020. It is vital that efforts towards achieving the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063 be mutually reinforcing and link disarmament to development.

We believe that the appropriate management and regulation of the international trade in conventional

weapons is vital to promoting regional and international peace and security, as envisaged by the ATT. In that context, we welcome the successful conclusion of the fourth Conference of States Parties to the ATT, held in Tokyo this year, which enhanced the discussion on issues concerning international cooperation and assistance and measures to prevent illicit arms transfers, as well as systemic information exchange among States. We look forward to fruitful consultations during the fifth Conference of States Parties, to be held in Geneva in August 2019. We also urge States that are yet to subscribe to the Treaty to do so in order to achieve its universalization and promote its effective implementation.

It is equally important to underscore that addressing illicit flows of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is key to reducing protracted armed conflict and violent attacks in Africa. For that reason, we welcome the successful conclusion of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action, including the consensus adoption of an outcome document, which for the first time includes provisions that recognize the necessity of dealing with small arms ammunition.

It is our hope that further efforts will be made to deal with the issue of conventional ammunition management and the regulation of that trade within a proper context. We therefore welcome Germany's ongoing regional consultations to handle the priorities of States on the subject, ahead of a possible group of governmental experts in 2020. We also take note of other positive outcomes of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action, including references to gender-based violence, gender equality and participation in disarmament processes and sustainable development.

Ghana also shares the view that curbing the use of explosive weapons in populated areas within the framework of international humanitarian law will save lives, alleviate the suffering of innocent civilian populations during war, facilitate post-conflict recovery and reduce the level of environmental contamination from unexploded ordnance. We welcome the 2017 Maputo communiqué on the issue of 19 African States, including Ghana. We similarly welcome the urgent call on the international community to develop a declaration on the matter and further encourage other international initiatives for the protection of civilians and civilian objects in armed conflict, in compliance with international law.

In conclusion, we underscore the critical importance of the universalization of, and adherence to, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the various protocols and conventions on small arms and light weapons. It is our hope that all Member States, particularly arms-producing States, will demonstrate good faith and political will by supporting resource-constrained countries, in order to effectively implement those conventions and protocols and ensure a world without illicit arms flows and diversion.

Mr. Castañeda Solares (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my country aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16).

Every year, small arms and light weapons, their proliferation and illicit trafficking cause the deaths of hundreds of people around the world, while stoking conflicts and exacerbating violence. The production of such weapons and their respective ammunition is not decreasing, and their diversion to illicit markets contributes to drug trafficking and the existence of organized crime, while threatening the protection of individuals and hindering the creation of an adequate environment conducive to promoting sustainable human and economic development.

Guatemala therefore believes that the Arms Trade Treaty is a milestone in international trade regulations on conventional weapons and in the fight against the illicit arms trade. Guatemala welcomes the recent accession of the Republic of Suriname and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau to the Treaty and hopes to achieve the full universalization of that instrument.

With regard to the results achieved during the third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, Guatemala again reiterates its satisfaction at the inclusion of gender-related issues, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, above all, references to the subject of ammunition, on which we will continue to actively work.

Moreover, Guatemala strongly condemns the use of cluster munitions by any actor and in any circumstance, which is a violation of the principles

embodied in international humanitarian law and human rights law. We reaffirm our commitment to the effective implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Likewise, it is a source of great pride for my country that Central America was declared the first zone free of cluster munitions, a practice that should be implemented in all regions of the world.

We also wish to state our concern about the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas. As shown by recent events, the consequences of their use are devastating, and their disgraceful effects are often indiscriminate. We recognize the importance of respecting international humanitarian law and the responsibility of States to protect their civilian populations.

Guatemala condemns the use of any weapon with indiscriminate effects, as that constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law. Scientific and commercial advances in the field of artificial intelligence and the use of technology for the development of new weapons must therefore be regulated through a legally binding instrument. Autonomous lethal weapons pose a grave danger to humankind. If such weapons are not controlled by human beings, compliance with the principles of distinction and proportionality cannot be ensured.

The current situation poses important challenges to the quest for international peace and security. The persistent suffering and the continuing loss of human lives caused by the use of conventional weapons is what motivates Guatemala to continue actively and proactively working in these deliberations.

Mr. Beerwerth (Germany): I will read out an abridged version of our statement.

Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.18) and would like to make some additional remarks in a national capacity.

Led by the Sustainable Development Goals, especially target 16.4, Germany is actively promoting a global alliance against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We feel that better coordination is crucial for a more 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, which was further

strengthened thanks to a successful Review Conference under French chairmanship in June.

Furthermore, Germany remains committed to promoting the universalization and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Germany encourages eligible States to make best use of the Voluntary Trust Fund, which now has more than \$5 million at its disposal to support implementation activities. The Fund has called for project proposals to be submitted to the ATT secretariat by mid-January 2019.

Germany has been working hard to highlight the critical role played by the diversion of conventional ammunition in driving armed conflicts in areas of crisis around the world. In 2017, we proposed to dedicate a new group of governmental experts to focusing on improved ammunition stockpile management and to countering the diversion of conventional ammunition into zones of conflict and crime, which, in our view, is the most pressing issue to be tackled. We need to realize that ammunition is indeed the oxygen nourishing conflicts, even more so than weapons themselves.

The work of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) on lethal autonomous weapons systems has been making good progress this year. The consensus report (CCW/GGE.1/2018/3) of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, which met in August under Indian chairmanship, identified possible guiding principles covering important aspects for the first time, such as human accountability and responsibility, which highlighted human control as one of the main focus areas for future Group's deliberations. Germany looks forward to taking discussions in the Group forward in a results-oriented way in 2019 to ensure that diplomatic efforts to regulate lethal autonomous weapons systems are not outpaced by technological developments.

Over the past decades, the use of weapon systems capable of delivering massive explosive force has been a defining feature of armed conflict. In populated areas, those weapons can have grave humanitarian consequences, as we sadly witness in today's theatres of conflict, be it Iraq, Syria or Yemen. To discuss the legal, technical, military and humanitarian aspects of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), we have established the so-called "EWIPA talks" sequence in Geneva, which consisted of three events this year.

As discussion during the CCW's Meeting of the High Contracting Parties demonstrated, there is room

for further exchange on that pressing issue. Building on last year's work, we are preparing a working paper under the agenda item on arising challenges, including more good practices on means and methods used, with a view to reducing and mitigating the risk of incidental civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects.

Ms. García Gutiérrez (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are deeply concerned that some countries are increasingly seeking security in arms and that the global arms trade continues to grow at unprecedented levels, resulting in the accumulation of large arsenals, including in highly vulnerable regions that are prone to conflicts involving armed violence. Moreover, as armed conflicts move from open fields of war to urban centres, the most vulnerable populations continue to be the most affected. The use of long-range explosive weapons in populated areas is equally deplorable. Their use is contrary to international humanitarian law and should therefore be addressed urgently.

With that in mind, my country aligns itself with the joint statement on that issue delivered by the representative of Ireland at the beginning of this debate on behalf of 50 countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.18).

For Costa Rica, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is unique and important, as it combines the technical objectives of arms control with the humanitarian aspect of the issue. My country has therefore sought to establish binding criteria for all conventional arms transfers in order to prevent them from contributing to stoking conflicts, armed violence and fuelling organized crime and terrorism, which inevitably leads to human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law. That is evidenced, *inter alia*, by deplorable acts of gender-based violence, with terrible consequences, in particular for women and children.

It is essential to intensify synergies among complementary instruments, such as 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, and adopt legally binding instruments to combat commercialization, marking and illicit brokering. We must also work to develop robust and mandatory stockpile-management standards in order to cope with the excessive levels of arms and ammunition production.

In that vein, Costa Rica has been working on the effective management and creation of institutional capacities for the implementation of the ATT through

a national control system, under which training has been carried out for hundreds of officials on the issues of licensing, customs and compliance. That has been achieved with the invaluable help of international cooperation.

We also welcome the progress made in that matter at the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which gave us an opportunity to reflect on the progress made in implementing the Programme of Action and in other elements necessary for its proper implementation, such as the inclusion of ammunition in its sphere of activity. The integral approach to munitions in the Programme of Action is fundamental for my country.

It is essential to address the ethical, legal and technical concerns that have been raised with regard to lethal autonomous weapons systems, which we believe run counter to international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We also believe that it is time to take concrete action regarding the use of armed drones outside areas of active hostility. We are concerned about the use of armed unmanned aircrafts, which, until now, has been characterized by a lack of transparency, accountability and reparation for victims, thereby eroding democratic control and international scrutiny concerning the use of force.

We have established a clear and crucial link between development and disarmament. We must comprehensively examine the complex regime of conventional armaments in order to achieve significant reductions in illicit arms trafficking, the effects of which will contribute to reducing armed violence, in favour of more peaceful and inclusive societies. That will allow us to attain target 16.4 and, in turn, the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In conclusion, it is essential to highlight the important role of civil society in the issue of conventional weapons. We welcome its contribution in pointing out problems, finding solutions and raising awareness among States, in order to address the challenges facing the international community.

Mrs. Theofili (Greece): Greece fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU) on this thematic cluster (see

A/C.1/73/PV.18) and would like to contribute a few remarks in its national capacity.

Among the numerous challenges facing disarmament negotiations, perseverance in tackling the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is gradually providing tangible results. Greece participated in the bureau of the third Review Conference on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, presided over by Ambassador Jean-Claude Brunet of France. After 17 years of its existence, the time is ripe to accelerate our work towards synergizing and streamlining efforts that link the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons to a plethora of regional and national initiatives, in order to battle such illicit trade. While the Programme of Action constitutes the flagship in tackling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the availability of the necessary tools, bolstered by the technological know-how, has come a long way and today provide a strong foundation for advancing that endeavour to the next level:

At the international level, Greece, from the outset, has supported efforts towards the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which today numbers 130 signatories and 97 State parties. As the ATT is a formidable safeguard in tackling the diversion of conventional weapons in general, and small arms and light weapons in particular, from licit to illicit trade, we believe that it should be included in the equation of a tangible and realistic road map to further decrease the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons and the impact that they have on national, regional and international security and stability.

Furthermore, we support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's Sustainable Development Goals, and especially target 16.4, which notes that the reduction of illicit arms flows will strengthen recovery and the return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime.

The regional road map for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and firearms and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024 is one of the EU initiatives indicative of tangible progress in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. That project builds on past experiences, coordinating stakeholders and implementers, in an

effort to minimize overlap. It is aimed at addressing the entire spectrum of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons through, first, ensuring a coordinated approach to the implementation of the road map; secondly, addressing the necessary legal and procedural harmonization and standardization; and, thirdly, paving the way for further targeted capacity development interventions by elaborating gap analysis and assessments in order to inform future policy and project approaches.

Political will constitutes the main catalyst to further stopping illicit transactions in military goods, including small arms and light weapons and firearms, from falling into the hands of non-State actors, proliferators and criminal and terrorist organizations. We anticipate that the new cycle of biannual meetings, leading to the fourth Review Conference, will take note of the momentum aimed at establishing constructive synergies among Governments, international and regional organizations and non-governmental institutions. It is our belief that that approach, which requires continuous coordination, will further harmonize efforts towards our ultimate goal, namely, the elimination of the scourge of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.18). I would also like to make the following additional remarks.

The international security situation is deteriorating. We must therefore reaffirm our collective commitment to boosting respect for, and the universality and effectiveness of, our instruments on disarmament and conventional arms control. The proliferation crises of weapons of mass destruction must not obscure the fact that conventional weapons continue to pose a major security threat for all regions of the world, regardless of whether they are affected by conflicts. International measures on conventional arms are part of an overall disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control approach. The past few years have shown that international action must now take the risk of terrorist groups acquiring and using conventional weapons further into consideration. The international community must therefore not waver in its efforts.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to fuel conflict, exacerbate armed violence and drive terrorism and organized crime. It constitutes a grave threat to international peace and security. Small

arms and light weapons are today the weapons that kill by far the most people worldwide. Only together can we respond effectively to that challenge.

For example, we are convinced that the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects allowed for States to rally together in seeking our common goals and fighting against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their disastrous consequences. Thanks to an inclusive, transparent and robust preparatory process, the Conference demonstrated that multilateral discussions remain effective and allow us to move forward together. Negotiations in good faith in a demanding consensus-based setting therefore remain the only possible method, which was demonstrated by the June Conference. I hope that everyone here will be faithful to the Conference and vote in favour of its outcome document, which will highlight the sincerity of our commitment.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is unique. It enables complementary expertise — be it political, legal, military or diplomatic — to come together. That feature of the CCW is a guarantee of the Convention's ability to address current and future challenges. States parties are addressing the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems, as proposed by France in 2013. That is a significant development, and France welcomes the ongoing work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the issue in particular. Together with Germany, we have developed substantive proposals to contribute to the Group's work, notably to negotiate a political declaration. France is pleased to note the wide support among States for that proposal and hopes to move forward in that regard in future meetings.

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) pose another threat that affects all regions. The international community's action on that issue is essential. Such action was revitalized by the consensus adoption three years ago of the first resolution devoted to IEDs in the First Committee (resolution 70/46), proposed by Afghanistan and co-sponsored by France and Australia, which must serve as a guideline. It is important that work undertaken on IEDs, both on the practical and political levels, contribute to an overall coherence in our efforts, in keeping with the spirit of the resolution. France is fully committed to the CCW on that issue, demonstrated by its coordination of the group of experts

on IEDs. France will continue to actively work on the issue within the CCW during the next cycle.

By creating partnerships of accountability among exporters, importers and transit countries in all regions of the world, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) should make it possible to regulate legal trade more effectively and prevent illicit flows. Following a substantial preparatory process, which owes much to the Organization's outstanding commitment of the Japanese presidency, the fourth Conference of the States Parties to the ATT helped to underline the need to make progress with substantive discussions, especially on the implementation of the Treaty and, in particular, the fight against diversion, to which my country contributed. We must not lose sight of our objective of making the ATT a truly universal standard.

Certain important issues, including financial difficulties, have prevented several important meetings from being held in satisfactory conditions. That must not happen in the future. As such, we fully support the efforts made by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. States must pay their contributions and do so in a timely manner. France is fully mobilized on all of those issues and will remain committed to them in future.

Mr. Khaldi (Algeria): Algeria fully associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), of Yemen, on behalf of the League of Arab States (see A/C.1/73/PV.17), and of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.18).

Addressing conventional-weapons issues is vitally important. My delegation cannot stress enough that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to exacerbate armed violence by fuelling and prolonging conflicts and generating tragic humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. Those weapons pose a deep and enduring threat to peace, security and stability in many regions around the world, particularly in Africa. By the same token, they represent a constant and major concern to the international community, considering the close link that their misuse suggests with the emergence and rise of terrorist groups, organized crime, human and drug trafficking and smuggling networks. For its part, Algeria continues to accord high priority to securing its borders, sparing no efforts in dismantling criminal

networks, which contributes enormously to fighting the growing scourge of terrorism, in particular in the Sahel region. In the light of those challenges, my delegation would like to raise the following points.

First, Algeria welcomes the unanimous adoption of the substantive outcome document of the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument.

Secondly, on the basis of its national experience, my country would like to reiterate the utmost relevance of the Programme of Action. Therefore, we take this opportunity to actively call for its full implementation in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

Thirdly, Algeria takes great interest in the Secretary-General's report on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them (A/73/168).

Fourthly, Algeria remains strongly engaged in, and in favour of, all forms of assistance and cooperation initiatives undertaken at the regional level, as stated in the Programme of Action. Within that framework, my country is wholly dedicated to further engaging with the Sahel countries to strengthen security cooperation through technical assistance programmes.

Fifthly, Algeria strongly believes that embedded technical assistance and financial support from developed countries, the United Nations and international organizations are crucial to helping the Sahel countries build local capabilities and fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Algeria promotes establishing information-exchange platforms and sharing best practices with its international partners. In that spirit, Algeria is highly and responsive to swiftly accede to requests for information it receives through INTERPOL or from any another international parties within the scheme of mutual legal assistance treaties.

In fact, we can safely say that the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), headquartered in Algiers, constitutes a significant asset that we believe will greatly enhance the capacity of the continent to address the threats posed by terrorism and transnational organized crime. We hereby express our satisfaction about the convening of the second general

assembly of AFRIPOL, which was held in Algiers two weeks ago, during which member countries agreed to establish three task forces to combat transnational crime, cybercrime, terrorism and violent extremism.

Algeria underscores the importance of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Indeed, since its adhesion to that key instrument, my country has remained fully committed to fulfilling its obligations to ensure international peace and security, in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, allow me to point out that my country has been tirelessly working towards the fulfilment of the noble objectives set 20 years ago by the States parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Last year, Algeria successfully carried out its landmine clearance obligations under the Ottawa Convention by destroying the remaining stockpile of anti-personnel landmines.

Ms. Tichy-Fisslberger (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.18). Allow me to add some additional points of particular importance to my country.

Let me start by welcoming the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda and his call to step up efforts to pursue disarmament in order to save lives and protect future generations. We concur that, for the benefit of all, we need to make best use of the disarmament toolbox as part of an integrated approach that brings together humanitarian, legal, ethical and development considerations.

In order to create a safer world for all, it is essential to uphold and fully implement the agreed instruments and mechanisms and to incorporate issues where there is a need, in response to new developments. That is of particular relevance in the context of changing dynamics of warfare and scientific and technological progress. The fact that today's conflicts are increasingly taking place in urban areas entails particular challenges for the protection of civilians. To reduce the humanitarian impact of urban warfare, we are called upon to do our utmost to uphold the rules-based international order by respecting international law and, in particular, international humanitarian law.

We would be ill advised to turn a blind eye to actions that undermine the important principles of proportionality, distinction, the prohibition of unnecessary suffering and the required precautions in

attack. The humanitarian harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas is of particular concern. The problem flows from how those weapons are used in many instances. When more than 90 per cent of victims are civilians, our common principles of international humanitarian law are seriously challenged. The short- and long-term humanitarian effects cause far too many direct victims and, moreover, make affected areas de facto uninhabitable.

The urban context is reinforcing the reverberating effects, which are among the root causes of people becoming internally displaced or having to flee their country. The growing awareness about the challenges posed by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas is demonstrated by not only the increasing number of dedicated discussions in various forums but also the large number of States supporting the first joint statements on those issues. I want to thank Ireland for having led that initiative.

Austria reaffirms its commitment to reduce the devastating humanitarian harm caused by explosive weapons in populated areas. We call on all States to avoid or, in any event, minimize the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. We welcome the continued support of the Secretary-General for our efforts to develop a political declaration and his ambition to improve data collection on collateral harm, as outlined in the disarmament agenda. Let me seize this opportunity to commend and underline the importance of the contributions and first-hand experience of the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society to our efforts to better protect civilians.

There can be no doubt about the international obligation that any weapon — be it explosive, an armed drone or another weapons-system — should be used in accordance with international humanitarian law. As the Secretary-General outlined in his disarmament agenda, new and emerging weapon technologies pose challenges to existing legal, humanitarian and ethical norms, as well as non-proliferation, international stability and peace and security. Those questions have not yet been sufficiently addressed. The potential impact of technological progress, in particular artificial intelligence, on international law and international humanitarian law deserves increased attention by the international community.

Austria firmly believes that humans must always retain control over the critical functions of weapons

systems, namely, targeting and attacking. We call upon the international community to join us in our efforts to bring about a legally binding instrument to ensure that autonomous weapons remain under meaningful human control, before such weapons are introduced to the battlefield.

This year we are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Thousands of lives and limbs have been saved by the growing support for that Convention and its sister instrument, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Both Conventions include important victim-assistance provisions to ensure that victims can fully take part in societies. Austria is encouraged by the progress achieved and will continue to work towards the goal of ending the scourge of anti-personnel mines, including improvised anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions.

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

The destabilizing effects of conventional weapons on security and stability at the regional and subregional levels, as well as their catastrophic humanitarian toll, serve to underscore the need for continued action aimed at controlling those weapons. The history and politics of arms regulation dictate a comprehensive and equitable approach that takes into account the priorities and security interests of all States. It is essential that the pursuit of nuclear disarmament not give way to a destabilizing conventional imbalance of the type that spawned two world wars during the past century.

The final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament provides a clear direction in that regard:

“Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out on the balanced reduction of [...] forces and of conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the need of all States to protect their security” (*resolution S-10/2, para. 22*).

Several worrisome trends are emerging on the conventional-weapons horizon. The level and the scale of global military expenditures top the list. The present

expenditure on international trade in conventional arms is close to \$2 trillion. Ironically, while the total budget of the United Nations is approximately 3 per cent of the world's total military expenditure, approximately 33 times more is being spent on fuelling and exacerbating conflicts rather than on preventing them.

The same troubling trend is mirrored at the regional level, in particular in South Asia, where one State's military spending grossly and vastly overshadows that of others. That has the potential to fuel instability and jeopardize the delicate regional balance. The situation is rendered more complex due to the presence of long-standing disputes and stalled political dialogue, which hinder the realization of the goal of durable peace in our region.

We remain concerned about the growing transfers of conventional armaments, particularly in volatile regions, that are inconsistent with the imperatives of maintaining peace, security and stability. The policy of double standards towards South Asia, based on narrow strategic, political and commercial considerations, must be eschewed. For its part, Pakistan is committed to the establishment of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia that includes an element of conventional force balance. Pakistan does not want to be, and is not, engaged in an arms race in the region.

Pakistan has developed the necessary legislative, regulatory, enforcement and institutional mechanisms for addressing the range of issues relating to conventional arms regulation. Policy guidelines on exports are in place, along with a national evaluation mechanism for regulating their trade. We are taking additional measures to strengthen the enforcement regime, which covers imports and licensing.

Pakistan welcomes the outcome document of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We participated actively and constructively in the Review Conference and remain committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the outcomes agreed at its Review Conferences.

Pakistan voted in favour of resolution 67/234 B, whereby the General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty. As we continue our national review of the Treaty, we believe that its success, effectiveness and universality will depend upon its non-discriminatory

implementation, especially by strict adherence on the part of States parties to its principles.

Pakistan is a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and all of its five Protocols, and remains fully compliant with their provisions. We are proud of our active contribution to demining and clearance efforts worldwide, particularly under United Nations peacekeeping operations, to which Pakistan remains one of the largest troop contributors. The success of the CCW lies in the delicate balance that it seeks to maintain between humanitarian considerations and the legitimate security interests of States.

The CCW also provides the most appropriate forum for addressing the issue of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in a comprehensive and balanced manner. Pakistan shares the concerns about the acquisition and use by non-State actors and terrorists of IEDs, as well as various types of conventional weapons.

Pakistan presided over the fifth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW, held in 2016, which took important decisions for dealing with several substantive contemporary issues, including on the very important issue of lethal autonomous weapon systems. We hope that further consideration of the issue of lethal autonomous weapon systems in the CCW context will be results oriented and lead to a legally binding instrument stipulating appropriate regulations on such systems.

Ms. Raharimboahangy (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): Madagascar aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), and of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.18). However, I wish to make a few remarks in a national capacity.

Everyone knows that development cannot be effective or sustainable without human security. Madagascar's experience in fighting illicit trafficking in weapons and ammunition and, in particular, their unregulated and uncontrolled use has made clear the urgent need for strategic and operational plans to prevent and eradicate those practices.

Madagascar ratified the Arms Trade Treaty in 2016 and, throughout that process, welcomed the unwavering support of the United Nations, including the Office for Disarmament Affairs in collaboration with the United

Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, and civil society. That has allowed our country to benefit from commendable technical and financial assistance towards fighting the insecurity that was inherited long ago from a precarious, but now stable, political and economic situation.

The stability that we have gained only needs to be consolidated, and we cannot forget to thank our bilateral partners, such as Japan, that have broadly supported Madagascar in that effort. In that regard, I am pleased to mention three projects that have been implemented: a workshop on tackling issues related to the Arms Trade Treaty through the Voluntary Trust Fund, an arms-tracing and marking project and a project supporting security-sector reform. As of last week, 846 seized weapons had been destroyed as part of the notable activities of Amnesty International's arms month in Africa.

Convinced of the decisive role of multilateralism in the fight against weapons proliferation, Madagascar welcomed the holding of the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in June 2018, and the outcome document that was adopted, which took into account, among other things, an important issue for many countries, namely, that of ammunition.

On a different note, Madagascar wishes to express its concern about explosive weapons in populated areas and their human impact, especially on civilians. We reiterate the 2017 Maputo declaration of 19 African States and support, in that same vein, the Secretary-General's recommendations for the development of bilateral and regional cooperation on that issue.

Moreover, as a State party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Madagascar advocates the principle condemning incitement to activities denounced by that Convention and, by extension, calls for the reduction of investments that might foster controversial weapons manufacture.

With regard to partnership, Madagascar promotes subregional, regional and international collaboration and assistance that work in synergy with national priorities. We stress that support must be coherent and rightly conceived on the basis of a holistic and systemic approach, in order to better understand the potential causes of illicit arms trafficking. That will

also significantly reduce the relocation of centres of illegal trafficking activity.

In conclusion, given the evolving global security situation, which is marked by technological progress and further characterized by human activity, Madagascar urges all stakeholders to undertake increased and adapted activities in order to implement multilateral instruments.

Ms. Donnelly (New Zealand): Once again, the conventional-weapons debate provides us with an opportunity to celebrate some very positive developments, but also to recognize just how far we have to go, particularly in our efforts to strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law and to improve the protection of civilians caught up in conflict.

On the positive side of the ledger is the considerable progress being made in the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The race to 100 States parties has been a competitive one, with Suriname and Guinea-Bissau bringing the ATT family to a membership of 99 in recent days. New Zealand continues to advocate for the universalization of that important Treaty, particularly in our region of the Pacific. Earlier this year, with our close partner Australia, we were very pleased to host a conference for Pacific Island countries to promote uptake and implementation of conventional-weapons treaties, especially the ATT. We will continue to follow up with our Pacific partners and look forward to our region being much better represented in the Treaty.

As we all know, the success of a treaty cannot be measured simply by the extent of its membership, but rather by its progress towards the realization of its object and purpose. Through the intersessional programme of the ATT working groups, considerable effort has been directed at the attainment of the Treaty's dual objectives of establishing the highest possible common standards for regulating international trade in conventional arms and preventing and eradicating their illicit trade. In our engagement in that work, New Zealand has also sought to retain a focus on the bigger picture underlying our Treaty and the ambitions that we all hold for its outcomes on the ground.

Technical discussions on national legislation, policy and infrastructure must not be ends in themselves; they must be motivated by our wish that all arms-transfer decisions be able to contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability, reduce human suffering and promote responsible action in international

trade in conventional arms. Alongside eradication of the illicit trade and diversion of conventional arms, it is those transfer decisions, and international confidence in those decisions, that will enable the ATT to meet the ambitious objectives that we have all set for it.

New Zealand remains a strong supporter of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), and we continue to serve in the role of coordinator on national implementation measures. We welcome the continued growth in CCM membership, with Sri Lanka and Namibia having brought the total to 104 States parties. As we celebrate the tenth anniversary of that important instrument, however, it is clear that we need to pick up the pace. We are of course relieved by the sharp decrease in cluster-munition casualties between 2016 and 2017, but, while that is a basis for celebration, it must not result in our complacency. Our community is striving for a world in which there are no casualties whatsoever, either from cluster-munition attacks or cluster-munition remnants, and we remain committed to achieving that important zero.

To that end, New Zealand continues to unreservedly condemn any and all instances of the use of cluster munitions, including in Syria and Yemen. New use compounds the suffering of those caught up in those seemingly intractable conflicts, and will continue to hamper recovery efforts and undermine confidence, even when the worst is over. We welcome and support all efforts to uphold the obligation in the Convention and to strengthen the norm against cluster munitions, and will certainly do our part, including in raising awareness of the contribution that can be made by ending investments in the production of those inhumane weapons.

New Zealand is pleased to see the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas getting the attention that it deserves, and we align ourselves fully with the joint statement on that issue delivered by the representative of Ireland (see A/C.1/73/PV.18). We remain committed to addressing the humanitarian harm caused by such weapons, while also recognizing that our efforts in that regard complement our long-standing support for many other related initiatives, including on safe schools and health care under attack. We look forward to working with all interested States, organizations and civil society partners across all relevant forums to make progress on that important issue.

Finally, New Zealand has participated actively in the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous

Weapons Systems. We remain concerned about the challenges posed by such weapons to international law, and international humanitarian law in particular. We remain open to all options currently on the table and do not view them as mutually exclusive. We look forward to next year's Group providing for more focused discussions and decisions on those options.

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

Indonesia is deeply concerned about the indiscriminate use of conventional weapons, in contravention of international humanitarian law, which is responsible for the immense loss of life and property in numerous parts of the world. The illicit trade and unregulated use of those weapons, especially in the hands of non-State actors, has already had a devastating human, material and economic toll. Regrettably, that tragedy is on the news and in the media every day, but there has not even been close to an adequate response. The situation continues to pose a serious threat to international security.

Indonesia stresses the dangers arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, which happen to be the weapons of choice in most conflicts. We call on the major producing States in particular to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited only to Governments or to entities duly authorized by them. The 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 Tracing Instrument is essential. In that regard, there is also a need to enhance international cooperation and assistance.

Indonesia is concerned about the devastating humanitarian impact caused by the use of cluster munitions. We express our solidarity with cluster-munitions-affected countries. We urge parties to armed conflict to exercise the utmost restraint and care. While cluster munitions should never be used, every effort should be made to ensure that innocent civilians caught up in conflict are not harmed and are instead protected.

Indonesia also condemns the use of anti-personnel mines in conflicts, in contravention of international

humanitarian law. They have maimed, killed and terrorized innocent populations in many regions. We stress the need for the full implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty and urge States not yet party to join it. While international assistance remains vital in landmine-clearance operations and victim rehabilitation, national ownership by the affected States, in order to ensure that victims are rehabilitated properly and that peacebuilding is deepened, is equally important.

Indonesia also underlines the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and ammunition for their self-defence and security needs. In that regard, we are against any undue restrictions or coercive measures placed by exporting States on importing States.

Finally, we also share the concern expressed about increasing global military expenditure, a significant part of which could instead be spent on development needs. That is very important for alleviating poverty, as well as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It is high time that energy and money be reprioritized. Let us all play our part to ensure that global peace is fostered and the sustaining peace agenda is successful.

Mr. Czepelak (Poland): For well-known reasons, we are very much focusing on weapons of mass destruction in our debates, which is the right approach. Nevertheless, at the same time, every year, hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians — men, women and children — lose their lives due to the use of conventional weapons.

Over the past few decades, the international community has succeeded in developing an immense number of regulations pertaining to conventional weapons, the substantial content of which is also impressive. In addition, we have internal national rules and legislation on the use and trade of conventional weapons. Let me underline that Poland's regulations on the transfer of weapons are strict, complete and followed thoroughly. Therefore, it seems justified to pose the question: what is preventing us from making real progress in lowering the number of victims caused by the use of conventional weapons — small arms and light weapons in particular? There are several phenomena that deserve our attention in that context.

Over the past few decades, we have observed a decrease in traditional wars, which have been replaced

with armed conflicts of a different nature — purely domestic conflicts, domestic conflicts with international engagement, conflicts between States and non-State armed groups and hybrid wars. What is the common denominator of those conflicts? The prevailing number of civilian victims. As we are not able to prevent conflicts, we need to do our utmost to protect innocent civilians. That is the first humanitarian responsibility of politicians and military commanders-in-chief.

Another interesting trend is a steady increase in the volume and value of the international weapons trade. According to the arms-transfers database of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, since 2002 there has been a steady increase in the volume and value of the international transfer of major weapons, which, in the past two years, has reached the levels of the late 1980s and early 1990s. That is a clear result of the deteriorating security environment and the challenges that we are currently facing.

Let us be frank and realistic: the international transfer of weapons is a fully legitimate activity. It needs, however, to meet certain standards, one of which is transparency in armaments as a key confidence-building measure. The implementation by States of their export-control regulations is of key importance in that activity. The International Tracing Instrument, which requires States to ensure that weapons are properly marked and that records are kept, is an important instrument in preventing diversion. What should be of concern is the fact that the number of States reporting their trade of weapons to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has recently diminished. However, it is worth noting that the vast majority of State parties to the Arms Trade Treaty are fulfilling their obligations.

Although the use of legitimate weapons should be perceived in the context of security threats and the military needs of States, whenever we speak about the use of conventional weapons we need to stress the importance of compliance with the core principles of international humanitarian law — distinction, proportionality and precaution. That is very important in the context of another alarming aspect of contemporary armed conflicts, namely, the increasing fighting in population centres. In such circumstances explosive weapons are very likely to have indiscriminate effects, which results in the killing and injuring of civilians.

In conclusion, we call for more intensive diplomatic efforts to curb the number of ongoing and protracted conflicts. We all know how effective traditional diplomacy can be if it is driven by common interests and mutual respect. To that end, we need to all truly engage in seeking peaceful solutions to existing conflicts.

Mrs. Hassan (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee for this session. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. My delegation is convinced that this session will be successful under your presidency, and you, Mr. Chair, can be assured of the full support of my delegation.

Djibouti aligns itself with the statements delivered in this room by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.18), and of Yemen, on behalf of the League of Arab States (see A/C.1/73/PV.17).

The current greatest threats to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are, undoubtedly, conflict and violence. The intractable nature of many hotbeds of unrest around the world continue to increase death tolls, and the nature of the specific challenges that they pose will require the sustained attention of the international community.

According to some sources, approximately 30 million light weapons are in circulation in sub-Saharan Africa, an arsenal that increases by 8 to 10 million weapons every year. Those arms are unfortunately the weapon of choice in many conflicts and pose a threat to international peace and security. The spread of terrorism and international organized crime further complicates already fragile situations and requires different solutions to those proposed by conventional peace operations. Moreover, that spread also undermines the tools of diplomatic negotiations at our disposal. It is urgent to address such measures in detail.

The June Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in which my delegation took part, enabled us to make headway in certain areas. The fourth Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, which was held in Japan in August, reiterated

the need for material, financial and technical support for developing countries.

Despite those tools, Djibouti remains concerned about the lack of progress made in the fight against the illicit circulation of such weapons, which, as we all know, is ongoing and even intensifying. That demonstrates the need for, and integral role of, regional and subregional cooperation partnerships if we hope to arrest the cross-border movement of illicit arms, and we welcome the decision taken by our Heads of States to silence the guns by 2020.

The Horn of Africa has experienced a series of positive historical developments that are likely to generate dividends for peace, reconciliation and economic development. We hailed the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which ended two decades of fraught relations — toeing the line between war and peace — and ushered in a new era of peace, friendship and cooperation between the two countries. The positive repercussions for other inter-State conflicts among the countries of the region have been rapid, and we hope will be substantial.

In that regard, as my Foreign Minister emphasized during his address to the General Assembly (see A/73/PV.11), the Presidents of Djibouti and Eritrea met on 17 September in Jeddah, hosted by His Majesty King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, and agreed to turn a new page in relations between the two brotherly countries. At the end of the meeting, and thanks to the tireless efforts of the King of Saudi Arabia, as well as the Ethiopian Prime Minister, they agreed to continue that dialogue in order to find a peaceful solution to outstanding issues, including the border dispute and prisoners of war.

Before concluding, I wish to state that Djibouti remains convinced that more good-faith efforts in dialogue and negotiation will allow for progress in consolidating the architecture of law and collective security, which are the foundations of international peace and stability.

Mr. Ataíde Amaral (Portugal): Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.18), and would like to make complementary comments in its national capacity.

Effective cooperation and willingness to reach consensus are, more than ever, the way forward. The

role of the United Nations and the existing rules-based multilateral system should be, and need to be, strengthened. As the initial implementation plan for the disarmament agenda was launched, we responded positively to the Secretary-General's call for action. We particularly welcomed the initiative to establish a multi-partner trust fund within the Peacebuilding Fund dedicated to projects on small arms and light weapons control.

Small arms and light weapons are the most widespread instruments of violence and death. Their illicit trafficking causes tremendous human suffering and fuels organized crime, terrorism and regional instability. We welcome the outcome document adopted in June at the Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which stresses the importance of the Programme of Action for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recognizes the gender dimension. Portugal strongly advocates the inclusion of gender aspects in all projects on small arms and light weapons control projects as part of the broader effort to promote women's participation in disarmament affairs. We are also convinced that the inclusion of ammunition in the scope of the Programme of Action will significantly increase its implementation.

My country is contributing to several European Union initiatives and programmes to address illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, including the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats and the iTrace initiative.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has the potential to be a very effective instrument against the illicit trade in conventional arms and ammunition, especially to regions in conflict and countries with high levels of armed violence. The Treaty will also contribute to human rights protection and the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We would like to particularly highlight the need for the implementation of the ATT provisions on gender-based violence. Portugal urges all States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is an example of success. Despite the remarkable progress already achieved, we are still far from having attained the objective of an anti-personnel-mine-free world by 2025. Portugal calls upon every State to support and

promote the universalization and implementation of the Convention and the Maputo Action Plan 2014-2019.

On the tenth anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, it is with great concern that we face the possible use of those weapons by State and non-State actors. That deserves our strongest condemnation. The same applies to the indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices, particularly in densely populated areas. Portugal also supports the universalization and strengthening of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

On new and emerging threats, such as armed drones and lethal autonomous weapons systems, we should reaffirm that international law also applies to those weapons and that future weapons systems must remain under human control. We underline that all States share the responsibility to ensure that their weapons systems comply with international law, in particular international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, the international community should redouble its efforts to make progress in conventional disarmament and arms control and have a real impact in some of the most vulnerable societies, helping to prevent conflicts and saving lives.

Mr. Fadhil (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Yemen, on behalf of the League of Arab States (see A/C.1/73/PV.17), and of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16).

Iraq recognizes that the challenges emerging from the development of conventional weapons are no different in their disastrous effects from those related to weapons of mass destruction. It is therefore incumbent upon us all to shoulder our responsibilities, redouble international efforts and generate synergy in order to promote the universality of the relevant international instruments and achieve international peace and security. In that regard, Iraq has joined the majority of such instruments, including the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its five Protocols. Iraq is working towards implementing its obligations and submitting updated national reports on time.

The phenomenon of the illicit trade in conventional weapons is the main factor exacerbating armed conflicts and organized crime. In addition, the excessive stockpiling of small arms and light

weapons and their ammunition contributes to sustained and severe violence. In that regard, Iraq welcomes the outcome document of the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspect. We reiterate the importance of redoubling efforts to establish an integrated system that combats the illicit trade in such weapons and prevents their diversion into the hands of non-State actors and terrorist groups, in order to achieve the ultimate goal of living in a world of security and stability.

The threat of mines and explosive remnants of war goes beyond the killing and maiming of thousands of people every year. They also have long-term social, economic and environmental effects. All Committee members are aware of the hardships that have faced Iraq in fighting the most dangerous terrorist groups, namely, the terrorist gangs of Da'esh. Despite that, Iraqi institutions continued to address challenges and develop contingency plans for liberated areas, according to priorities, while conducting surveys and demining efforts, registering the names of victims of war remnants and raising awareness of affected communities and displaced persons before their safe return to their homes.

Last month we held a workshop in Baghdad on promoting a strategic approach to victim assistance, in cooperation with the Implementation Support Unit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the European Union Mission in Baghdad, which was widely attended by relevant specialists as well as Iraqi and foreign civil-society organizations.

My country would like to thank all States and organizations that provide us with support and assistance. Iraq reaffirms the imperative need for its national institutions to continue receiving support and assistance in all their forms from the international community so as to eliminate the threat posed by this kind of fatal weapon to humankind, the economy and environment alike.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Ukraine aligns itself with the joint statement on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas delivered on behalf of a group of interested States by the representative of Ireland during this thematic debate (see A/C.1/73/PV.18).

Ukraine fully shares the concern of the international community that the illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of conventional arms and ammunition poses a serious threat to security and stability in the world. Therefore, we support global, regional and national efforts to address that challenge, including export-control and border-control measures, stockpile management, international cooperation and assistance.

At the national level, Ukraine attaches particular importance to ensuring effective export-control procedures in the sphere of conventional arms. Ukraine strictly adheres to the respective resolutions and decisions of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies. The Security Council resolutions that impose arms embargoes provide guidelines for the adoption of the relevant legislation in Ukraine.

We support the proper 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 well as the International Tracing Instrument, by all States. Ukraine welcomes the unanimously adopted outcome document of the Review Conference on the Programme of Action held in June in New York. We also support and have co-sponsored the draft resolution entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" (A/C.1/73/L.63), submitted this year by South Africa, Colombia and Japan.

Ukraine recognizes the important role of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in addressing post-conflict remedial measures to minimize the occurrence, risk and effects of explosive remnants of war. As a State party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention for more than 10 years, Ukraine acknowledges its fundamental role in minimizing the use, risks and effects of landmines. We also share the view that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms continues to be an instrumental transparency and confidence-building measure in the field of conventional arms trade.

As in the previous four years, we cannot avoid raising the long-standing issue of illicit mass transfers of conventional arms to the occupied territory of Ukraine from the Russian Federation. The Russian aggression against Ukraine, with the use of its military

forces armed with modern types of conventional armaments and ammunition, has significantly damaged the existing system of conventional arms control. The Russian Federation continues to illegally transfer arms and ammunition and send its military personnel to our territory through uncontrolled parts of the Ukraine-Russian border, thereby deliberately promoting destabilization in the region.

Another challenge that Ukraine has to deal with is the drastically increased number of mines and dangerous explosive remnants of war in the occupied territory in the east. Mines and explosive devices are scattered throughout the conflict area, especially along the contact line, and pose a severe threat to civilians, including children. Those devices are often planted by Russian-led armed groups in residential areas and along communication routes, thereby posing a greater threat to the civilian population than to military personnel.

Faced with those extremely difficult circumstances, Ukraine is taking all possible measures to destroy and dispose of explosive remnants of war on its territory. The State emergency services of Ukraine and other national authorities, in close cooperation with the United Nations Mine Action Service, UNICEF, the OSCE, NATO and other international partners, are actively engaged in performing a range of demining actions on liberated territories in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Finally, as we have done on many previous occasions, we urge the Russian Federation to take all steps necessary to withdraw its military equipment and personnel from the territory of Ukraine, along with its subsequent de-occupation.

Ms. Çalışkan (Turkey): Turkey aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.18). The following few remarks are made in our national capacity.

The excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to peace and security, as well as to the social and economic development of many countries. The annual death toll resulting from small arms and light weapons of more than 500,000 people is alarming. There is also an undeniable relationship among the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, terrorism and organized crime. Therefore, Turkey strongly supports international cooperation to combat and eradicate the

illicit trade in small arms and light weapons within the framework of all international forums.

The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a milestone in placing that issue firmly on the international agenda. In that respect, the full and comprehensive implementation of the Programme of Action and strengthening it with new measures, in accordance with evolving security needs, bear significant importance. We welcome the outcome of the third Review Conference under the presidency of France, as we attach importance to maintaining consensus regarding the Programme of Action, which we see as a valuable instrument. We are also committed to strengthening the International Tracing Instrument.

The Arms Trade Treaty is an important step towards a universal and legally binding mechanism that sets common standards at the highest possible level to regulate the export, import and transfer of conventional arms. It also supports the implementation of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Since its inception, we have actively participated in the process and have signed the Treaty. Pending its ratification, we look forward to acceding to the Treaty in the near future. As a member of all four export-control regimes, Turkey already has a robust export-control mechanism in place and meticulously implements its related principles.

Turkey is fully conscious of the human suffering and casualties caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel land mines. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention constitutes a major international instrument aimed at eliminating those mines, as well as preventing their use, production, stockpiling and transfer. As a party to and a strong supporter of the Convention, Turkey has completed its commitments relating to article 4, destroying a total of approximately 3 million anti-personnel mines.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is an indispensable part of international law on conventional weapons with indiscriminate effects. Turkey fully implements the Convention and its annexed Protocols, to which it is a party, and encourages adherence to that fundamental international regime.

Issues such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and lethal autonomous weapons systems continue to be important. Turkey is concerned about the increasing global impact of improvised explosive device attacks worldwide, in particular through the perpetration of

terrorist acts. We believe that the United Nations has an important role to play in addressing the problem of IEDs.

In conclusion, let me reiterate my country's commitment to international cooperation on all the issues that we will address under this cluster.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.29.

Ms. Mac Loughlin (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): A priority for Argentina is to prevent the negative consequences of illicit arms trafficking and their diversion, which foster political and security instability, violence, crime, organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking. Such activity particularly affects the most vulnerable sectors of society, their fundamental rights and the chances for sustainable development. Argentina welcomes the comprehensive approach to the issue taken by the Secretary-General in his disarmament agenda.

It is necessary to reiterate the importance of international mechanisms related to the issue and the need to explore the synergies that exist among the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the International Tracing Instrument, the Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

In that regard, we highlight Argentina's traditional support for the Programme of Action on Small Arms, which held its third Review Conference in June. We also welcome the holding of the fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Tokyo in August. As a co-author of the Treaty, Argentina has given great importance to the instrument, maintaining an active and committed role in discussions relating to it. The ATT is a fundamental instrument that articulates three central dimensions for arms trading: human rights, production and responsible commerce.

In that regard, the consolidation of the ATT and advances in its implementation and universalization are vitally important steps towards creating a transparent and responsible trading system, while avoiding the proliferation of conventional weapons and their use against civilians through the establishment of criteria, parameters and common standards for all States when authorizing transfers.

The Argentine Republic is convinced that 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 creates an environment conducive to negotiations on new instruments for other weapons that are not yet fully regulated from a humanitarian perspective. The Convention and its Protocols are relevant tools in the context of disarmament, arms control and international humanitarian law.

Argentina aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Ireland on the use of explosive devices in populated areas (see A/C.1/73/PV.18).

Argentina has maintained an active role in promoting confidence-building measures in general, and in particular within the sphere of conventional arms. Argentina participated in, and was committed to, the process of establishing the Register of Conventional Arms and believes that the System for the Standardized Reporting of Military Expenditures provides an important contribution. Likewise, it is a priority to increase the number of States that provide information to those mechanisms.

I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.29, entitled "Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", on behalf of more than 30 delegations. The draft resolution's sponsors are listed in the document. The goal of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.29 has always been, and continues to be, to improve understanding of the new developments taking place and, in that regard, welcomes the adoption in 2017 by the United Nations Disarmament Commission of consensus recommendations in the area of conventional weapons. The draft resolution is not prescriptive; rather, it aims exclusively at getting States to voluntarily provide information about the confidence-building measures that they have adopted and at having the Secretary-General provide assistance in maintaining an electronic database of the information submitted voluntarily by States. Argentina once again expresses its gratitude for the support it has received and invites those delegations that have not yet become sponsors to do so. In conclusion, Argentina hopes that the draft resolution will once again be adopted by consensus.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.63.

Mr. Ngundze (South Africa): We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representative

of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), and of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/73/PV.18).

Since its inauguration, in May 1994, the South African Government has committed itself to a policy of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control that covers all weapons of mass destruction and extends to concerns relating to the proliferation of conventional weapons. A primary goal of South Africa's policy is to reinforce and promote South Africa as a responsible producer, possessor and trader of defence-related products and advanced technologies. South Africa has therefore been a strong and consistent supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty and the strengthening of arms-control systems. The illicit proliferation of arms, facilitated by inadequate or weak control systems, destabilizes communities, negatively impacts security and compromises development.

Since the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), States parties have worked hard to encourage the universalization of the Treaty. In that regard, I would like to seize this moment to welcome States that have recently joined the ATT, especially Cameroon, from our own region. South Africa believes that the full and effective implementation and universality of the Treaty will contribute to promoting international peace and security by reducing the human suffering caused by armed violence, which most often affects women and children. South Africa therefore calls on all States that have not yet signed or ratified, especially the major conventional arms producing and exporting countries, to do so in order to further promote the Treaty's universalization.

South Africa joins other Member States in welcoming the outcome of the recently concluded fourth Conference of States Parties in Tokyo, in particular the move from procedural issues to more substantive discussions. In our view, the discussions of the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation and the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting will add impetus to the realization of the goals and the objective of the ATT.

South Africa also welcomes the successful conclusion and adoption of the outcome document of the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was

concluded in June. Although consensus on the outcome document could not be maintained, my country was nevertheless encouraged by the interest and dedication shown by Member States during the discussions to revive their commitments to the full implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels. That was a true manifestation of the global support towards ending conflicts in the world in general, and on the African continent in particular, which is a direct contribution towards the realization of the African Union's aspiration of silencing the guns by 2020.

South Africa reaffirms its commitment to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the humanitarian principles enshrined therein. We attach great importance to that framework Convention, as evidenced in our ratification of all its Protocols. South Africa also reaffirms its support for the work of the open-ended Group of Governmental Experts to discuss emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Against the backdrop of the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) held in September 2017, concerns remain about the use of cluster munitions in some countries. South Africa therefore welcomes the increasing number of countries that are joining the Convention, in particular those from the African region, such as Benin and Namibia. The continuous addition of new member States will help the CCM in meeting the shortfall of the 26 member States it needs to comply with the Dubrovnik Action Plan goal of signing 130 States parties by 2020.

In conclusion, this year South Africa has the honour, on behalf of Colombia and Japan, to again introduce the omnibus draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.63, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects". As in the past, the draft resolution seeks to operationalize the Programme of Action by essentially mapping out the Programme's implementation priorities for the next year or two. My delegation would like to express appreciation to all delegations for their assistance in the past and seeks further support for the draft resolution during this session.

Ms. Roopnarine (Trinidad and Tobago): At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community (see A/C.1/73/PV.18) on this thematic cluster.

For Trinidad and Tobago, like many countries of our region, the security, development and human rights of our citizens continue to be adversely affected as a result of the cross-border illegal activity associated with the unlawful trade in small arms and light weapons and their associated ammunition. However, experience has taught us that that unfortunate reality can be successfully confronted if we adopt a collaborative approach on the basis of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its related instruments, such as the International Tracing Instrument, the Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

My delegation therefore reiterates the importance that we place on the Programme of Action as an important instrument for mobilizing international cooperation to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. While we have had difficulties in achieving consensus during negotiations on substantive issues related to the Programme of Action, we welcome the outcome document of the recently concluded third Review Conference. We are pleased that the outcome document has upheld the recognition of the linkages among small-arms issues and gender perspectives. We are also pleased with the inclusion of overt references to ammunition, whereby States that apply provisions of the Programme of Action to the ammunition of small arms and light weapons can exchange and, as appropriate, apply relevant experience, lessons learned and best practices acquired within the framework of other relevant instruments to which they are party.

We are encouraged by the forward momentum of the past four years to regulate and monitor conventional weapons through the Arms Trade Treaty. My delegation believes that, with the determined efforts of all States, the ATT can become a major step towards bringing the international arms trade fully under the rule of law. We note the progressive measures that have been taken within the ambit of the Treaty since its entry into force, as States parties look ahead to the fifth Conference of States Parties. We wish to welcome Latvia's decision to make gender and arms-related gender-based violence the focus of its presidency, and we look forward to working with it in that regard. We also recognize the role of civil society in promoting gender issues and encourage States to also engage with it.

My delegation wishes to underline that, for the ATT to be a success, it must be implemented in good faith by

all States parties, including the major manufacturers, exporters and importers of conventional weapons. We urge all Member States that have not yet done so to take the necessary steps to ratify and implement the ATT, as well as the Firearms Protocol.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) has proved to be a key component of the broader normative framework for the protection of civilians. Trinidad and Tobago's accession to the CCM demonstrates our continued commitment to join efforts to end the terrible harm posed by those indiscriminate weapons. We therefore share the perspective that investment in the production of those weapons is a contravention of the CCM.

Finally, my delegation wishes to reiterate its concern about the harm and risks associated with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). It is estimated that thousands of civilians, if not more, have been killed, injured or displaced as a result of that technology. Due to their unique characteristics, armed UAV operations raise particular implications for the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation therefore highlights the ethical, legal and humanitarian consequences of the use of armed UAVs in a manner incompatible with international law.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.55.

Mr. Horne (Australia): Australia is committed to playing its part in advancing the international framework on conventional weapons. The illegal and irresponsible trade in conventional arms frustrates our collective effort to further peace, security, public health and sustainable development. More than half a million people die violently each year in conflict and non-conflict settings, by some estimates, and many of those civilian deaths are caused by small arms and light weapons in the hands of non-State actors.

Australia is a proud champion of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and has been since the very beginning. Our foreign policy white paper reaffirms our commitment to protect and strengthen international rules and norms. Our efforts to encourage more States, particularly those in our region, to join the Treaty is a prime example of that. Although it is still in its infancy, we are confident that the ATT can evolve into one of the most important and widely endorsed normative initiatives to combat illicit arms trade and the violence that it fuels. Australia led the sub-working group on preventing diversion this

year — a fundamental objective of the ATT that is important for all States, whether they have joined the Treaty yet or not.

Our efforts, like those of others, are wider than just furthering the ATT. We continue to advance our work on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is also an important component of the international architecture. Last year, our highly successful national firearms amnesty saw 57,324 unregistered or unwanted firearms surrendered. Australia also contributes to both the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund and the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, because it is important that States be able to access assistance in support of their efforts to implement the ATT and the Programme of Action.

Technology evolves rapidly in all areas, and conventional weapons are no exception. In the context of the Programme of Action, we must ensure that weapons tracing remains timely and reliable, given advances in manufacturing, technology and design. The use of polymer, for example, affects the durability and traceability of markings. That is why we promote reflecting those technological developments through an annex to the International Tracing Instrument.

In the context of lethal autonomous weapons systems, we are an active participant in the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. Although the Group is yet to arrive at an agreed definition or set of characteristics for lethal autonomous weapons systems, we are hopeful that continued discussions in 2019 will see further progress.

Australia considers existing international humanitarian law sufficient to regulate the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. However, we encourage States to look at ways to strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law, by non-State actors in particular, to reduce civilian casualties in conflicts where explosive weapons are used. We must also consider further initiatives to prevent the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons, such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which account for the vast majority of civilian casualties globally.

Australia continues to prioritize mine action and employs a three-pronged approach that includes supporting the implementation and universalization of the relevant Conventions by funding their

implementation support units and stepping up to take on roles; supporting international organizations that further those efforts, including the United Nations Mine Action Service and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, as well as Humanity and Inclusion; and providing funding to mine-clearance activities in affected countries.

Finally, one of the greatest threats to advancing the international framework on conventional weapons is our capacity to fund annual meetings and review conferences. We urge all States parties, particularly those in arrears, to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time. Those meetings are vital to the implementation of our agreements. We also draw the First Committee's attention to two draft resolutions in particular: one on IEDs, led by Afghanistan and supported by France and Australia (A/C.1/73/L.60), and another on illicit brokering, which we are leading with the Republic of Korea (A/C.1/73.L.55). We encourage all Member States to join us in co-sponsoring those two important draft resolutions.

Mr. Giacomelli da Silva (Brazil): The international regime on conventional arms control plays a central role in promoting transparency and stability, as well as preventing the use of conventional weapons for violations of international humanitarian law and their diversion to unauthorized users. We therefore welcome the inclusion of the section on disarmament that saves lives in the the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament.

Brazil has been an active promoter of the purposes and objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) since its inception, having actively contributed in its negotiations. We ratified the ATT on 14 August and are now a full member of the Treaty.

Brazil also remains committed to the full implementation and strengthening of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We therefore welcome the successful conclusion of its third Review Conference and note with particular satisfaction that the outcome document recognizes the importance of efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit flows of ammunition. Brazil has been at the forefront of efforts in that field, including by pioneering legislation on the marking and tracing of ammunition.

Brazil has never used mines on its territory and was one of the main supporters of the Ottawa Convention, which we ratified in 1997. The Brazilian armed forces have been engaged in mine-action cooperation for the past two decades, particularly in Central and South America, as well as in Africa. We also acknowledge the humanitarian challenge posed by improvised explosive devices, especially their use in densely populated areas. We deplore the fact that those devices seem to be increasingly used against civilians.

The regulation, restriction and proscription of certain conventional weapons are also important tools for alleviating human suffering and mitigating humanitarian harm in situations of conflict. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) plays a central role in that regard, with its wide membership and flexible framework. In that regard, we are increasingly concerned about the emergence of new threats and challenges to the implementation of international humanitarian law, including those posed by lethal autonomous weapons systems. Brazil, alongside Austria and Chile, has proposed a mandate for the CCW to establish a legally binding obligation to outlaw any weapons system that is not subject to human control.

The use of armed unmanned aerial vehicles is another matter of great concern. It is necessary to increase accountability, transparency and oversight for the use of those systems in order to ensure that they are in full compliance with international law, especially international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

In a context of the increasing urbanization of armed conflict, the threat posed by direct and indirect impacts of the unrestricted use of explosive weapons in populated areas has also come to the forefront of humanitarian concerns. Brazil supports ongoing discussions on this topic and stresses the need for full compliance with international humanitarian law at all times and in every circumstance.

Mr. Herráiz España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.18).

Conventional weapons with indiscriminate humanitarian effects and access by populations to small arms and light weapons pose an increasingly clear threat to peace, stability and progress. There is

undoubtedly interaction among those weapons, armed violence and a lack of development.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is a refreshing humanitarian success that demonstrates that multilateral cooperation efficiently facilitates efforts to reduce human suffering. We reiterate our commitment to that instrument, although we must continue working to achieve its full universalization and the objectives of the Maputo Action Plan 2014-2019.

We believe that the Convention on Cluster Munitions constitutes an innovative approach, with a valuable humanitarian impact, and we support the full implementation of the Dubrovnik Action Plan. Spain has confirmed the complete destruction of its arsenals, in accordance with article 3 of the Convention, and is also ready to coordinate assistance to victims within the framework of the Convention until its next Review Conference. My delegation would like to emphasize the need for all States prohibit the financing of that type of undesirable weapon as part of their national legislation, in order to foster a basic sense of consistency with the objectives of the Convention and other restrictions under its article 1. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and all its Protocols are equally relevant humanitarian instruments.

One innovative aspect on which we can intensify our work in this area is more robust implementation of international humanitarian law regarding the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas, in order to better guarantee the protection of civilian populations. On the other hand, the global impact of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) requires sustained attention. Spain participated in the working group coordinated by the United Nations Mine Action Service on approving IED disposal standards.

The meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in Geneva succeeded in establishing positive foundations. Within that framework, we support a political declaration and a possible code of conduct that include transparency measures, confidence-building and exchange of information and best practices, including possible advances in science and technology in the field of artificial intelligence.

We call for the establishment of possible synergies among the three humanitarian Conventions I referred to, in particular on assisting victims and removing explosive remnants of war. Spanish legislation has

established a regime that we believe could constitute a possible role model. It creates a common approach with references to the three Conventions and all weapons that cause inhumane and unacceptable suffering, including not only financing but also aspects regarding patents, technology and advertising.

On the other hand, the Arms Trade Treaty is a fundamental instrument for promoting transparency and responsibility in preventing illicit trafficking, while contributing to international peace and security and the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We must intensify efforts towards its universalization and towards assisting States with the Voluntary Trust Fund.

Small arms and light weapons and their ammunition should be a priority, given that they cause the greatest number of victims in current wars and are a crucial factor in the phenomena of terrorism and organized crime. We highlight the importance of Security Council resolutions in this area, and we appeal for the universalization of the Firearms Protocol.

We welcome the success of the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument, which are key aspects in this fight. We are particularly pleased with the progress made in facilitating the treatment of ammunition in accordance with resolution 72/55, as well as including the gender dimension.

In conclusion, we cannot ignore the precarious financial situation of Geneva-based conventions. All mandatory contributions should be made within the established deadlines to allow for the smooth development of our efforts at the multilateral level.

Mr. Incarnato (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.18) and would like to add some remarks in its national capacity.

Italy strongly supports all international instruments restricting or prohibiting the use of weapons contrary to international humanitarian law. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols are crucial in that regard, and their universalization and full implementation remain fundamental.

We share the deep concern about the growing use and impact of improvised explosive devices (IEDs),

which pose serious threats to civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeeping personnel in conflict-afflicted and post-conflict areas. Both preventative and remedial strategies must be pursued at all levels to counter such a threat, starting with the establishment of appropriate regulatory frameworks. The need for such action has been recognized in successive General Assembly resolutions on countering the threat posed by IEDs, which Italy has co-sponsored. We welcome the report (A/71/187) submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 71/72, which translates that need into concrete recommendations.

We also welcome the informal meetings on explosive weapons in populated areas and mines other than anti-personnel mines in the framework of the CCW, as they provide excellent opportunities to deepen our understanding of those topics, in preparation for the next Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention.

Italy commends the in-depth work carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and its substantive outcomes. We agree with the principles, on which the Group identified strong convergence, that international humanitarian law must apply to all weapons systems and that existing or future weapon systems must be subject to human control, particularly in relation to the ultimate decision to use lethal force. We support the renewal of the Group's mandate for 2019, with a view to paving the way towards a consensual political declaration.

Italy is extremely concerned about the indiscriminate humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, especially on civilians. The universalization and full implementation of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions are among our priorities. Nationally, we completed the destruction of stockpiles of anti-personnel mines in 2002, and of cluster munitions in 2015. We also destroyed cluster-munition stockpiles retained for purposes permitted by article 3.6 of the Convention.

Internationally, we continue to allocate resources to mine-action programmes relating to all explosive remnants of war, with a focus on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education and victim assistance, as well as advocacy activities for the universalization of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions. Since 2001, we have devoted almost €55 million to mine-action programmes in, inter alia, Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, Gaza, Iraq, Libya, Somalia and the Sudan. We also engage in capacity-building, training programmes and the sharing of technical expertise. Our programmes rely on partnerships with the United Nations, other international and regional organizations, civil society and survivor representatives. In particular, we have established long-term and fruitful cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations Mine Action Service.

Italy attaches great importance to assisting survivors and their families as a fundamental component of humanitarian aid and as a key element in long-term development strategies. We particularly engage in promoting gender- and diversity-responsive assistance, with the aim of adequately addressing the different needs of various beneficiaries. Italy has indeed supported the development of operational guidance by the Gender and Mine Action Programme, aimed at disseminating good practices for gender- and diversity-sensitive victim assistance in mine action and broader disability sectors.

Illicit, unregulated and irresponsible transfers of conventional arms have pernicious humanitarian, social and economic effects. Italy is committed to the effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the International Tracing Instrument and the Palermo Trafficking in Persons Protocol. The ATT's unique contribution towards more transparent and responsible arms trade and to countering illicit arms transfers relies on universalization and effective implementation as two sides of the same coin. We continue to call on all States that have not ratified the Treaty to do so as early as possible, and we commend those that joined the Treaty during the past year.

We welcome the successful conclusion of the 2018 Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and look forward to the implementation of its outcome document. We believe that also applying the Programme of Action's provisions to ammunition for small arms and light weapons would be beneficial. We also continue to stress the fundamental link among sustainable development, peace and security, as recognized by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Finally, Italy is concerned by the financial issues affecting the implementation of several of the

conventions mentioned earlier. It is essential that States abide by their mandatory financial obligations in order to allow those instruments and their related support structures to function continuously and effectively.

Ms. Cervenka (Norway): Conventional arms are the real weapons of mass destruction in many countries. We know that small arms and light weapons kill more than half a million people every year. Our response must be to intensify global efforts to combat the irresponsible and illegal trade and use of such weapons, including ammunition. Norway is a firm supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty. It has great potential to reduce human suffering and provides fundamental norms for responsible arms trade, including by assessing the potential for gender-based violence before arms exports are authorized. We urge all countries that have not yet done so to exceed to the Arms Trade Treaty and ratify it.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is perhaps the single most successful multilateral arms-related treaty of recent times, with 164 States parties, 53 million stockpiled mines destroyed — each potentially saving a life or a limb — and vast areas of successfully cleared land. If we could only quantify the direct effect that the Convention has had on the lives of civilians, the number of lives saved and how mine clearance paves the way for development, then it would surely receive the political attention it so deserves.

Norway will be assuming the presidency of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention later this year. We will work to bring renewed political attention to the Convention and intend to view our presidency through a protection lens. The Convention is an important tool for ensuring the protection of civilians from landmines during and after conflict. We are worried about the new use of landmines and the increase in the number of victims in recent years. That concern about the indiscriminate impact of landmines was what brought about the Convention in the first place. Together, we will have to consider what can be done to address that challenge so that the Convention can keep on saving lives in the years to come. A mine-free world by 2025 remains our vision and our rallying cry.

This year the global community will commemorate the 10-year anniversary of another landmark treaty — the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which has, in its way, made a substantial difference to human security. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions have established

norms that are widely respected by many, not just the States parties themselves. We must continue to support those two vital instruments.

A major challenge in the years to come will be the widespread use of homemade explosive devices, many of which are produced and used by non-State actors. Addressing large-scale contamination by improvised mines and the suffering that they cause will require coordinated efforts and dedicated resources from the international community. Improvised mines that are victim-activated and are under, on or near the ground are covered by the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and must be addressed as such by the humanitarian mine-action community.

We would like more countries to participate in the ongoing discussions on how to enhance the protection of civilians in conflict and thereby improve compliance with international humanitarian law. There is a clear obligation to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants in conflict. We have witnessed the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas in Syria, Yemen and Ukraine. Such use is clearly disproportionate and in violation of international humanitarian law. We have noted the call by the Secretary-General on all countries and parties in conflict to avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. As a global community, we must address the challenge of urban warfare.

Mr. Aldai (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau for your efforts to ensure the success of the First Committee's work.

My country aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/73/PV.16), and of Yemen, on behalf of the League of Arab States (see A/C.1/73/PV.17).

As we discuss the issue of conventional weapons, my country reiterates its firm position on fighting the illicit trafficking in, and the provision of, small arms and light weapons. That position is based on the principles we share with other States around the world, because they have great impact on the sustainability of global peace and stability.

The State of Kuwait attaches great importance to the phenomenon of illicit trafficking in small arms

and light weapons. Such trafficking has significant negative effect and can contribute to exacerbate armed violence and prolong conflicts, as well as broaden their geographical dimension. We stress 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 welcome the outcome document of the third Review Conference. We underscore the importance of the document's consensus-based approach, which seeks to build trust and increase cooperation among States, in order to eradicate the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We must commit to make further efforts under this international instrument to combat and eradicate that dangerous phenomenon; otherwise, such weapons could fall into the hands of non-State actors and be used for terrorist acts.

The State of Kuwait welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, and reaffirms that the implementation of the Treaty must be consistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the legitimate right of States to self-defence, while taking into account the balanced responsibilities between countries that import or export weapons. We call for addressing the significant imbalance between industrialized and developing countries concerning the production and possession of, and trafficking in, conventional arms.

It is important to recall that our region continues to suffer from instability for many reasons, including the illicit supply of small arms and light weapons. We therefore call on States to further raise awareness of the dangers of those arms, which can lead to greater instability. In that context, the State of Kuwait reaffirms the need to distinguish, on the one hand, between the fight against illicit trafficking in and the provision of arms, and, on the other hand, imposing discriminatory restrictions on the legitimate trade in conventional weapons among States in accordance with the threats facing their sovereignty and security.

Rapid technological development has facilitated the production of weapons that can fall into anyone's hands, in particular individuals and non-State actors. States must therefore cooperate on border security and tighten control over land and sea borders, while exchanging information, so that such weapons do not reach armed and terrorist groups. There are shortcomings in the way in which disarmament mechanisms are dealing with

the urgent issue of disarmament, making such weapons accessible to all.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait stresses the importance of cooperation among relevant stakeholders with United Nations bodies in order to implement the various relevant treaties and pledges.

Ms. Yang Jia (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We have seen in recent years growing international concern about the indiscriminate use of conventional weapons. Thanks to its concerted efforts, the international community has succeeded in achieving positive results in the field of conventional arms control, with the successful conclusion of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Moreover, within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems adopted a consensus report (CCW/GGE.1/2018/3) that established guidelines and mandated further discussion on the issue. At the same time, concerns about the indiscriminate use of conventional weapons are far from being fully addressed. United Nations conventional-arms-control mechanisms need to be further strengthened, as conventional arms control is a wide-ranging and complicated issue. In that regard, China advocates the following principles.

First, we must all adhere to multilateralism, bring multilateral mechanisms represented by with the United Nations into full play, and promote and encourage more countries to participate in the conventional arms-control process. Secondly, consultations must be conducted on an equal footing, while respecting the legitimate security concerns of all countries and balancing humanitarian concerns and legitimate military security needs. That is the basis on which we should proceed. Thirdly, we must strengthen international cooperation. Developed countries should increase their assistance to developing countries in the areas of institution-building, funding and technology transfer.

As a full State party to the CCW and its five additional Protocols, China has always supported the work of the Convention, faithfully fulfilled its obligations under the Convention, submitted national implementation reports on time and made annual financial contributions to its Implementation Support Unit. China actively participated in the drafting and

revision of the Convention's regulations and was co-Chair during the drafting of the United Nations improvised explosive device disposal standards. We also participated in the revision of the International Mine Action Standards and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines.

Humanitarian concerns about lethal autonomous weapons systems have attracted increasing attention from the international community in recent years. China believes that international norms must be established through negotiations to regulate the military application of artificial intelligence. China actively participated in the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and is willing to continue in-depth discussions on that issue within the framework of the Convention.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has greatly accelerated the spread of terrorism and extremism and has led to greater regional unrest. China believes that, in order to properly solve that problem, all countries should conscientiously implement the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. China actively participated in the third Review Conference and the preparatory meeting of the Programme of Action, and attended the Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty as an observer earlier this year. China is willing to redouble its efforts to promote a reasonable international arms-trade order to alleviate issues caused by the illicit transfer of weapons.

Military transparency is high on China's agenda, and China attaches great importance to the Register of Conventional Arms. China has participated in the work of the Register in a constructive manner and, in recent years, has annually submitted data on arms transfers to the Register. China commends the important role of the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures and annually reports to the mechanism. China is also willing to work with other countries to further enhance its universality and effectiveness.

China is committed to the cause of international humanitarian assistance. The Chinese Government has provided more than ¥100 million in humanitarian mine-clearance assistance to more than 40 countries, including financial assistance, equipment, training programmes and on-site guidance, and has trained more than 500 professional mine-clearance technicians. In September 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping

announced at the leaders' summit on peacekeeping that China would carry out 10 mine-clearance assistance programmes in the next five years. China has gone above and beyond its commitments ahead of schedule. China organized a mine-clearance training course this year for the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia, and provided them with material assistance. China stands ready to join hands with all parties to work for new progress and breakthroughs in the field of conventional arms control.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/73/PV.18), and I would like to make some remarks in a national capacity.

The United Kingdom remains committed to international conventional arms control. We continue to play a leading role in the current instruments and arrangements, and we will encourage others to also support them politically, practically and financially. Without that support, especially funding, they will not be able to function effectively.

The full and equal participation of all relevant actors and stakeholders is also vital for success. Women must be properly represented in disarmament and arms-control discussions, negotiations and processes. Their involvement is key to developing and delivering sustainable action. That should be recognized in relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Let me speak about the individual instruments. The United Kingdom is a strong supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty. It is the means to achieving a globally well-regulated, legal trade in arms, while preventing trade in illicit arms and the diversion of legitimate arms to the illicit market. Its obligation on States parties to assess the risk of serious gender-based violence or serious violence against women and children before authorizing the export of conventional arms is a cornerstone of our commitment to the women and peace and security agenda. The Treaty has made much progress, but there is still much more to do. Universalization must remain a priority, and we must focus in particular on persuading the States whose accession would have the greatest impact on the aims and objectives of the Treaty to join.

We therefore welcome the Treaty's focus on outreach. Successful engagement must include regional organizations, civil-society groups, industry and academia if it is to reach a diverse range of potential

States parties, adherents and allies. In the meantime, existing States parties must fully and effectively implement their current commitments. The Voluntary Trust Fund is essential to support that process, and the United Kingdom will continue to be an active member of the selection committee.

The United Kingdom is proud of the humanitarian successes of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We are deeply concerned by reports of the continued use of those indiscriminate weapons, even as we collectively continue to clear them. We call on all States to abide by international humanitarian law. We are implementing our own obligations by clearing anti-personnel mines in the Falkland Islands. The United Kingdom is also providing approximately £100 million to global mine action between 2017 and 2020.

The United Kingdom remains fully committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Under the United Kingdom's chairmanship in 2017, the high contracting parties agreed essential financial reforms. However, the Convention will become financially stable only if all high contracting parties pay their contributions and arrears promptly.

The United Kingdom welcomes the progress made this year by the CCW Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. We support continuing the Group's current mandate into 2019. We continue to oppose a legal instrument or ban that would prejudice legitimate technological advances. We look forward to further work through the Group on guiding principles and the role of existing processes, structures, industry standards and national and international legal frameworks.

The United Kingdom is at the forefront of global efforts to counter the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. The transnational nature of illicit trafficking means that no one country can eradicate the problem alone. The United Kingdom will continue to strengthen cooperation with partners to reduce the supply of, and demand for, illicit weapons. Since 2017, we have supported national and regional projects on arms regulation, law enforcement cooperation, disarmament, counter-terrorism and the promotion of conflict resolution. We welcome the outcome of the third Review Conference 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 and the International Tracing Instrument.

International cooperation and the effective operation of a rules-based international system are our best hope of tackling the threats to life and security, and are essential to building a safer world.

Mr. Klučar (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic firmly supports the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We call on all States that have not yet done so to join it. We consider the ATT to be an effective international instrument with the objective of establishing the highest possible international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms. In our view, the ATT contributes to international and regional peace, security and stability. One of our main goals is the universalization of the Treaty. In general, the number of States parties has been increasing, and we remain convinced that broader universal adherence to the ATT will strengthen global security and positively contribute to conventional-weapons-trade regulation.

We understand that, for many of those States parties that are not traditional exporters, the Treaty's core requirements of establishing national arms-control systems and national control lists are quite new and demanding tasks. In that respect, we would like to mention the role of the Voluntary Trust Fund, which has been an important instrument for supporting national implementation and has been so far funded by donations from 14 States parties. The reports of the Voluntary Trust Fund have proved its indispensable role in strengthening the implementation of the Treaty. The Czech Republic has supported the Voluntary Trust Fund financially by providing voluntary contributions in previous years. We hope to do so again next year.

We recognize that good progress has been achieved, since the entry into force of the Treaty, in the implementation of obligations by States parties. Our common goal is to achieve greater responsibility and transparency in international arms trade. To that end, it is indispensable to strengthen the reporting capabilities of States parties, so that they are able to fulfil their reporting obligations. We are convinced that an effective system of reporting will help States parties and their national authorities in the risk assessment process, while evaluating individual requests at the national level.

The Czech Republic welcomes the progress achieved during the third United Nations Conference

to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in June. We consider the Programme of Action to be the universal framework to counter the threat posed by illicit small arms and light weapons. We support its full and effective implementation at all levels and urge all countries to adhere to its principles, as illicit small arms and light weapons continue to contribute to instability and armed violence in the world.

We would like to emphasize that the implementation of the Programme of Action is supported by synergies, with international instruments such as the ATT having similar objectives. The Czech Republic would also like to stress the importance of the International Tracing Instrument, the only global standard on how and where to mark small arms and light weapons. Although a very successful initiative, there is a need to address the current developments in technology and the design of small arms and light weapons, especially the growing trend of modular design in small-arms manufacture and the increased use of polymer frames. We would like to stress that curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition is crucial to reaching the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument are essential tools to that end.

The Chair: I shall now call on speakers who have asked to speak in the exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Verdier (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina feels compelled to take the floor to exercise its right of reply in response to the references made concerning the Malvinas Islands in the statement delivered by the representative of the United Kingdom.

Argentina wishes to reiterate the unique situation of the Argentine territory of the Malvinas Islands, in accordance with the content of the interpretative declaration issued by the Republic of Argentina during its ratification of the Ottawa Convention, on 14 September 1999. To date, that declaration has not been modified and constitutes the basic foundation of the extension granted to my country to fulfil the provisions of article 5 of the Convention.

The only parts of Argentine territory affected by anti-personnel mines are the Malvinas Islands.

However, Argentina is prevented from accessing those mines in order to comply with its obligations assumed under the Convention, as that territory, together with the South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, are illegally occupied by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and are the subject of a sovereignty dispute.

Indeed, the General Assembly has recognized the existence of that sovereignty dispute and has urged both Governments to resume negotiations to reach a peaceful and definitive solution as soon as possible. In that same vein, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples annually adopts a draft resolution stating that this special and unique colonial situation must end in a peaceful and negotiated manner, and requests both Governments to resume negotiations to that end. The most recent of those draft resolutions (A/AC.109/2018/L.8) was adopted on 21 June.

However, despite the reiterated declarations of the United Nations and other regional and international forums, the United Kingdom continues to ignore the calls of the international community to resume bilateral negotiations aimed at finding a peaceful and definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

Following its request for an extension on 1 October 2009, Argentina presented an outline plan to implement article 5 of the Ottawa Convention in the disputed areas over 10 years, on the basis that sovereignty negotiations between the United Kingdom and the Argentine Republic resume and that, in that framework, both parties reach an agreement on clearing anti-personnel mines, including unexploded ordnance.

The Argentine Republic reaffirms its sovereign right over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which are an integral part of its national territory.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands or the surrounding maritime areas of both territories, nor about the principle and the right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in article 1

of the two International Covenants on Human Rights, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. That means that there can be no dialogue on sovereignty unless the Falkland Islanders so wish. The 2013 referendum sent a clear message that the people of the Islands do not want dialogue on sovereignty. Argentina should respect those wishes.

The United Kingdom's relationship with the Falkland Islands and all of its overseas territories is a modern one, based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each territory to determine their own future. The Republic of Argentina continues to deny that that fundamental human right applies to the people of the Falkland Islands and acts in ways that go against the principles established in the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Verdier (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Unfortunately, I am compelled to once again take the floor.

Argentina reiterates that the principle of the self-determination of peoples, on which the United Kingdom is basing its refusal to resume sovereignty negotiations, does not apply to the controversy between the two countries over the sovereignty of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, in accordance with resolutions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

Unlike other colonial cases in which the General Assembly has recognized the applicability of the principle of self-determination, that is not referenced in any of the resolutions on the question of the Malvinas Islands. Moreover, in 1985, the General Assembly rejected two amendment attempts that sought to incorporate a reference to the principle of self-determination into the resolution on the question of the Malvinas Islands.

The Argentine Republic, in line with what has been indicated by others from Latin America and the Caribbean, represented by various groups, reiterates that the illegitimate vote that took place in the Malvinas Islands is a British unilateral act that, above all, alters the essence of the question of the Malvinas Islands and does not end the sovereignty dispute or affect the legitimate rights of Argentina. That is proved by the fact

that the voting did not alter the conduct of the sessions of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee held since that date, which continued to adopt draft resolutions on the question of the Malvinas Islands by consensus, as usual.

The sovereignty dispute will not be settled by the outcome of a so-called referendum in which British citizens demonstrated their desire to remain British. Allowing the British citizens of the Islands to become arbitrators of a dispute to which their own country is party distorts the right of peoples to self-determination, since, on the Malvinas Islands, there is no people that can be defined as such by international law. Argentina recalls that the interests of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands and their way of life are adequately protected by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, as well as by the Constitution of the Argentine Republic.

The Argentine Republic reaffirms its legitimate sovereign right over the Malvinas Islands, South

Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime area, which are an integral part of the Argentine territory.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): I will be brief and spare the First Committee a history lesson. However, the United Kingdom is clear about both the historical and legal position on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. The United Kingdom has never implanted any civilian population. All civilians voluntarily migrated to, or were born in, the Falkland Islands. Civilian migrants voluntarily came from a large number of countries, as they did throughout the whole Americas region, including Argentina, during the nineteenth century. The Republic of Argentina's claim to the Islands, which it bases on the principle of disruption to its territorial integrity, is without foundation, as the Islands have never been legitimately administered by, or formed part of, the sovereign territory of the Republic of Argentina.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.