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Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Choi (Republic of Korea)

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

Agenda items 85 to 105 (*continued*)

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

Mr. Loebel (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the member States of the South American Common Market (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and the Association of States — Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela — to speak about anti-personnel landmines.

Our subregion is located on a continent that has first-hand experience of the consequences of landmines. The destructive power of such weapons and the damage that they can do extend far beyond the conflicts that gave rise to them. Such consequences can be measured not only in terms of immediate human or material destruction, but also in terms of development or the slowing of such development. That is why our subregion is calling for the universalization of the Ottawa Convention. In this connection, we wish to express our satisfaction at the growing number of States that are committing themselves to the letter and spirit of the Convention.

Our member countries have fulfilled our legal requirements with regard to the elimination of those weapons, first of all, by establishing our subregion as a

zone of peace. After that, and in the framework of the Organization of American States, we supported the declaration of the Western Hemisphere as a zone free from anti-personnel landmines. From the beginning, we have supported and defended the instrument that became the Ottawa Convention, which we have signed and ratified. Respecting the provisions of the Convention, our countries continue to make progress on eliminating arsenals under their jurisdiction, given the resources available. In addition, they have participated in demining activities in complement with peacekeeping operations in other regions of the world.

The commitment of MERCOSUR and its associated States to the cause of eliminating those weapons has led them to actively participate in the first Review Conference, held in Nairobi at the end of last year. The Conference enabled our countries not only to share ideas and experiences with the rest of the international community but also to reaffirm the need to continue working towards attaining the goals of the Convention. The Review Conference's Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009 reflects the enormous task ahead of us. While the Action Plan is ambitious, it is realistic. At the same time, we trust that the sixth Meeting of States Parties, to take place in Zagreb in November, will provide an initial opportunity to assess the situation since the Nairobi Conference.

Many millions of anti-personnel mines have been destroyed or removed. But those efforts are not enough. There are areas of the world where the mine clearance process still requires a great deal of time and

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money before the affected communities can return to the development process.

For that reason, MERCOSUR and the associated States renew their call for international cooperation in the area of financial assistance. Our countries are in a position to complement such financial backing with the provision of specialized human resources. On many occasions, the officials of our armed forces have demonstrated their competence and proficiency in the planning and execution of humanitarian mine clearance, such as the operations carried out by the Organization of American States in Central and South America. The member States and the associated States of MERCOSUR want to use those capacities for the benefit of the global efforts to eliminate anti-personnel mines. To do that, we depend on the necessary financial support of States and regional and international organizations able to contribute. Without those resources, we could not advance at the pace required by the circumstances.

Mr. Lezona (Congo) (*spoke in French*): The anti-mine struggle is at the heart of the concerns of the international community, which is striving to free peoples from suffering caused by anti-personnel mines throughout the world. Those deadly artefacts do serious damage not just to their direct victims but to the families of the victims as well, who must cope with an added social and economic burden.

The Government of the Congo welcomes the fact that the campaign against mines today has become a global struggle. The Nairobi summit on a mine-free world, held from 29 November to 3 December 2004, enabled the international community to evaluate the progress made by States in that area and to adopt the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009. The four main points of that Plan are universal adherence by States to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the destruction of mine stockpiles, the demining of mined areas and assistance to victims. The Sixth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, to be held from 28 November to 2 December in Zagreb, Croatia, will provide a further opportunity for States parties to evaluate progress made since the Nairobi Summit.

Some progress has been made since the last meeting. With respect to the goal of universal accession, there are now 147 States parties to the

Convention. The Republic of the Congo, which currently holds the presidency of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) welcomes the fact that all States members of ECCAS are parties to the Convention.

With respect to mine removal, we are pleased to note the demining activities and the measures taken to reduce risks, which have significantly reduced the number of mine-related casualties.

Assistance to victims has an important place in the campaign against mines, because assistance to victims enables them truly to integrate into society.

However, it has to be recognized that challenges remain, because certain States have not yet acceded to the Convention, because more than 180 million mines are still stockpiled and because some States continue to use anti-personnel mines. Furthermore, universal adherence to the Convention is limited by the fact that non-State actors produce, stockpile and use mines.

I would like to underline the fact that my country's mine stockpiles were destroyed in September 2003 and that the mine removal process is currently under way in the mined areas in the departments of Bouenza and Kouilou, in the southern part of the country, bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola. My delegation takes this opportunity to appeal once again to the international community, in particular the United Nations, for technical and financial assistance for effective demining activities and the resumption of agricultural activity in the area.

For that reason, my delegation urges the delegations of other States to unanimously adopt the draft resolution on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (A/C.1/60/L.56), of which we are a sponsor.

Ms. Jusufaj (Albania): My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement on the cluster on conventional weapons made by Ambassador Freeman of the United Kingdom on behalf of European Union.

Through its active preventive diplomacy and enhanced cooperation with neighbouring and regional countries, Albania aspires to ensure its basic security interests and meet its international obligations. Albania is fully committed to cooperation in the region and

beyond on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Recognizing the importance of the issue of small arms and light weapons, it has taken strong measures at the national level to prevent the illicit trafficking of arms.

Albania welcomes the politically binding draft international instrument agreed upon by the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. It provides States with an important tool to enhance cooperation in tracing the sources of the leakage of small arms and light weapons into the illicit trade. However, we share the regret of other delegations at the absence of an international legal instrument in that field.

Albania has taken due measures to successfully and fully implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Through continuous commitments based on the Programme of Action, with the assistance of and in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and other donors, Albania has implemented various programmes and projects to fulfil its international obligations in this area. We have closely cooperated with and been active participants in various regional initiatives to strengthen control of small arms and light weapons. Albania is committed to 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. In that regard, the Albanian Government is working intensively to complete a national legal framework in the weapons control field. In addition, a 2002-2003 project on control of small arms and light weapons led to 300,000 small arms being collected and controlled.

Albania is fully committed to apply the European Union Common Position on arms brokering, and is drafting appropriate national legislation on brokering activities. We also think that an international instrument on arms brokering would bring about positive new developments in this field.

Albania is active in a Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) programme, Operation Safe Place, that aims to improve inter-agency and intergovernmental cooperation on preventing small arms and light weapons trafficking across the region. In December 2004, a regional planning meeting for

Operation Safe Place — organized jointly by the Government of Albania, the SECI Regional Centre for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption and Saferworld, an organization based in the United Kingdom — was held in Albania.

I am pleased to note that just a few days ago Albania began implementing a project to destroy thousands of tons of munitions at the destruction facility established at the Mjekës military factory, under the supervision of the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency. With the implementation of this project, the facility will become a regional centre for demilitarization.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): Before I take the floor on conventional weapons, I would like to thank my colleagues here for their expressions of sympathy and support for the victims of the earthquake of 8 October and for the people of Pakistan as a whole. The scale and severity of the catastrophe, the loss of thousands of precious lives, the suffering of the injured and the bereaved families, and the devastation left by the earthquake have all raised profound questions about nature, human preparedness for such calamities and our bonds as a global community.

From out of this darkest cloud have come the most shining examples of the human spirit and solidarity. My colleagues here have expressed their deepest sympathy with palpable sincerity and their Governments have provided generous humanitarian assistance. I thank them all. Rescue and relief operations continue, but as a harsh winter besets the remote villages and townships in the mountainous regions, we will need everyone's continued solidarity and support for the arduous task of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

In my intervention, I will touch on the subjects of conventional weapons, the Convention on Conventional Weapons, explosive remnants of war, mines other than anti-personnel mines, and small arms and light weapons.

At the beginning of the First Committee meetings this year, Under-Secretary-General Abe cautioned us that the preponderant focus on the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD) should not divert our attention from matters relating to the regulation and reduction of conventional arms and armed forces. We agree. Unfortunately, that is precisely what is happening. Conventional weapons and armaments and

the global trade in them are becoming something of a blind spot for the international community. While international attention is focused on the need to control WMD — and rightly so — the trade in conventional weapons continues to flourish in a legal and moral vacuum. After an initial decline in the outlays on conventional weapons in the immediate aftermath of the cold war, in recent years we have seen a surge in expenditure and a build-up of conventional armaments and armed forces. Conventional weapons are used in scores of conflicts raging in different parts of the world.

Conventional arms include small arms and light weapons, which, no doubt, can also have a destabilizing impact. However, an overemphasis on small and light weapons control — indeed, a disproportionate focus on them — tends to eclipse the issue of sophisticated conventional weapons and technology being traded in huge quantities around the globe.

The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I) characterized the global military expenditure in 1978 as a “colossal waste of resources” (*resolution S-10/2, para. 16*) and called not only for reductions in such spending, but for the reinvestment of those resources into efforts to fight poverty and improve the human condition. By that yardstick, cumulatively, global trends in military expenditures worldwide are both staggering and alarming. In 2004, total military spending rose to \$1.035 trillion. In contrast, the total budget of the United Nations, mandated to maintain international peace and security, is less than 1.5 per cent of the world’s military expenditure.

Third world countries are the favoured destination for arms sales. New markets are being explored, created and sought after. Globalized arms production and sales ignore the grave humanitarian, political and strategic consequences of conventional weapons proliferation. Arms sellers often encourage both sides in a conflict to buy more weapons. The only question asked is who has the money. The result is a series of regional arms races, mostly in volatile parts of the world. In fact, arms vendors from different countries often compete for a bigger slice of a country’s growing defence budget and propel such growth. Some of them see conflict situations as unique selling opportunities. While trying to facilitate talks to ease tensions, senior officials have used such occasions

to lobby for the purchase of sophisticated military equipment produced by their national manufacturers. Those officials market weapons, even as they seek to mediate peace.

The demand for weapons emanates from either insecurity or ambition. Some States are seeking to build up their national air, sea and land forces with a view to becoming a global power, often with the self-proclaimed intent of dominating their region. Other States, affected by the arms imbalance thus created, are then obliged to acquire weapons to ensure a minimum capability to deter aggression and domination. The build up of such massive arms acquisitions not only diverts desperately needed resources from development and poverty alleviation, but also contributes to instability and insecurity at regional and global levels.

In view of these disturbing trends, it is imperative that we pursue conventional arms control, at the lowest possible levels of armaments and military forces, in order to promote regional and international peace and security. We believe that the preservation of a balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest levels of armaments should be the prime objective of conventional arms control.

I would like to recall the definitive and authoritative direction given by SSOD I:

“Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out on the balanced reduction of armed 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” (*Ibid., para. 22*).

We must step up efforts to curb excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons as well as their uncontrolled transfers. Moreover, conventional arms control must both address the root causes of insecurity, emanating from disputes, conflicts and perceived threats and seek to promote balance among regional States. We need to follow up such affirmations with concrete action.

First, the Department of Disarmament Affairs can analyse the data on arms transfers and help States develop benchmarks for conventional arms control at regional and subregional levels. On 30 August 2002,

on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, Secretary General Kofi Annan stated:

“If the effectiveness of this tool were strengthened further, it could serve as a significant early warning mechanism, contributing with other instruments to the prevention of conflict and to restraint in arms acquisition” (*Press Release SG/SM/8355*).

That assessment remains valid.

Secondly, the Conference on Disarmament can consider formulation of the principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control.

A stable balance of conventional forces is necessary to ensure strategic stability, particularly in the regions riven with tensions. The massive introduction of sophisticated weaponry accentuates conventional asymmetries and compels greater reliance on nuclear and missile deterrence in the regions that have such capabilities.

In South Asia, we are pursuing a strategic restraint regime, which has three constituents: nuclear and missile restraint, conventional balance, and conflict resolution. Even as we sustain confidence-building and composite dialogue to address outstanding issues and work towards strategic stability and nuclear risk reduction, we will continue to strive for a conventional weapons balance at the lowest possible level of armaments. In the interest of peace and security in South Asia, there must be restraint both in the demand and the supply of conventional weapons.

Pakistan is fully committed to the faithful implementation of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its additional Protocols. The delicate balance in these instruments — to minimize human suffering without sacrificing the legitimate security interests of States — must be maintained.

The Convention's Protocol on the Explosive Remnants of War, though not perfect, is a significant step forward in the field of international humanitarian law. Its real value will be judged by its faithful implementation. Therefore, instead of discussing its further refinements or modifications, the focus should be on the Protocol's entry into force and implementation. Pakistan's armed forces are being

trained and sensitized at all levels to the principles of international humanitarian law relating to humanity, discrimination, proportionality, and superfluous injury. Legal advisers are associated with planning at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

This August, extensive discussions on anti-vehicle mines were held by the Group of Governmental Experts. Divergences remain. We are of the view that the CCW and its five Protocols adequately address humanitarian aspects of mines, including anti-vehicle mines. Anti-vehicle mines are defensive weapons meant to deter aggression and to avert war, and can thus, contribute to stability in a conflict situation. In our case, empirical evidence gathered over the past 55 years has established that anti-vehicle mines have not caused civilian or military casualties. Further discussions on mines other than anti-personnel mines should focus on the questions of varied requirements, national capacities and illicit transfers to non-State actors. We banned the export of mines in 1999.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has worked out a balance between humanitarian concerns and the legitimate security needs of States and rightly focuses on illicit trade. This balance and focus must be maintained. Member States have achieved considerable progress in implementing the Programme of Action nationally, regionally and at international levels. The recent conclusion of the international marking and tracing instrument was an important step forward in furthering the objectives of the United Nations Programme of Action. The next important issue is illicit brokering, which should be taken up by a group of governmental experts in pursuance of the General Assembly resolution.

We look forward to actively participating in next year's Review Conference, which we hope will maintain the spirit of consensus that has characterized the discussions and negotiations on various aspects of small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Anigbo (Nigeria): It is commonly acknowledged that nuclear and similar weapons have mass destructive capacity, but it is conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, that are actually killing people worldwide. This fact was recognized by world leaders in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) when they called for the

fulfilment by Member States of their obligations under the three major international documents on conventional arms.

As an African country, Nigeria understands the real negative impact of this class of weapons on affected States. It is for this reason that Nigeria has remained steadfast in its commitment to fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and to the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action. Over the years, Nigeria had taken steps and major initiatives in that direction. Apart from being a major motivator and part of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa, Nigeria has spent more than \$12 billion in the last 15 years in various efforts to stem the tide of recurrent conflicts in West Africa that have been fuelled by illicit circulation in the subregion of an estimated 8 million small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, thousands of Nigerian soldiers and civilians have lost their lives in peacekeeping endeavours in the affected countries.

In addition to its role in the ECOWAS Moratorium, Nigeria is one of the 10 African States participating in a regional pilot project known as the small arms transparency and control regime in Africa, sponsored by the Governments of Finland and Sweden. Under this project, the 10 participating African States have agreed to build, on a voluntary basis, a transparency regime on matters pertaining to the licit flows of small arms and light weapons. It is encouraging to note that the prospect of achieving the overall objective of the project to build the capacity of the participating States in order to prevent the diversion of licit arms flows into illicit networks remains bright.

Nigeria operates a strict firearms regime as further proof of its determination to keep these weapons out of circulation in the country. By Nigeria's Firearms Control Act, possession or acquisition of firearms for personal use requires approval from the highest authority. Efforts at controlling illicit small arms are extended to the borders. In November 2003, Nigeria initiated and hosted the First Tripartite Seminar on Enhanced Border Control and Security with its neighbouring States of Benin and Niger, involving the border operatives of the three countries. The Federal Executive Council has approved the communiqué that emerged from the seminar for implementation.

Through regular joint border patrols with its neighbours, Nigeria has continued the effort to keep track of the influx of illicit small arms into the country, and has sometimes succeeded in arresting and prosecuting transborder arms traffickers.

In a three-phase training programme, with support provided by the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Nigeria has trained over 200 border security personnel in modern methods of interdicting concealments by traffickers and smugglers, and cooperates with the police from other West African countries in tracing the movement of illicit arms across borders through the Interpol Bureau in West Africa, in which Nigeria has strong representation.

With the establishment of the Nigerian National Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons on 7 May 2001, we now have a national arms register and database. In addition to its other responsibilities, the Committee has continued to organize several training workshops and seminars for stakeholders on the issue of small arms.

Last year, Nigeria initiated moves for cooperative activities with the Department for Disarmament Affairs regarding a national action plan, as well as on capacity-building through the training of arms-related security operatives. We take this opportunity to express appreciation to Member States, especially Germany, which have initiated efforts in cooperating with Nigeria in this important endeavour.

Nigeria views as a positive development the agreement in June 2005 on an international instrument that would enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable manner. We, however, view that as only a stopgap measure, because we believe that it is only through a legally binding international instrument that the transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors can be effectively controlled. To stem the tide of illicit arms flows, it is imperative that consideration be given to limiting arms transfers to Governments and licensed and authorized arms traders.

Most Member States recognize the role of brokering in the illicit small arms trade, including the lack of common international standards for the regulation of the activities of arms brokers. As a result of the broad consultations carried out over a period of time, it is evident that Member States share a common

desire for the initiation of an effective process in that regard. The time is now ripe for the establishment of a group of governmental experts to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons, with a view to concluding a legally binding international instrument in that area.

The Nigerian delegation wishes to emphasize once again the importance of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes in preventing relapses into conflict. It is common knowledge that conflicts become prolonged and complex if they are not followed by effective DDR programmes. One lesson learned is that many DDR programmes fail because they are not made part of ceasefire agreements or are not included in the mandates and the budgets of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Nigeria is a good example of a country that carried out a successful DDR programme following its civil war in 1970, with the result that some ex-combatants rose to the highest level of service on behalf of the Nigerian Government and people. The Nigerian model is a perfect illustration of what can be achieved through genuine commitment to the reintegration process. We therefore urge that DDR programmes be made an integral part of the budget and the mandate of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

While we underline the importance of practical measures to eliminate the threat of illicit small arms, the Nigerian delegation does not wish to ignore the need for conflict-prevention measures, including early warning systems and the pursuit of negotiated solutions to conflicts, as such measures are the most effective means of minimizing the demand for illicit small arms. The international community should pay particular attention to the need to adopt such measures as the best strategy for peace.

A related issue is the need to create a favourable political atmosphere and adopt policies of inclusion in order to enhance harmonious relationships at the national and international levels and encourage a sense of belonging. This will strengthen democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance, as well as economic recovery and growth, all of which can work to eliminate conflict and ensure durable peace. This line of action is in conformity with the spirit of the

New Partnership for Africa's Development and the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

The Nigerian delegation underscores the need for all nations to be guided by the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter. This is the most enduring solution to the problem of illicit small arms.

Mr. Mine (Japan): Yesterday, we exchanged views about some of the important points of divergent positions within the Committee. Are there delegations that are prepared to comment on that exchange of views, in particular on the three points we discussed with the European Union? I have observed a certain structural difficulty within the Committee due to the technical aspects of certain issues and the need for experts to deal with them. Perhaps it is difficult for some delegations to address those issues without the necessary expertise. Having said that, I wonder whether it is still possible to get some reaction through you, Mr. Chairman, about what we discussed as it would be helpful to see the overall situation with respect to these points.

Mr. Roa (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wanted to endorse the statement made yesterday by Ambassador Mine of Japan, supplemented by his statement today, in connection with the proposals made. In that context, the delegation of Colombia would like to underline the importance we attach to the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. In that respect, we have considered the European Union's proposals on the language of that draft resolution.

The delegation of Colombia believes that the proposals have not achieved sufficient consensus among the international community to be included in our draft resolution. Our delegation would be in a position to consider their inclusion if they enjoyed consensus approval, but since that is not the case, we fully support the statement of the delegation of Japan in that regard.

Mr. Trezza (Italy): I refer to the invitation made by the representative of Japan to make additional comments on the question that was discussed yesterday regarding the draft resolution they presented on small arms and light weapons. Italy, of course, supports the statement made by the European Union presidency on

small arms and light weapons and its succeeding declarations.

First, we are grateful to Japan for presenting on behalf of the original sponsors a draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We want to underline the importance that we attach to the issue and to the draft resolution.

One of the main features of the draft resolution is the establishment of a group of governmental experts on illicit brokering. We support the establishment of that group, but we believe that the mandate should be more ambitious and should include a reference to the necessity of examining the feasibility of developing an international instrument to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons, including their ammunition.

Let me underline, on the one hand, the importance of being more specific in our objectives and, on the other, the close link between illicit arms and the ammunition of such arms. Illicit trafficking in ammunition can be as devastating as trafficking in weapons. In our view, this concept remains valid for illicit brokering. We listened to other delegations today, in particular the Albanian delegation, which made the same point.

I hope that Ambassador Mine, who is usually very receptive to requests from Italy, and the original sponsors of the draft resolution, will take a positive view of this request.

Ms. Mtshali (South Africa): My intervention has been prompted by the intervention made by the representative of the United Kingdom, who took the floor yesterday on the small arms and light weapons omnibus draft resolution that was introduced by Japan.

As delegations are aware, Colombia, Japan and South Africa are the main sponsors of the draft resolution. Arguments have been made that the draft resolution should be amended to include a number of additional issues. In this regard, South Africa would like to stress that the small arms omnibus draft resolution essentially seeks to operationalize the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. As such, the sponsors of the draft resolution have always deemed it important for the draft to be adopted by consensus.

As we all know, the search for consensus is often a difficult exercise. Some will always wish to add

language, while others will seek to subtract. The omnibus draft resolution, in its present form, represents that which the sponsors believe will attract consensus from all delegations. It was drafted in good faith and after considerable consultations, not only among the sponsors, but also with numerous important role-players. In this regard, I wish to express my appreciation for the tireless efforts of Ambassador Mine and his team.

The draft resolution seeks to promote the small arms and light weapons agenda by focusing on what is possible and achievable in the present circumstances. To add or subtract language, however well-intentioned such a proposal may be, could result in moving us away from consensus and would not appear to be the best course of action at the present time.

The preparatory process for the 2006 Review Conference will soon commence. Delegates will then have ample opportunity in advance to raise small arms and light weapons issues that are of particular importance to them.

South Africa has long been involved in the small arms and light weapons process, and we certainly view the 2006 Review Conference as a major event to further advance that cause. We would, therefore, appeal to all delegations to fully utilize this important event to maximum benefit.

In closing, I wish to add my voice to Ambassador Mine's invitation to delegations yesterday to express their views on this matter — on the omnibus draft resolution. This will certainly assist the draft resolution's sponsors to reflect on it, bearing in mind our wish for a consensus resolution.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): First, let me underline the fact that Norway greatly appreciates the efforts made by the sponsors of the omnibus draft resolution and what they have done over past years in tabling draft resolutions which we have all supported.

We agree that it is essential to reach consensus on such an important draft resolution, but we also very much appreciate the very kind invitation extended by Ambassador Mine to let delegations indicate their views on the language of the draft. In this respect, I will very briefly make two comments.

First, in our statement yesterday, we clearly stressed that we need a very good, strong mandate for the Group of Governmental Experts on brokering. This

has been a priority area for Norway for many years. Secondly, we hope that this General Assembly will give some directions for the Review Conference next year.

I say this just as a response to Ambassador Mine's invitation, but we should strive for a draft resolution that we can all support.

Mr. Maclachlan (Australia): I wish to thank Ambassador Mine for his invitation to comment on the draft resolution.

We agree entirely with delegations that have underlined the importance of consensus on this draft resolution. Small arms and light weapons and their illicit transfer is a vital issue — one on which we all should take action.

However, we must be careful to ensure that in our bid for consensus we do not sacrifice ambition, and in this regard we support the proposals, in particular the proposal to broaden and deepen the scope of the Group of Governmental Experts in 2006. We believe illicit brokering is a fundamental issue that we need to address in relation to small arms and light weapons and that, by expanding or raising, if you like, the level of ambition of that Group — who knows? — we may actually be successful in delivering a quality outcome that benefits us all.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): I would like to intervene in response to the kind invitation extended by Ambassador Mine of Japan. First of all, we would like to thank him and the delegation of Japan, along with the delegations of Colombia and South Africa, for the draft resolution on small arms.

With regard to what was raised yesterday with respect to the Group of Governmental Experts on brokering and the review process for the Programme of Action, it is our belief that it is important to proceed in a manner that would preserve the integrity of the review process. Hence, it is of vital importance that the procedure for the review follows the pattern to which we have agreed, through the preparatory committee meeting which is supposed to take place in January. Therefore, we do not share the view that, here at our meetings of the First Committee, we can really achieve consensus on issues that relate to the review of the United Nations Programme of Action on illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Therefore, we believe that the approach, as outlined by Ambassador Mine, is one that would ensure a consensus that is needed, not only for this draft resolution but also for the entire review process of the Programme of Action.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*spoke in French*): I did not plan to speak, but I am compelled to do so as a result of the statement made by my friend and colleague, the Ambassador of South Africa.

The consensus around the draft resolution on small arms is an essential element in the value that we attach to the efforts of the international community in this area. The principle of consensus on this draft resolution is just as dear to France's heart as it is to that of South Africa.

What leaves us dissatisfied in this affair is the fact that we feel that consensus must be the result of a process of dialogue and reciprocal effort. We can have no opportunity to engage in dialogue or to make all the efforts we are prepared to make if, from the outset — from the very first day — we are presented with a relatively unambitious draft text and told that no more can be done with it this year.

Of course, we trust the three sponsors to conduct consultations and to reflect, to the best of their abilities, the results of those consultations. We cannot be satisfied, however, with a situation in which there is no dialogue and in which the European Union, among others, has no opportunity to advance its arguments vis-à-vis those whom, we are told, are having problems.

I therefore want us to be properly understood so that there will be no misunderstanding. We do not want to end up with a text that does not enjoy consensus, but we would like that text to be the outcome of an open process in which we will have had the opportunity to make our case. We find that that is not sufficiently the case today.

Mr. Freeman (United Kingdom): As I responded to Ambassador Mine yesterday, and as he has raised this issue again this afternoon — in, I think, a genuine wish on his part to be as open as he can be — I would just like to make a couple of remarks and to thank those who have responded to Ambassador Mine's request, which is one that, obviously, we very much welcome both in its genuine commitment to

understanding others' views and in its encouragement to others to join in.

As he said yesterday, it is quite difficult sometimes in these meetings to turn positions around and have people articulating what they may wish to say in the margins, but are not quite so ready to say in the meeting. I think that is partly what my French colleague is referring to in terms of the need to have a dialogue that allows views to be fully expressed. Of course, I am grateful to the representatives of Australia, Norway and others who have spoken this afternoon and very much share the views of my fellow members of the European Union.

As I said, I would make just a couple of points, if I may, at this stage.

I think this is a useful initial exchange, but it is not a fully satisfactory exchange. However, there is still time in the days ahead to try and take up the point raised by the Ambassador of South Africa that the envelope of consensus can be pushed a little bit further. That would be in the interests of all of us who actually wish to achieve as ambitious outcomes as are possible and compatible with that consensus.

The other point I would just like to make in terms of those next few days and reflections on this issue is that one needs language in draft resolutions of this kind — particularly, perhaps, omnibus drafts — that is inclusive enough, that allows for the maximum number of possibilities and that does not appear to be closing off possibilities. One wants to be able to reflect ambition, at least, in an omnibus, as far as possible, to allow for possibilities.

Some of the points I made yesterday relate to that question of possibilities, which is why we suggested some specific additions that we think would strengthen a draft resolution we very much wish to encourage, of course. It is the degree of ambition that one has in mind.

Mr. Mine (Japan): I am sorry to ask for the floor again. I would like to take a look at what we have discussed today, hoping that I have understood quite well what has been pointed out.

I may be mistaken in understanding that someone has said that there was not enough dialogue. When we held open consultations, there was no response. I am not quite sure whether we should hold another consultation, because there was no response last time.

If we have another consultation, what kind of response are we going to get? I certainly noticed at the consultations that there was a reminder from the United Kingdom delegation, representing the European Union, that the Union has certain positions. That is all I had at the last consultations.

Now, having heard the different positions expressed at this meeting, I would like to consult with the two other sponsors and see what we can do, making use of the remaining time. That is what I think and what I would like to share with other people.

Mr. Freeman (United Kingdom): I wish very briefly to thank Ambassador Mine. I think that is a most positive and courteous response to the kind of discussion we have had. I look forward to contributing to whatever kind of further consultations he would wish to have.

The Chairman: Let us move on to the next segment, which is "Introduction of draft resolutions and decisions".

Mr. Koné (Mali) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the honour it has been accorded to introduce to the First Committee a draft resolution entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them", on behalf of the 15 States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

The draft text takes account of the major concern of West Africa, and indeed all Africa, in the sphere of disarmament and non-proliferation. Contained in document A/C.1/60/L.37, the draft resolution before the Committee is an updated version of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The major changes to it have been dictated by our desire to update it in the light of important developments that have intervened in respect of this issue since the last session.

As laid out in a straightforward manner in its preambular part, the draft resolution reflects the collective awareness of the West African subregion of the damage caused by small arms and light weapons to the security, stability and development of our States. It also reflects the political resolve of our States to bring

the illicit proliferation of such weapons under control through cooperation and to mitigate their devastating effects on our peoples and, indeed, on all humanity.

The bold initiatives taken since 1993 in West Africa, Africa as a whole and the United Nations are testimony — unnecessary though it may be — to the relevance of such measures as, inter alia, the ECOWAS moratorium on light weapons, the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position, and the drafting of an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons.

I should now like to draw the Committee's attention to the following new elements contained in the draft resolution before it.

The new title takes account of light weapons. The new first preambular paragraph recalls the resolution adopted last year. The new second and third preambular paragraphs summarize the substance of the second, third, fourth and fifth paragraphs of the former text, reflecting our concern to make the text shorter, more concise and more user-friendly. The new fourth preambular paragraph updates the sixth paragraph of last year's resolution. The other new elements help to align the text to the current context, while the last two operative paragraphs refer to the next session.

We thank in advance all delegations that may choose to join the Secretariat's list of co-sponsors of the draft resolution. We hope that the Committee will adopt the draft resolution by consensus, as it has at previous sessions.

Ms. Thunborg (Sweden): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/60/L.48, on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). I do so on behalf of more than 50 countries, including my own.

My delegation is grateful to all the sponsoring countries for their support for this important draft resolution. We hope that many more countries will join us in the coming weeks, among them, hopefully, all 94 parties to the Convention.

The Third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention will take place in November next year. At that time, the important Protocol on

Explosive Remnants of War should have entered into force. We call upon all States parties to follow the example of the 13 countries that already have done so to adhere to the Protocol as soon as possible. The new Protocol will contribute significantly towards minimizing the humanitarian consequences of explosive remnants of war.

We call upon all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention and to its Protocols. Greater adherence will aid us in our work to ban or restrict the use of weapons that cause unnecessary suffering or that affect soldiers or civilians indiscriminately. It will help us in our work towards banning or restricting weapons that leave undetectable fragments in the human body, mines and booby traps, incendiary weapons, blinding laser weapons, and explosive remnants of war.

We call upon all States that have not yet done so to extend the scope of the Convention and its Protocols to include armed conflicts of a non-international character. Leading up to the Review Conference next year, we will increase our efforts to promote the universalization of all those instruments of the Convention.

We will also work to ensure that progress is made on other important substantive issues at the Review Conference. We take this opportunity to express well-deserved support for the ongoing work of the Chairperson-designate and the two coordinators. We encourage the Group of Governmental Experts to consider all proposals on mines, other than anti-personnel mines, put forward since its establishment, with the aim of elaborating appropriate recommendations at the meeting in November. We also encourage the Chairperson-designate and the Group to report on the work done on compliance, as well as on the implementation of existing principles of international humanitarian law and on possible preventive measures aimed at improving the design of certain specific types of munitions, including submunitions.

I hope that the draft resolution, as in previous years, will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me, on behalf of France, Germany and the other sponsors — Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Mali, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey — to

introduce a draft resolution on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, contained in document A/C.1/60/L.40.

Surplus ammunition stockpiles play an often underestimated role in post-conflict areas. They can also contribute to starting or perpetuating new conflicts in those same areas, because surplus ammunition, the securing of which entails a net cost for States, can be diverted from military stockpiles into zones of instability, where they fuel and exacerbate conflicts and violence.

The draft resolution is inspired by achievements in various regional frameworks, with the assistance of approved funding mechanisms. Ours is a cooperative approach based on dialogue and seeks to impart a universal dimension to our efforts. We wish to insist first and foremost on the national responsibility of States to evaluate their excess stockpiles and to determine whether external assistance is needed to eliminate associated risks. It is in that context that the international community can be brought to cooperate with those States at their request.

That approach has a few concrete implications, which it will be useful to qualify and prioritize. We in no way wish to promote any form of intrusiveness. I repeat that it is up to States and to them alone to determine what is excessive in their stockpiles. We must, however, encourage those who bear that primary responsibility to take the appropriate measures to manage surplus ammunitions.

States must also educate their armed forces and security forces on every aspect of the issue and assess the stockpiles that they wish to maintain.

It is clear that we do not seek to define the notion of conventional ammunition. We wish to promote a broad and open approach that will give maximum flexibility to the international community's actions. We must not be restrictive in the implementation of such a voluntary and cooperative mechanism.

Regarding the overall philosophy guiding the draft resolution, we hope to promote a pragmatic and voluntary approach. We believe that voluntary assessments, on the one hand, and international assistance, on the other, should be linked. Our longer-term objective is to have a positive impact on the illicit trade in ammunition.

France and Germany organized an open-ended meeting at which we were encouraged by the failure of any delegation to raise any major difficulties. Moreover, we heard many suggestions for useful and interesting improvements, as well as constructive contributions. In introducing this draft resolution to the First Committee for the first time, we therefore welcome the spirit of dialogue that has prevailed in the debate.

We have tried to take the greatest possible account of the remarks that were made by participating delegations. The draft text before us therefore reflects certain amendments to the distributed version. We will continue to work on the content of the draft resolution with all delegations that wish to do so and hope that others will do us the honour of becoming sponsors.

Mr. Maclachlan (Australia): Australia was greatly encouraged by the consensus adoption in the First Committee, during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, of the resolution on the prevention of the illicit transfer and unauthorized access to and use of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). But we have decided this year, with the co-sponsorship of Argentina, Kenya, Thailand and Turkey, to reintroduce the draft resolution with updates.

It is a sad fact that the threat posed to international security, and to civil aviation in particular, by terrorists' acquisition and use of MANPADS remains undiminished. The potential costs, both in terms of the loss of innocent lives and in economic terms, demands national action and international cooperation.

This draft resolution encourages Member States to take concrete steps to exercise effective control to prevent MANPADS from falling into the hands of non-State end users. In addition to controls over stockpile security and transfers — including transfers of components — we are encouraging Member States to incorporate controls over training and instruction materials, which may assist non-State actors in their use of these weapons.

An additional element in this year's draft resolution acknowledges the role of the unauthorized transfer of materials and information in assisting the illicit manufacturing of MANPADS. It reflects the importance of effective controls over the illicit manufacturing of small arms and light weapons, such as MANPADS, to combating illicit transfers.

Delegations will recall that it was a vital element of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, which we agreed in 2001.

I want to make one point perfectly clear: this draft resolution safeguards authorized trade between Governments. We recognize that MANPADS are a legitimate weapon system in authorized hands. The draft resolution is a response to the increasing international concern about the potential use of these weapons by terrorist groups, and especially about the risk that they pose to civil aviation.

The draft resolution recognizes the importance of information exchange and transparency in the trade in MANPADS to build confidence and security among States. It complements the First Committee's omnibus small-arms draft resolution and supports the Committee's goal of addressing contemporary security concerns. Australia also welcomes progress achieved at the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, including with regard to the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The draft resolution also takes a practical approach. For States requesting assistance, it encourages initiatives aimed at mobilizing resources and technical expertise to assist in enhancing national controls and stockpile management practices.

We note the considerable efforts of others in controlling illicit transfers of MANPADS. In that regard, Australia welcomes the complementary work of the International Civil Aviation Organization, including its resolution A35-11, addressing the specific threat posed by MANPADS, and the establishment of a secure website for the exchange of information on MANPADS.

Australia is grateful for the useful comments and suggestions that we have received to date on the draft resolution. The text has been adjusted to take into account views expressed during the informal consultations, and I would like to add that we will hold additional informal consultations on Monday. We believe, however, that the text now strikes a good balance between preventing the proliferation and unauthorized use of MANPADS and the rights of Governments to possess and trade in MANPADS with other Governments in the interests of their national security.

In addition to the sponsors that I mentioned earlier, the draft resolution has already received many other sponsors. Australia encourages delegations to consider the draft favourably and, if they so wish, to join its list of sponsors.

Mr. Landman (Netherlands): Of the draft resolutions that the Netherlands is presenting, I should like to briefly introduce two. The first is draft resolution A/C.1/60/L.34, entitled "Addressing the humanitarian and development impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons".

In the spirit of First Committee reform, this is a one-time-only draft resolution addressing a compelling issue at the right time. It should be seen as a balanced attempt to distil from the recent major meeting on United Nations reform those issues that are relevant to the small-arms agenda. In our opinion, if a consensus of heads of State or Government has developed on issues relevant to our work, it is our duty to take that consensus into account in our work. And there has not been very much consensus in our area.

This draft resolution takes a broad approach to security and disarmament, as do some other First Committee draft resolutions, such as the ones on environmental risks, disarmament education and the relationship between disarmament and development. Such an approach indeed reflects the interconnectedness of issues, which our heads of State or Government underlined.

Some delegations have expressed the concern that the draft resolution could pre-empt the upcoming small-arms review conference. We have taken care to address that concern. Let me stress that the draft resolution is a text that will be finalized this coming week. It is our intention to find consensual support for it. That is why we have already held three open-ended consultations, with two more to be held next week. The very positive response to this process has already led to cross-regional sponsorship from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The second draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/60/L.35, is entitled "National legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology". After many cross-regional requests for co-sponsorship of the draft resolution in past years, we are now considering opening it to co-sponsorship.

Effective national control of the transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology — which includes transfers that could contribute to proliferation activities — is an important tool for enhancing international peace and security. Moreover, the exchange of national legislation, regulations and procedures on export controls could serve as a point of reference for States that are in the process of developing or improving such national legislation.

Let me conclude by inviting those Member States that are interested in co-sponsoring this draft resolution to approach us in the coming days.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I should like at the outset to apologize for a slight violation of discipline, because I must say something of a technical nature relating to our previous work.

We listened with great interest to the discussions on the basic proposals made by the representatives of Japan, Colombia and the Republic of South Africa regarding the draft resolution on small arms and light weapons, of which Russia is a sponsor. We, like other sponsors, have a number of technical questions. It is true that the introduction of new elements could violate the consensus. But the introduction of new elements into the draft resolution might also change the number of sponsors. We are happy that consultations will be continued on that subject. We would simply like to ask the representative of the European Union to submit his proposals in written form so that we can send them back to our capitals, have them examined at expert level and then express our views on them.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like, on behalf of five Central Asian States — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — to introduce the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/60/L.7, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

When this initiative was first put forward, the General Assembly adopted by consensus a number of resolutions and decisions on the matter, thereby demonstrating that there was total support by the international community for the initiative of the Central Asian States. We are grateful to the Department

for Disarmament Affairs and to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for their significant support and assistance in transforming Central Asia into a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

It is gratifying to note that that nuclear-weapon-free zone is regarded as being one of the most important elements in the strategy to strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation process. Thus, it has been observed that the non-nuclear-weapon States have been initiating cooperation in this area. We welcome the successful holding, last April in Mexico, of the first Conference of the States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones.

Given the legal nature of the proposal, we must keep that item on our agenda. The delegation of Uzbekistan, has the honour to introduce, on behalf of the five Central Asian States, the draft decision to the Committee for its consideration. I would like to express gratitude for the fact that, as in previous years, the draft decision has the support of all delegations and will be adopted by consensus.

Programme of work

The Chairman: Next Monday, we will continue our thematic discussions on the subject of regional disarmament and security, together with other disarmament measures and international security. A number of delegations have expressed curiosity as to which cluster the question of disarmament and non-proliferation education would be discussed under. Given past practice, I suggest that that question be addressed on Monday, since we will be discussing other disarmament measures. Furthermore, the Chairman of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, Mr. Vicente Berasategui, will be our guest speaker at that meeting. Time will be also set aside for an informal question-and-answer session with him.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): I am taking the floor to express our thanks and appreciation to the Secretary of the Committee for having distributed yesterday the log of draft resolutions and their status. I want to express our gratitude to the Secretariat for that; we did not have time to do so yesterday.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.