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First Committee

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Official Records

Chairperson: Mr. Marco Antonio Suazo (Honduras)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 81 to 96 (continued)

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

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall continue our discussion of conventional weapons and the introduction of draft resolutions.

I welcome Mr. Dalius Čekuolis, Chairman of the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and invite him to share his thoughts with us and tell us of the progress being made.

Mr. Čekuolis (Chairman, Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects): I thank you, Sir, and the Committee for a very supportive, inclusive attitude towards our Third Biennial Meeting, held in July. I hope that by now only the very best impressions prevail.

I wish to start the discussion and, in modest terms, see how we can further build upon the momentum and therefore have our value added to this very important small arms process.

The Secretary-General in his April report entitled “Small Arms” (S/2008/258) observed that small arms and light weapons were the weapons of choice in crime and conflict. The Geneva Declaration latest report, “Global Burden of Armed Violence”, estimates that more than 740,000 people are killed each year as a result of such violence, both directly and indirectly, with approximately two thirds of those deaths occurring outside war zones. Some regions suffer much more than others. Nevertheless, every country is affected to some degree.

As a result of all the tens of meetings we held, collectively or bilaterally, I clearly felt that another diplomatic stalemate was no longer affordable. The Third Biennial Meeting has put the United Nations small arms process back on track. Its modest and unequivocal success came in the form of rich, in-depth and focused discussions, and almost universal agreement on the way forward, the first such agreement in seven years.

The Meeting did not amend the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), but it provided the means to spur their implementation at the global, national and, most important, regional levels.

I will spare the Committee an account of the Meeting or the process leading to the outcome document. We tried to sum up our experience in an article, “Tackling the illicit small arms trade”, published this month in the journal *Arms Control Today*, which can be accessed at www.armscontrol.org.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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The article sheds light on the preparatory process, method of work, factors that pulled towards the success, and, importantly, the next steps.

Shortly the First Committee will adopt an omnibus small arms draft resolution (A/C.1/63/L.57), sponsored by Japan, South Africa and Colombia, which will provide the framework for our future work. Hence, commending the sponsors for their work, I will try to focus today on the future of the small arms process — the way forward — as I see it, inspired by the Third Biennial Meeting of States.

First, it is important to give immediate effect to concepts and agreements contained in the outcome document. Most importantly, the States agreed at the Meeting on the significance of regional approaches to the implementation of the Programme of Action. Regional efforts play a central and essential role in connecting global commitments with national actions. Regional meetings, in this regard, will play an important role. Regional and subregional organizations and frameworks, however, will have to step up, in particular in building national capacities, increasing cooperation and assistance, and building support for action on the Meeting outcome recommendations.

The next point is establishment of the Programme of Action Implementation Support System of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the database of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for matching needs and resources. I believe that States will use those two instruments, in particular enhancing the exchange of information and building national capacity. We need greater familiarization with the tools among recipient and donor communities if we are to follow up on a commitment agreed at the Meeting: to translate assistance needs into concrete projects with measurable goals.

National reporting also requires special attention. The Meeting stressed the importance to Programme implementation of national reporting. Now we expect less frequent but more comprehensive reports. To increase comparability, further developing of reporting templates will be needed. Templates may usefully reflect concrete assistance or capacity needs, available resources, assistance guidelines, contact points for projects, and so on. National reporting has to be tuned to concrete implementation steps and challenges. The more systematic analysis of reports will give guidance

on where resources and diplomatic action are required most.

Although Programme of Action meetings are invariably held in New York, much of the expertise on small arms lies with the national missions — and intergovernmental and civil society organizations — in Geneva. I recognize colleagues from Geneva, and I truly mean it when I say that the link New York-Geneva and Geneva-New York is of great importance, and will continue to be. The Geneva Process held the first meeting last week in New York, debating ways to bridge the New York and Geneva disarmament communities, civil society, United Nations implementation agencies and partners. Developing an informal forum in New York, a kind of counterpart to the Geneva Process, is worth pursuing.

Making better use of civil society expertise is extremely important. Civil society made an important contribution to the success of the Meeting. Non-governmental organizations make a salient contribution in the field, building national capacities in many States and acting as implementing partners of many projects. The Meeting has taken a first modest step, one hopes, towards a more interactive and productive relationship with civil society at future United Nations small arms meetings. Civil society's active involvement, in New York and in many regions, in a preparatory process for the next biennial meeting will be essential.

So far I have elaborated on the way forward process-wise. The process, frameworks and meetings are mere tools and means to tackle real issues. It is much more important to follow up on ideas of substance developed over previous years or debated at the Meeting.

On illicit brokering, States agreed to take further steps to implement the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts. Regional and national efforts must be intensified in this regard. States also agreed to use international cooperation and end-user certification/verification to address this problem. Consideration of possible negotiation of a legally binding instrument is another important step.

With regard to stockpile management and surplus disposal, States emphasized the link between effective stockpile management and surplus identification and responsible disposal. Regional and national efforts will now endeavour to focus on enhanced cooperation;

information exchange; capacity-building; technical assistance; financial support where needed; regular and full review of management, safety and security measures; and review of national stocks. States agreed in July to compile lessons learned in stockpile management and to develop practical guidelines. The Secretary-General may play a significant role in developing such guidelines, in my view.

The outcome on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument stressed the mutually reinforcing nature of weapons marking, record keeping and tracing. The next steps for the ITI are relatively clear: training of national personnel; bringing national laws and regulations into line with the ITI; assistance to non-manufacturing States for import marking; further development of the INTERPOL Weapons Electronic Tracing System; and more comprehensive reporting on ITI implementation.

The outcome document lists the issues that various States — not necessarily the United Nations membership as a whole — consider important to Programme implementation. Those are, in essence, placeholders for future topics, subject to further discussion and negotiation.

One of those topics commands a great deal of consensus now and is worth vigorously pursuing. Verifying the identity of the end-users of weapons shipments is an important means of preventing diversion of the weapons to the illicit market and of enforcing arms embargoes. Without a standard format for authenticated end-use certificates, Governments in transit States have little means of establishing their veracity. Some regional instruments address end-user certification and verification, but no global instrument on end-use verification exists.

The Secretary-General in his 2008 report on small arms recommended developing an international framework for authentication, reconciliation and standardization of end-user certificates. In the outcome document of the Meeting, States stressed the importance of end-user verification, including certification and standardization. This year's omnibus small arms draft resolution I think will prod us to commence working on this practical issue.

Summing up, I wish to observe that the Third Biennial Meeting, although in my view quite successful, is only one additional step on the road. Long-term success in meeting the small arms challenge

will require the sustained commitment of all Member States to effective action in collaboration with our partners in international organizations and civil society.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Committee, I thank Ambassador Čekuolis for his fine work.

I shall now suspend our formal meeting and move to the informal portion, which will allow us to exchange opinions, ask questions and comment on the presentation that we have just heard.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 10.35 a.m.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): I warmly welcome Ambassador O'Ceallaigh, of Ireland, President of the Dublin Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Convention on Cluster Munitions, and invite him to take the floor.

Mr. O'Ceallaigh (President, Dublin Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Convention on Cluster Munitions): First, Sir, I congratulate you on your election as Chair of the First Committee and thank you for your stewardship of the very fruitful debates over the past two weeks.

It is an honour and a privilege for me to address the Committee today and to report on the Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Convention on Cluster Munitions, which took place in Dublin from 19 to 30 May 2008. I do so in accordance with the decision of the Conference at its final meeting on Friday, 30 May, as recorded in its Final Document.

The Conference in Dublin was the culmination of a series of meetings, held in Oslo, Lima and Vienna in 2007, and in Wellington in February 2008. The objective of those meetings, and of the Dublin Conference, as set out in the Oslo Declaration of 23 February 2007, was to prohibit "cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians".

The Dublin Diplomatic Conference was attended by 127 States, with 107 attending as participants and 20 as observers. A large number of international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also attended as observers.

The Conference was opened by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, Micheál Martin, and at its opening session heard a video message from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and an address by the President

of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Dr. Jakob Kellenberger.

I had the honour of being nominated by the Government of Ireland as President of the Conference and of being elected by the participating States to serve in that capacity. Representatives of the following eight countries were elected as Vice-Presidents: Chile, France, Hungary, Lebanon, Mauritania, Mexico, Norway and Zambia.

The work of the Conference took place in meetings of the Committee of the Whole and in bilateral and other informal consultations, including informal meetings convened by Friends of the President. I acknowledge the importance of the contribution made by the Friends of the President, and express my gratitude to the representatives of Australia, Austria, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa and Switzerland for their service in that capacity.

Following two weeks of intense work, the Dublin Diplomatic Conference adopted the Convention on Cluster Munitions, by consensus, on Friday, 30 May. The Convention will be opened for signature in Oslo on 3 December this year, and will enter into force six months after the deposit of the thirtieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

The main provisions of the Convention are as follows.

There is a comprehensive prohibition on the use, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention and transfer of cluster munitions, as well as on assisting, encouraging or inducing anyone to engage in behaviour prohibited to a State party.

Cluster munitions are defined for the purposes of the Convention. Weapons systems with certain characteristics, aimed at avoiding indiscriminate area effects and the risks posed by unexploded submunitions, are excluded from the definition and thus from the operative provisions applying to cluster munitions. Explosive bomblets specifically designed to be dispersed or released from dispensers affixed to aircraft are subject to the same prohibitions as cluster munitions.

The Convention contains obligations regarding the destruction of stockpiles of cluster munitions, and the clearance of cluster munition remnants from areas under the jurisdiction or control of a State party. These obligations must be complied with as soon as possible

and within certain prescribed deadlines, which may be extended where circumstances warrant it.

The Convention also includes comprehensive provisions on assistance to cluster munition victims, as well as on international cooperation and assistance to States parties with the fulfilment of their obligations. States parties are obliged to report annually on the implementation of their obligations.

Article 21 of the Convention takes account of the fact that, at least initially, not all States will be party to the Convention, and that some States not party may wish to continue to use cluster munitions. It permits States parties, subject to certain restrictions, to engage in military cooperation and operations with such States.

It is a matter of particular satisfaction to my Government that the Dublin Diplomatic Conference was able to reach an outcome by consensus. I am also glad to be able to inform the Committee of the message addressed by the Secretary-General to the Conference on the occasion of the adoption of the Convention:

“I am delighted that the strong calls to address the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions have been answered with the adoption today of this new Convention. I welcome this successful outcome of the Dublin Diplomatic Conference, and congratulate everyone who contributed to the process.

“A broad-based coalition of States, international organizations and civil society has brought about a new international standard that will enhance the protection of civilians, strengthen human rights and improve prospects for development.

“As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I am honoured to accept depositary functions under the Convention. In addition, the entire United Nations system stands ready to support and assist States Parties in implementing their treaty obligations. I therefore encourage States to sign and ratify this important agreement without delay, and I look forward to its rapid entry into force.”

The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Dr. Jakob Kellenberger, addressing the Conference at its opening, quoted the St. Petersburg Declaration of 1868, saying that, in renouncing the use

of bullets that explode in the human body, the Declaration constituted the first prohibition of a weapon in modern international humanitarian law. He said that the International Military Commission that adopted that Declaration, in its own words, “fixed the technical limits at which the necessities of war ought to yield to the requirements of humanity”, and he noted that the challenge and responsibility before the Dublin Diplomatic Conference was to set those limits for cluster munitions in 2008.

The statement delivered on behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross at the end of the Conference concluded that the Conference had met the challenge referred to by President Kellenberger, and had “done so decisively on behalf of humanity”.

As I mentioned, the Secretary-General has agreed to act as depositary of the Convention. Work has been undertaken during recent months to prepare authentic texts in the six official languages of the United Nations. The text of the Convention as adopted, in English, French and Spanish, may be consulted on the website of the Dublin Diplomatic Conference. The Arabic, Chinese and Russian language versions have already been circulated to all Member States in draft form, and will be finalized shortly.

The delegation of Ireland has submitted the Final Document of the Dublin Diplomatic Conference for circulation as an official document of the General Assembly.

It is the hope and expectation of my Government that the Convention done at Dublin on 30 May will attract wide adherence and have a significant impact, in terms both of addressing the risks to civilians posed by existing cluster munition remnants and of preventing future use.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Ambassador O’Ceallaigh for his excellent work as President of the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on cluster munitions and congratulate him on it. We appeal for good representation at the ceremony in Oslo and for progress on ratification of the Convention so that it may be brought into force as quickly as possible.

Mr. Labbé (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our country endorses what the delegation of Brazil said on behalf of the States of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and associated States.

We commend Ambassador O’Ceallaigh for his report on the characteristics, development and result of the Dublin Conference.

Chile is happy to take part in this year’s discussion on conventional weapons, with good reason. The Oslo process, launched from the diplomatic nucleus of a like-minded group made up of States of different regions and with different political leanings, concluded successfully in Dublin with the negotiation of a legally binding instrument prohibiting cluster munitions. This represented a new, substantial step forward towards strengthening not only international humanitarian law, but also the underlying concept of the paradigm of human security, which is that the centre of gravity of multilateralism applied to security should be focused on human beings.

But — beyond the concrete attainment of a new legal corpus belonging to both international humanitarian law and international disarmament law — the proponents, stimulated and assisted by the vigorous activity of civil society, were able once again to free themselves of the procedural restrictions that suffocate the Conference on Disarmament and other disarmament machinery bodies that work within a more extreme version of the consensus rule.

An open-ended process, guided by high-minded political principles and ethics, and led by States with a strong and firm unflagging commitment to the cause of disarmament, produced the diplomatic conditions for a concrete result that, as with the Ottawa Convention, will have a positive impact on the lives of millions of human beings. The provisions of what I think we shall all now refer to colloquially as the Oslo Convention will continue to grow in juridical significance, because, as we know, beyond the mechanics of its entry into force, it has established with irrefutable moral force the principle that the use of cluster munitions is incompatible with a civilized society, aware of the supreme importance of the human being.

Beyond the content of the Convention, the Oslo process has shown for a second time that there are alternative ways forward in this important segment of the multilateral agenda.

Chile joined the Oslo process as a result of the personal conviction of the President of the Republic, who had no doubt of the need and the potential results. Further, the endeavour was overwhelmingly supported by our region, where such instruments are consistent

with the democratic consolidation that we have experienced over recent decades, together with a security climate governed by trust and cooperation.

Inhumane instruments of war have no place in any latitude or longitude, and certainly not in the Latin America of the twenty-first century. That is why we joined the process, taking part in all the discourse on the raising of awareness and negotiation that began in the fjords of Oslo, continuing in Lima, Vienna and Wellington, and concluding in Dublin. We also supported the diplomatic campaigns in the regional trenches, participating in conferences held in San José and Mexico City, and we will be at the lofty heights of Quito just before the signing in December.

Our guiding light is now the designation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a cluster-munitions-free zone. What better follow-up to the Treaty of Tlatelolco could there be than this historic step?

Chile would like to underscore the leadership and political courage shown once more by Norway — an example to be followed, almost a talisman, every time we find ourselves faced with frustration in disarmament forums. By definition, leadership in multilateral diplomacy belongs to all the members of the community of nations. Success is possible when there is a clear perception of the global public good, when there is experience, innovation and imagination to devise procedures to make progress, and when we have the conviction to bring on board the many individuals that we know share our ideals.

What is the next chapter in this saga? Perhaps it is small arms and light weapons.

Another success story is the progress made in the initiative to bring about an arms trade treaty. Challenging the scepticism of a great many naysayers, the Group of Governmental Experts led with great skill by Ambassador Roberto García Moritán has achieved consensus on the guiding principles for an instrument that will generate security and legal certainty with regard to the arms trade. Humanitarian and human rights considerations will also come within the instrument, which will have an impact on the ground in areas where conflict and transnational organized crime continue to claim thousands of victims.

Chile co-sponsors and resolutely supports the arms trade treaty draft resolution (A/C.1/63/L.39), by which the General Assembly would establish an open-

ended working group to negotiate the treaty. We participate in this effort energetically and enthusiastically.

Almost 10 years ago, in December 1997, a majority of Member States gathered in Ottawa to sign the Convention prohibiting anti-personnel landmines. With the benefit of hindsight, and bearing in mind the fruit borne by the process, we must describe the Ottawa Convention as a landmark in disarmament endeavours. It was more than an instrument; it also generated a community and a dynamic.

The Convention's implementation by its 156 States parties has created a community of not only its parties, the States, but also international organizations, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations. This dynamic is governed by transparency, inclusion and cooperation between the donor community and the States affected, which include Chile.

In our region the Ottawa Convention has supported the political process of confidence-building and the establishment of new concepts of security. In a historic phase when bilateral disputes have been solved by peaceful means, the remaining mines are mute but lethal testimony to times, not so long ago, when sister nations were on the brink of armed conflict. In that context, removal of the mines is a symbol of what we want to be.

The Convention recognized that mine-clearance, which is dangerous, arduous and costly, would take a long time. That is not unique; we have only to look at compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention to see that the difficulties over the destruction of such undesirable devices affect small States and the great Powers alike.

It is important to emphasize that the treatment of requests for extension, under article 5, has come about within the practice and dynamic of the Convention itself — that is, by way of a broad dialogue and in a spirit of serious and pragmatic cooperation. Chile has participated actively in the analysing group for extension requests, which has just concluded its work in Geneva with a number of reports that will help at the meeting of States parties in the evaluation of, and subsequent decision-making on, each request.

As an instrument of disarmament and international humanitarian law, the Ottawa Convention

has a strong chapter on victim assistance, which States parties and the other organizations making up the community that I mentioned earlier have implemented with particular seriousness and dedication. There is no doubt that in this regard the example of the Ottawa Convention has been incorporated into the Oslo process, as, in dealing with the problem of the victims, it broadens the beneficiaries to include families and communities that have suffered.

This will be a year bearing memorable fruit in the area of conventional weapons. The Group of Governmental Experts on ammunition stockpiles in surplus, led with pragmatism and imagination by Ambassador Hasenau, has succeeded in producing by consensus an important report containing recommendations, inspired — without actually saying so — by the paradigm of human security, that, being applicable to arsenals and magazines, would give security to nearby communities.

The concept of surplus munitions leads us to think about the problem caused by the undeniable proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Kofi Annan was right when he said that in terms of lives destroyed small arms and light weapons could be compared to weapons of mass destruction.

We perhaps need restorative winds, fresh breezes blowing from the Canadian plains or the Nordic fjords. Let us be provocative and ask whether the time has now come to set the multilateral treatment of this matter in the dynamic of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions. The democracy that we propound at the national level has its counterpart in international organizations. Democracy is government by the majority, with full respect for the rights of minorities. What good reason is there to continue delaying progress towards the binding instrument that a majority of Member States clearly desire?

I conclude by asking the Committee to reflect on the lessons of this fruitful year. Getting bogged down in the machinery of disarmament has been pushed into the past, with regard to conventional weapons, by a brave exercise in leadership from below. The synergy of the overlapping of international humanitarian law and disarmament law and the need to protect human security are parameters that we can keep in mind to produce results with a positive effect on millions of human beings. We must continue along this road. We know that logic supports us.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): Yesterday morning I reported that we have a fairly long list of speakers. I am aware of the importance of the topic and the messages that we want to deliver in the work of the Committee, but we must show mutual respect. I therefore urge members not to force me to use the gavel in my efforts to maintain interaction within the parameters that we have all agreed. I do not want to use it, but I shall not hesitate to do so if necessary.

Mr. Tarui (Japan): I shall be very careful to keep within my time limit.

It is estimated that every year more than 500,000 people are killed worldwide as a result of the use of small arms and light weapons. It is patently clear in this light that the United Nations needs to continue to actively address this issue.

At this year's Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, under the very able leadership of its Chairman, Member States adopted the first report since the adoption of the Programme of Action in 2001 to contain guidance on several key issues. Each country that participated in the Meeting committed itself to taking concrete measures to promote the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

Furthermore, an attempt was made to ensure more productive debates in the Meeting through the introduction of focused topics, expert presentations and the appointment of facilitators. We believe that those innovations contributed to the successful conclusion of the Meeting.

The Programme of Action Implementation Support System, which the United Nations Secretariat launched at this year's Meeting, will be extremely beneficial for matching needs to resources. In this connection, the Government of Japan has contributed \$480,000 to the Coordinating Action on Small Arms Mechanism database, which is the foundation of the Programme of Action Implementation Support System.

Last week, Japan, as the coordinator for this year's draft resolution (A/C.1/63/L.57) on small arms and light weapons, submitted the draft resolution to the Committee on behalf also of Colombia and South Africa. The draft resolution encourages the implementation of "The way

forward" (A/CONF.192/BMS/2008/3) contained in this year's Meeting report.

Additionally, while taking sufficiently into account each country's views, we have attempted to sketch out a long-term vision for the work related to small arms and light weapons. For instance, the draft resolution proposes commencing preparations for the next biennial meeting well in advance, convening an experts' meeting and the holding of the next review conference. In order to further strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action, we would like to receive the strong support of all Member States for the draft resolution.

Regulating the arms trade is also effective for preventing conflict and terrorism. Attempts to create common international standards for the arms trade were occurring well before the establishment of the United Nations, and that significance has long been recognized.

Against that backdrop, the Group of Governmental Experts meetings on an arms trade treaty were held this year. Japan participated actively in the work of the Group, since we maintain a long-standing national policy of prohibiting in principle the export of weapons to any country. The Group discussed common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons and concluded that further consideration was required.

Japan, among others, believes that we should maintain the momentum of discussions on the creation of an arms trade treaty. It was from this perspective that the United Kingdom and the co-author countries, which include Japan, introduced this year a draft resolution (A/C.1/63/L.39) which proposes further deliberations between all United Nations members in 2009 on this subject. Japan calls on all Member States to lend their support to the draft resolution. For our part, we will make every effort to intensify the momentum towards an arms trade treaty.

To respond to the humanitarian concerns caused by cluster munitions, Japan has been contributing to the clearance of unexploded ordnance in Lebanon, Laos and other areas. In this vein, Japan welcomes the adoption at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference in May of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, whose contents were precisely introduced by Ambassador O'Ceallaigh of Ireland. The Government of Japan is

seriously considering concrete steps towards the signing of the treaty.

In parallel with that work, Japan continues to contribute to the efforts to create an effective international instrument within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which engages the major producers and possessors of cluster munitions.

It should be noted that next year marks the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention, and consequently a second review conference is being planned. The Ottawa Convention has been making steady progress, but issues such as its further universalization and adherence to mine clearance and stockpile destruction obligations still remain. Japan has been working actively to universalize the Convention, especially in the Asia Pacific region.

As for our efforts in mine action projects, in the area of victim assistance Japan has provided support to a vocational training project for landmine survivors in Cambodia and an orthotics and prostheses project in Colombia.

In the area of mine clearance, last year Japan extended \$51 million in assistance to projects in 14 countries.

Since Japan, along with Chile, plans to take up the position of Co-chair of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention next year, we are determined to contribute proactively to the intersessional meetings with a view to ensuring the success of the upcoming review conference. What is more, Japan intends to continue its support for projects in landmine-affected countries.

Ms. Molaba (South Africa): I start by congratulating you, Sir, on the excellent work you have done in the past two weeks.

South Africa has noted with concern that conventional weapons have most often been used in inter-State, as well as intra-State warfare, and have been responsible for the majority of casualties throughout the world.

In South Africa's statement during the Committee's general debate, my delegation already touched upon a few aspects of the conventional weapons debate. My intervention today will therefore

be confined to highlighting specific elements within the conventional weapons theme.

The Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects remains the central global instrument to prevent, combat and eradicate that illicit trade. Its full implementation should therefore remain central to all our national, subregional, regional and international efforts to address this scourge.

South Africa welcomed the outcome in July of the Third Biennial Meeting of States to consider implementation of the Programme, which restarted the formal international consideration of implementation. Through the adoption of a substantive report at the end of the Meeting, the United Nations small arms process is now widely considered to be back on track.

South Africa believes that international cooperation and assistance remain an essential aspect of the full implementation of the Programme of Action. Such international cooperation and assistance is, in fact, an overarching theme underpinning all the undertakings that States made when they adopted the Programme of Action. As such, it is not limited to illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the strictest sense, but also extends to efforts to, inter alia, address illicit brokering, trace illicit small arms and light weapons, and stockpile management, where a whole range of measures are required to prevent theft and diversion of State-owned small arms and light weapons.

In addition, international cooperation and assistance efforts should be built on the foundation of capacity-building, because, without the necessary skills transfers, the sustainability of implementation efforts will be compromised.

While national reporting on implementation efforts could facilitate the receipt of international cooperation and assistance, my delegation holds the view that the focus should remain on enabling States to make progress on their implementation efforts, rather than developing formal requirements.

The anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention remains the most comprehensive international instrument for ridding the world of the scourge of anti-personnel mines. At the Ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, to be held in Geneva from 24 to 28 November this year, the most important aspect will

be the consideration of requests for extensions to clearance deadlines. The consideration of those requests will be particularly challenging, as no precedent exists for taking such decisions. In addition, our consideration will require a thorough analysis of the situation in each requesting State.

South Africa believes that the clearance of all mined areas in accordance with the Mine Ban Convention is part of the Convention's overall comprehensive approach to ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. We would call upon those States that have submitted extension requests to redouble their mine-clearance efforts.

South Africa welcomed the opportunity in May this year to participate in the Dublin Diplomatic Conference to negotiate a legally binding international instrument to prohibit the use and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians. My delegation will also continue to actively participate in the deliberations on cluster munitions within the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and specifically in the next experts' meeting, which will take place in Geneva from 3 to 7 November, as well as the next annual meeting of the CCW States parties.

Conventional weapons often appear to attract less international attention than weapons of mass destruction. However, conventional weapons proliferation remains a very real problem, particularly in those areas of the world where small arms are not only cheap, but also easily accessible, and where their proliferation continues to fuel violence and conflict. It is therefore important to continue all endeavours aimed at intensifying arms control efforts, as well as increasing transparency and confidence-building in arms trade transactions.

In terms of its National Conventional Arms Control Act, South Africa will continue to ensure the implementation of a legitimate, effective and transparent arms control process and to foster national and international confidence in its control procedures. We thus seek to contribute to regional and international security and stability, by promoting transparency and greater responsibility in the transfers of conventional arms.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): Three decades ago, the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament rightly

characterized global military expenditure as a huge waste of resources. Today, when the world is gripped by multiple crises, and a sizeable percentage of the human family are living below the poverty line, the world's military spending stands at nearly \$1.4 trillion. A glaring illustration is the fact that the United Nations, despite its mandate to maintain international peace and security, has at its disposal less than 2 per cent of the global military expenditure. This mammoth wastefulness goes on unimpeded in the form of build-up of conventional arms and armed forces.

While there is an urgent need to address the challenge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, it is at the same time imperative not to allow the debate to divert focus from the destabilizing impact of the huge volume of trade in combat aircraft, aircraft carriers, airborne and early warning and control systems, missile defence, nuclear submarines and warships and so on, as well as related technologies. It is hard to overemphasize the fact that such dealings disrupt regional balances and exacerbate tensions. Driven mostly by commercial considerations, such trade is bereft of any meaningful legal and moral underpinning.

Developing countries which should be spending their scarce resources to ameliorate the lot of their citizens are the target clientele for such sales. For sellers, a conflict situation opens a window of opportunity for peddling the wares of destruction to both antagonists. Similarly, conventional imbalances stoke the disadvantaged party's quest for modernizing and buttressing its arsenal.

In this situation, it is a moral and legal imperative to promote conventional arms control, at the lowest possible levels of armaments and military forces, in order to promote regional and international peace and security. Preservation of a balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest levels of armaments should be at the heart of conventional arms control.

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament clearly laid out that, along with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, the international community should negotiate a balanced reduction of armed forces and 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 ensure their security.

Pakistan believes that the key to ensuring the success of conventional arms control lies in its regional and subregional pursuit, since most threats to peace and security originate from conflicts between States located in the same region or subregion. Good practices like the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, a cornerstone of European security, can serve as models that can be emulated or adapted. As recognized by the international community, in any military equation special responsibility for promoting regional security agreements lies with States with larger military capabilities.

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

First, the Office for Disarmament Affairs can analyse the data on arms transfers and help States develop benchmarks for conventional arms control at regional and subregional levels. The Register of Conventional Arms and the Standardized Instrument for reporting would not, by themselves, lead to limitations in arms transfers. Those should be used not only for reporting, but also as a means to develop a global norm towards transparency in armaments. The data extrapolated from those instruments can serve as a significant early warning mechanism, contributing to the prevention of conflict and to restraint in arms acquisitions.

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. Massive induction 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, Pakistan is pursuing a strategic restraint regime, which has three constituents: conflict resolution; nuclear and missile restraint; and conventional balance. As a part of dialogue to address outstanding issues and work towards strategic stability

and nuclear risk reduction, we will continue to strive for conventional 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 for and supply of conventional weapons.

We have a well-known position on conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels, on regional approaches to disarmament and on confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels. In line with that position, in addition to submitting a draft resolution on negative security assurances, our delegation has, as in previous years, put forward three draft resolutions on those subjects. We thank the sponsors of the draft resolutions and would like to point out that all four draft resolutions remain open to further co-sponsorship.

Some developments in the realm of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) are noteworthy. First, the 2003 Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War entered into force. Secondly, an agreement was reached to establish a compliance mechanism that would be supported by a pool of experts. Thirdly, a plan of action was agreed to promote universality. Fourthly, agreement was reached on a sponsorship programme to facilitate participation of least developed countries in CCW-related activities.

We are of the view that the CCW and its five Protocols adequately address humanitarian aspects of mines, including anti-vehicle mines.

While noting the adoption of the Dublin Convention on Cluster Munitions in May, we believe that it should supplement and not supplant the CCW process. In this context, we have high expectations of the CCW meetings in Geneva next month.

Any proposal with regard to the conventional arms trade has to take into account the right of all States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and retain conventional arms for self-defence and security. Genuine efforts to prevent the destabilizing impact of conventional arms must consider constraints not only on their transfer and trade, but also on their production and deployment. Controls on the transfer or trade in armaments cannot be divorced from the question of arms production and trade as well as the motivation for their transfer and sale.

Any new criteria or guidelines should be objective and should take into account all the factors

relevant to the issue of conventional arms. Subjective criteria and standards suited to the interests of major arms-producing States will not serve the cause of international peace and stability.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Jordan, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.6.

Mr. Al-Allaf (Jordan): In Jordan's capacity as President of the eighth meeting of the States parties to the Mine Ban Convention, my delegation would like to introduce the draft resolution on the Convention, which appears in document A/C.1/63/L.6 under agenda item 89 (z).

Following the consultations on the draft resolution, Jordan submitted it on behalf of the Troika of Presidents of States parties to the Convention, which this year comprises Australia, Jordan and Switzerland. The draft was not opened for co-sponsorship. It will be recalled that last year it was decided that the draft resolution had reached a certain maturity and would be presented by the Troika from then on.

This year the draft resolution reaffirms once again the determination to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines, and addresses the challenges of removing such mines placed throughout the world and assuring their destruction. It also stresses the need to ensure assistance for the care and rehabilitation of mine victims.

The changes made to the draft resolution for this session are only procedural and technical in nature, and update this year's draft in line with the progress made in the work undertaken to implement the Convention since last session.

The draft notes with satisfaction the work undertaken to implement the Convention and the substantial progress made towards addressing the global anti-personnel landmine problem. It also recalls the eighth meeting of the States parties to the Convention, held at the Dead Sea, at which the international community monitored progress on implementation of the Convention, supported continued application of the Nairobi Action Plan and established priorities to achieve further progress towards ending, for all people and for all time, the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.

My delegation hopes the draft will receive the support it deserves, as it did in previous sessions. My delegation also requests Member States that are not parties to the Convention to consider supporting the draft resolution, bearing in mind its humanitarian values and objectives.

I now move to my national statement on conventional weapons.

Today, in the humanitarian efforts to rid the world of landmines and their inhumane consequences, it is important that the international community continue to work towards attaining the universality of the Mine Ban Convention and to mobilize and provide more resources for landmine clearance operations and rehabilitation of victims. This is vital for many Member States, since such assistance remains of the utmost importance if they are to live up to their obligations under the Convention.

Jordan is active in trying to bring about the Convention's universality, especially at the regional level. As a State party to the Ottawa Convention, Jordan has taken effective steps to comply with its provisions. Having completely destroyed all its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines, Jordan had sincerely hoped that it would be able to satisfy its treaty obligations by May 2009 and would not have to submit a request for an extension to its article 5 deadline.

Last November Jordan had the honour of hosting at the Dead Sea the eighth meeting of the States parties to the Mine Ban Convention. This November, the ninth meeting of the States parties will be held in Geneva, Switzerland. Jordan looks forward to a successful outcome.

Jordan reiterates its commitment to the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and welcomes the outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States, which provided an opportunity to consider progress in the implementation of the Programme.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons remains a matter of grave concern, due to its potential to disrupt peace, security and development. The fact that such illicit activity is most often linked with transnational organized crime, terrorism and narcotics

trafficking poses enormous additional threats to States and regions.

In this regard, the 2001 Programme of Action is the framework for our collective response to the problem posed by the illicit trade of these weapons, and should be implemented. Here, Jordan stresses the importance of providing technical, technological and financial assistance to States requesting it in order to strengthen the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

Despite the important humanitarian aims enshrined in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), it has not yet gained universality. Jordan therefore reiterates the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Convention, and appeals to all States that have not done so to become parties to this important international legal instrument as soon as possible.

This session, Jordan has joined Sweden, the main sponsor of the draft, Greece and the Netherlands in sponsoring the draft resolution (A/C.1/63/L.31) on the CCW. Jordan hopes that, as in previous years, it will be adopted without a vote.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.39.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take the floor to introduce on behalf of the sponsors — Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Japan, Kenya, the United Kingdom and my country, Argentina — draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.39, "Towards an arms trade treaty".

I am happy to note that the draft resolution has been sponsored so far by 88 Member States. If we bear in mind that in 2006, when resolution 61/89 was first presented, we had 77 co-sponsors, the broad support that we have received today clearly shows the renewed will and commitment of the international community with regard to the way ahead. We sincerely appreciate the contributions made by all delegations during the process of negotiating the draft resolution, and the support received. We invite all States that have still not done so to join us.

For those who love numbers, I recall that at the time of its adoption resolution 61/89 had 116 co-sponsors, representative of all regions of the world. I believe that it would not be over-optimistic to think

that for the draft resolution the number could be even greater, because it includes elements that bring balance, enabling us to work together harmoniously to deal appropriately with the matter of an arms trade treaty for conventional weapons.

A brief reference to the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution will help us to reflect upon the merits of the initiative, since there is a clear recognition of the inherent right of all States, under Article 51 of the Charter, to national self-defence. The preambular paragraphs also include a clear recognition of the right that we all have to buy, sell and transfer conventional weapons in keeping with our defence and security needs.

We also see throughout the preambular paragraphs reaffirmation of rights and obligations enshrined in other instruments. There is also a clear reference to the determination of all parties that conventional arms that we acquire shall not be diverted for illegal purposes.

Along these lines the operative paragraphs allow us all to work together, share opinions, better understand the different positions held by other delegations, find different solutions to the questions before us, and reflect jointly on the problems that we must solve. This step-by-step process also permits us to develop a common language that gives us a clearer understanding of the purpose of the initiative. The crafting of this common language in particular, and the report that we shall have before us in the Committee next year, will allow us to see with greater breadth and deeper understanding the needs that lie ahead as we address this matter.

The draft resolution clearly indicates that this process will begin next year with an organizational meeting, to be held by the end of February, followed by sessions in March and July. The dates have been given by the Department for Disarmament Affairs. I believe that this exercise will allow us to take an additional step in the right direction: to bring about a safer world, strengthen our national security and at the same time make an effective and responsible contribution to our efforts to face the difficulties posed by new threats to international security.

Once again I thank the co-sponsors of the draft resolution. I am sure that many other delegations will join them.

My delegation will be happy to take the floor again to present draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.29, "Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms". We did not wish to address that topic now, because we wanted to give due prominence to the presentation of draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.39.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): Jamaica associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Barbados on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member States.

Jamaica is deeply concerned about the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and, like most developing countries faced with this major problem, seeks the urgent support of the international community to assiduously work towards a permanent solution. The unrestrained access to and spread of these illegal weapons and ammunition pose severe humanitarian and socio-economic challenges to many States, particularly developing countries. Faced with the problem's gruesome consequences, the Jamaican Government has been obliged to divert scarce resources from the national development budget in a bid to stifle its far-reaching effects.

So, while Jamaica unconditionally supports efforts to combat terrorism and efforts for the elimination of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction, we must not marginalize the need for coordinated decisive action to curb the illicit trade in such weapons, which are inflicting havoc in many of our countries even as I speak. For countries like Jamaica, which is neither a producer nor a large-scale importer, small arms and light weapons constitute weapons of mass destruction.

In the past four years, Jamaica has implemented certain crime-fighting measures with the aim of tackling the import, transit and export of narcotic drugs and illicit firearms and ammunitions. These include the establishment of specialized units within the police force to directly tackle firearms and drug-related crimes; the passage of a Proceeds of Crime Act to confiscate assets of dealers in the illicit firearms and drug trades; and, with the assistance of French, United States and United Kingdom navy officials, increased surveillance activity along the island's coastline.

We welcome the successful outcome earlier this year of the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of

Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We note that during the Conference one dominant concern of many States, particularly developing countries, was their inability to implement the Programme due to their lack of financial and technical capacity. We therefore urgently request that developing countries receive the requisite assistance in a timely manner to satisfactorily implement their commitments.

Decisive action must be taken to prevent small arms and light weapons from falling into criminal hands. In this regard, Jamaica continues to call for the establishment of a system for the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons. We also call for serious consideration and action with regard to the incorporation of ammunition into the Programme of Action.

Jamaica firmly supports the establishment of an arms trade treaty to impose strict controls on the trade in small arms and light weapons. Such a treaty should include the export, re-export, import, transfer, transit and trans-shipment of all conventional arms, including components, ammunition and the technology for their manufacture.

The work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly with regard to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, remains crucial in our efforts to confront the challenges posed by illegal weapons. Jamaica endorses its work, and hopes that the renewed expansion of operations by the Office for Disarmament Affairs through the Centre will continue, for the benefit of the entire region. We also wish to acknowledge the tremendous support provided by the Regional Centre to the other member States of CARICOM.

Jamaica takes this opportunity also to express its appreciation for the work undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme in Kingston, as we seek to tame the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Mali, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.41.

Mr. Daou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time I have taken the floor in the Committee,

let me begin by conveying to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of the delegation of Mali on your election as Chairperson and by assuring you of the full support of my delegation throughout our deliberations. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and pay a well-deserved tribute to Ambassador Paul Badji for the excellent job he did last year as Chairperson.

My delegation takes this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for the actions the Organization has taken to promote assistance to States to end the illicit trafficking and stockpiling of small arms and light weapons.

There can be no doubt that peace and security must be managed in a preventive way. Preventing conflict and ensuring security are a constant concern for the highest authorities of Mali and other African States. The extent of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the tragic consequences of that proliferation have encouraged African countries at the national, regional and subregional levels to make the fight against this scourge a major focus of their security policies.

Northern Mali and the entire Sahelo-Saharan strip have for a number of years been plagued by insecurity created and maintained by armed bands, using anti-personnel mines, thereby undermining all development efforts made in that region of Mali. The situation threatens peace and stability throughout the subregion.

Therefore, in order to better fight banditry and acts of terrorism in the north, Mali has set up with certain neighbouring countries a framework for transboundary cooperation. Cooperation between officers of the security services along the borders has made it possible to exchange intelligence on the activities of criminal groups.

To strengthen this cooperation framework, and aware that the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is closely related to development because it is a major impediment to development actions, the Government of Mali will hold in the next few weeks in Bamako a conference on peace, security and development in the Sahelo-Saharan strip. It will give the countries of the region a useful opportunity to reaffirm their shared determination to make this common space a zone of peace and security, a centre of stability, growth and development. It will also make it

possible to provide responses adapted to the problems and challenges that they face: insecurity, cross-border banditry, terrorism and all sorts of trafficking, including drugs, weapons and human beings.

It should be remembered that Mali was one of the first countries to set up, in 1996, a national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It should also be remembered that following the 2001 Conference on small arms and light weapons my country continued to step up its efforts to combat their proliferation. That led to the adoption on 12 November 2004 of a new law on a firearms and munitions regime in conformity with the Programme of Action and the Bamako Declaration.

Mali understood very early on the need for cooperation, on the one hand in a bilateral framework, with its neighbours, and on the other hand in a multilateral framework, within the subregional, regional and international organizations of which it is a member.

At the subregional level, the member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) decided to convert the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa into a legally binding instrument. This process led to the adoption by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government on 13 June 2006 in Abuja of the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Convention represents major progress in our Community and a decisive stage in the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

In addition, on 6 June 2006 we launched in Mali the ECOWAS Small Arms Programme (ECOSAP). This Community programme, with its headquarters in Bamako, is aimed at promoting capacity-building to monitor illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons within our Community.

We are presenting on behalf of the African Group draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.41, "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them". Similar draft resolutions have always been submitted on behalf of ECOWAS and adopted without a vote.

The Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso, Ambassador Kafando, as Chair of the group of ECOWAS ambassadors, brought the draft resolution

before the African Group, which unanimously decided to support it. We commend the praiseworthy efforts that he continues to make for the adoption of the draft resolution, and fully support the statement that he will make this afternoon on behalf of ECOWAS.

We also take this opportunity to thank all those who have sponsored or supported the draft resolution.

Given the relevance and pertinence of the question, the Mali delegation is certain that the Committee will remain true to its tradition and adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

By the draft resolution the General Assembly would call upon the international community to provide technical and financial support to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to take action to help to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as for collecting them, and it would encourage civil society organizations to cooperate in the efforts of national commissions to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade in such weapons. The General Assembly would also encourage the international community to support the implementation of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials.

The world needs security and peace. Adopting the draft resolution would be an important step in the quest for security.

Mr. Sagindikov (Kazakhstan): The challenge caused by the destabilizing development, accumulation and proliferation of conventional weapons is one of the key issues in ensuring international stability and security.

The illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons has a negative impact on security, human rights and the socio-economic situation, particularly in crisis and post-conflict areas. Today, no country in the world is immune to the disruptions in the mechanisms of control over arsenals of conventional weapons.

We fully support the provisions and recommendations of the recent reports of the Secretary-General on small arms, and believe that the United Nations should play a leading role in countering this threat. The adoption of the outcome document of the Third Biennial Meeting of States regarding implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms, held in July 2008, constitutes real progress in the

process of countering the illicit trafficking of such weapons.

At the international level Kazakhstan is actively working on this issue within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the NATO Partnership for Peace. Since 1992, Kazakhstan has annually provided information on conventional weapons to the United Nations Register and data on small arms and light weapons to the OSCE, contributing to transparency in this area.

At the 2004 Almaty regional conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, we proposed the development of a regional mechanism for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms, similar to the Code of Conduct of the European Union in the field of conventional arms.

In 1996, first among the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, Kazakhstan adopted the Law on Export Control, which laid down principles and rules to control the export of arms, military equipment, raw materials, products, special-purpose technologies and scientific and technical information.

In February 2008, Kazakhstan introduced a new law on export control adapted to today's realities and current standards in the area of small arms and light weapons. We now have a system of export controls which fully corresponds with the most stringent international standards in this sphere.

Kazakhstan considers 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) as the most important international instrument for reducing risks for civilians and military personnel from the use of certain conventional weapons. The adoption of the Convention was an important step towards the humanization of the principles of warfare, reducing casualties and alleviating the suffering of civilian populations in the post-conflict period.

We believe that our accession to the Convention is in our national interests and will contribute to increasing the efficiency and universality of this international document. Currently, the Parliament of Kazakhstan is finalizing the ratification process of the Convention and Protocols I, III and IV. It is worth noting that, despite the fact that Kazakhstan is not a

signatory to Protocol II, we will comply with its provisions after its entry into force.

On 24 and 25 September this year Kazakhstan successfully hosted a joint United Nations/European Union regional seminar on promoting the universality of the CCW and its Protocols in Central Asia.

We support finding a compromise between the defence interests of States and humanitarian considerations in order to reduce the unjustified casualties of civilians and military personnel during armed conflicts and post-conflict periods. This goal should be achieved step by step. We express our hope that the number of parties to the Convention will increase significantly in the foreseeable future.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): My Government believes that improved security for all can be achieved at considerably lower levels of armaments than those that exist today. This is certainly applicable also in the conventional field. Arms control regimes are as critically needed for conventional weapons as they are for weapons of mass destruction. We need such instruments for promoting stability and confidence at the global and regional levels.

Let me also reiterate Norway's full support for the Geneva Declaration on armed violence and development.

Disarmament remains a security concern for States, but must also be seen from a human security perspective. We must not shy away from considering the humanitarian impact of certain weapons and munitions, and, if need be, take action. There can be no doubt that certain conventional weapons are causing unacceptable human harm, and severely impact prospects for long-term development. We are making progress in addressing these severe challenges. But much remains to be done.

In our general statement, we welcomed the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions by more than a hundred States in Dublin in May this year. Today even more States have expressed their intention to sign the Convention.

The use of cluster munitions has been the cause of human suffering for more than 50 years. The Convention on Cluster Munitions is a categorical ban on cluster munitions. It prohibits their use, production and transfer. The Convention strengthens international humanitarian law, and provides a framework for

implementation. It not only addresses a humanitarian problem, but also has great value in preventing a future humanitarian disaster that could easily reach the magnitude of the landmine problem.

The Norwegian Government has invited all United Nations Member States to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Oslo on 3 and 4 December 2008. We will welcome all future States parties to the Convention to attend the Oslo Signing Conference.

We will work with other States parties on the implementation and universalization of the Convention, which has already started to establish itself as the new international norm. The experience with the Mine Ban Convention and other conventions is that a new legally binding instrument becomes an international norm which goes beyond the membership of the Convention.

As with the Mine Ban Convention, the Cluster Munitions Convention is a result of cross-regional partnerships between affected and non-affected States, and a process whereby States work closely with United Nations organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society, organized in the Coalition on Cluster Munitions.

We look forward to the next review conference on the Mine Ban Convention in 2009. While there can be no doubt that the Convention has been a success, we will also face challenges in meeting important deadlines in stockpile destruction and mine clearance. From our perspective, extension requests should be well documented, so that there is no doubt about the realities behind such applications. Extensions must not be escape clauses of convenience.

Norway remains ready to assist States in fulfilling their obligations in accordance with the Mine Ban Convention. We encourage other donor countries to commit themselves to continue their assistance.

Through the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Mine Ban Convention, we have made important progress in the field of humanitarian disarmament, but we still have to address other threats to human security in war and armed conflict. We must now make renewed efforts in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Small arms kill half a million people each year. Small arms fuel conflicts. Small arms hamper reconciliation and post-conflict

recovery. Small arms have a negative impact on long-term development.

Seven years ago the international community agreed on the United Nations Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It was regarded as a point of departure for developing new international instruments to better combat the illegal trade in small arms.

Norway has provided financial support for the implementation of the Programme of Action. Norway is ready to respond positively to the current request from the Office for Disarmament Affairs to contribute to the global and regional disarmament Trust Fund 2009-2010.

Norway has endeavoured to contribute to the further development of norms against illicit trade in small arms. Yet we are concerned over the slow progress in further strengthening of the Programme of Action. Multilateral efforts to fight the proliferation of small arms and light weapons clearly need to be reinvigorated. In reinvigorating them, we must recognize the important role of regional and subregional institutions, and not least the importance of national responsibility.

Norway welcomes the outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, with the emphasis on international cooperation, assistance, and national capacity-building, as well as its focus on illicit brokering, stockpile management and an international tracing instrument (ITI).

Norway greatly appreciates the lead taken by the United Kingdom towards an arms trade treaty, and has co-sponsored the arms trade treaty draft resolution (A/C.1/63/L.39). It is vital to make full use of the proposed open-ended working group and work towards a legally binding treaty, which clearly will provide an added value. In the upcoming process we will emphasize the need to make sure that an arms trade treaty fully incorporates international humanitarian law and human rights. We also look forward to the active involvement of civil society in the process ahead.

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The adoption by 107 States of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Dublin on 30 May this year was undoubtedly the most noteworthy event of the year in the area of conventional disarmament. Henceforth, the use of cluster munitions will not be subject only to the

general principles of international humanitarian law; in addition, as soon as the Convention enters into force, the development, production, stockpiling and transfer of these weapons will be illegal for those States that have ratified the document. Switzerland will sign the convention on 3 December in Oslo.

Switzerland is also actively taking part in the efforts of the States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to negotiate an instrument concerning cluster munitions. We hope that they will lead to an immediate and credible prohibition of cluster munitions which cause unacceptable damage to civilians. These efforts are of crucial importance.

The aim is to produce a set of regulations to apply to the 90 per cent of global stocks of cluster munitions not yet covered by the prohibition envisaged in the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It is also to formulate regulations that convince the main States that produce and use cluster munitions of the necessity for a solid instrument that both provides security to civilians and meets military needs.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of the implementation of Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons concerning explosive remnants of war, which entered into force in 2006.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of amended Protocol II, on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices. Switzerland, which will assume the presidency of the tenth annual meeting of the States parties to the amended Protocol II, will continue to support the efforts to implement this instrument, and is currently assessing how the process can be revitalized.

Switzerland participated actively in the Group of Governmental Experts mandated by the Secretary-General to examine the feasibility, scope and parameters of an arms trade treaty. My country is pleased that the Group was able to adopt a report, even though we would have wished for a more positive document. Switzerland is especially pleased with the report's conclusions and recommendations.

The logical next step now is the creation of an open-ended working group to discuss the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts and work towards a legally binding treaty. We

fully support the approach taken in the arms trade treaty draft resolution (A/C.1/63/L.39).

Switzerland is also particularly interested in the subject of transparency in armaments. Measures in this area are an important factor in confidence and security between States. My country notes that in 2007 only 67 States submitted information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. This figure is lower than in previous years, and is therefore a cause for concern. Nevertheless, the number of States that have provided information about exports and imports of light weapons has increased considerably, which is a significant development. The Group of Governmental Experts dealing with the Register in 2009 will have to address these questions as well as the other challenges facing this mechanism in order to ensure that its relevance can be further strengthened.

In the field of small arms and light weapons, Switzerland attaches great importance to the process of the biennial meetings of States. At the Third Biennial Meeting regarding implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms, held last July, I had the honour to assume the function of facilitator regarding the issue of stockpile management and surplus disposal. Switzerland is pleased that the Conference ended with the adoption of a substantial outcome document, which should permit a concretization of the recommendations, the organization of regional and bilateral meetings, and the implementation of specific projects on the ground. The good result of the Conference is an excellent example of the cooperation between New York and Geneva and between delegations, non-governmental organizations and academia.

I would also like to draw attention to the issue of armed violence and development. According to figures published in the report of the Small Arms Survey of September 2008, entitled "Global Burden of Armed Violence", there are more than 870 million firearms in circulation throughout the world, causing the death of 740,000 persons a year, 490,000 of them outside conflict zones.

To increase awareness of the problem, in 2006 Switzerland launched, together with the United Nations Development Programme, the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, whose purpose is to seek solutions to the problem and thus to improve the prospects of sustainable

development at the global, regional and national levels. Initially signed by 42 States, the Geneva Declaration enjoys — only two years after its launch — the support of 95 States. This testifies to an increasing global awareness of the impact of armed violence on development, as well as the importance of the Geneva Declaration in this process. Moreover, the value of the Declaration was recognized by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2008/258) on small arms and light weapons to the Security Council.

On 12 September 2008, a Review Summit on the Declaration brought together representatives of 85 States, which, in the final Summit Statement, solemnly stated that armed violence could be an obstacle to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. They reiterated their commitment to do everything in their power to achieve measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence by 2015. I take this opportunity to urge those States which have not already done so to subscribe to the Geneva Declaration and its principles. Switzerland hopes that it can rely on the support of all the States that have subscribed to this initiative for its promotion in the relevant United Nations forums.

As President-designate of the upcoming conference on the anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention, with its slogan “Honour your commitments”, I draw the Committee’s attention to the challenges to the Convention both in the field of demining and in the field of destruction of stocks. We hope that all States will support the annual draft resolution (A/C.1/63/L.6) on the Convention, which this year is sponsored by Jordan, Australia and Switzerland. We would particularly welcome support by States which have not ratified the Treaty, but which would like to signal their support for its noble humanitarian goals.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): Let me congratulate and thank you, Sir, for your excellent work in presiding over the Committee. I also congratulate and thank the other members of the Bureau.

Austria fully supports the statement of the European Union presidency.

I would like to address a couple of points, beginning with small arms and light weapons. The availability of and easy access to small arms and light weapons have terrible consequences that we all know:

crime; terrorism; destabilization of State structures and societies; and national and international conflict.

As the representative of France, on behalf of the European Union, pointed out yesterday, simply destroying surplus small arms and light weapons is not enough. Firm national legislative and administrative provisions need to be put in place to prevent unregulated trafficking. As a staunch supporter of the rule of law, Austria is trying to do that: to help design and build better national or regional legal instruments against the scourge of these weapons, both nationally within Austria and in cooperation with partners.

Apart from projects on the destruction of arms and ammunition, we have supported various disarmament projects, particularly in Africa and Asia, to strengthen national and regional instruments to curb the illicit flow of these weapons. One such project focuses on regulating small arms brokering in Africa, another on the elaboration of a legal instrument for the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. Austria is also engaged in the development and administration of training courses in the field of stockpile management in Africa and the Balkans.

Together with Burkina Faso, we organized the conference on “Peace and Security in West Africa”. The conference underlined that only sustainable and resilient structures can guarantee long-lasting peace and prosperity.

The abundant availability of small arms and light weapons in various regions of the world is a challenge that has global dimensions and engenders internationally shared responsibilities.

For the other issues regarding small arms, including Austria’s commitment to the Wassenaar Arrangement and our support for the Group of Governmental Experts’ Report on Brokering, I refer to the European Union statement.

Secondly, I should like to say a few words on the Third Biennial Meeting of States regarding implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms. The Meeting, held in July, was one encouraging example demonstrating that political will and shared responsibility — by almost all States — are the necessary and effective ingredients for the way forward to implement the Programme of Action. I thank Ambassador Čekuolis, of Lithuania, for his leadership at the meeting and Daniël Prins, of the Office for

Disarmament Affairs, for his good assistance in the organizational work. Austria hopes that the Meeting will mark a turning point towards further successful meetings and review conferences, underpinned, as we now plan them, by regional preparatory meetings.

Thirdly, I turn to cluster munitions. Earlier we heard the report on the Dublin Conference by Ambassador O'Ceallaigh. The issue of cluster munitions is extremely important for Austria. We believe that the Conference was one of the distinct highlights of 2008. We have seen that it has been the interest and objective of a large and growing number of States to end the suffering caused by cluster munitions. We have tried to do as much as we can in this respect.

Nationally this year we adopted a law banning the use of all cluster munitions and providing for their destruction within three years. Internationally, together with Norway, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru and the Holy See, we called for an international ban on cluster munitions in the fall of 2006. Within 18 months, following several regional conferences, the group has grown considerably, and the Convention on Cluster Munitions was adopted in Dublin in May this year.

The text prohibits cluster munitions as an entire category of weapons and stigmatizes their use. The provisions relating to victim assistance, something we are particularly proud of, set new, groundbreaking standards in humanitarian law.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions will be opened for signature on 3 December in Oslo. We call on all States to sign it on that occasion. It is a unique chance to document in writing real progress in disarmament — something we do not encounter on a daily basis in our area of work. Let us not squander such an opportunity.

For those who want to know more, after this morning's session a panel event will take place in this room on the Oslo signature event. I hope that many Member States will attend.

Fourthly, I turn briefly to landmines, another central area in which Austria has traditionally been active and which reflects our interest in the intersection of disarmament and humanitarian policies. For more than a decade Austria has consistently advocated and supported projects for mine clearance and capacity-building and programmes for mine risk education and the rehabilitation of mine victims. In 2008, Austria

supported projects related to anti-personnel mines with €1.6 million, placing a regional focus on Africa and South-Eastern Europe and a thematic focus on assistance for victims. We will continue to support the mine ban process and cooperate with all interested States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations in order to achieve universal adherence to the Ottawa Convention; improve international cooperation; continue assistance for victims; raise awareness and educate about the risks; support the clearance of mine-affected areas; assist States in their efforts to eliminate stockpiles; and work towards ending production and the use of anti-personnel mines.

Finally, I should like to say a brief word on the arms trade treaty. It is undisputed that the illegal trade in arms contributes to the problems associated with the weapons involved. Austria was pleased to see the strong support among Member States for a concerted effort to address the question of irresponsible trade in arms, as reflected by the overwhelming majority voting in favour of resolution 61/89 last year. Building on the report of the Group of Governmental Experts, Austria is convinced that by establishing a working group as outlined in the current draft resolution (A/C.1/L.39) we take a necessary first step towards establishing an instrument to regulate conventional arms trade.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, Sir, I reiterate my delegation's support for your work, and assure you of our full cooperation for the success of our meetings.

Colombia associates itself with the statements made by the delegation of Brazil as presidency of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and associated States and by Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As we said in the general debate, the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects is of great importance for my country. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a key international instrument for making progress in the fight against this scourge, which kills many people each year and generates significant additional costs in the health-care sector due to victim assistance and treatment of disabilities.

The Programme of Action should be implemented comprehensively and develop legally binding instruments with the effective and active participation of States. We must all act together within the multilateral framework in order to achieve that goal.

The final outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States allows us to conclude that, through concerted efforts, States, international bodies and civil society were able to rescue the small arms and light weapons process.

We took a step forward by adopting concrete measures and recommendations on issues of assistance, international cooperation, national capacity-building, illicit brokering and stockpile management, as well as within the framework of the International Tracing Instrument.

We believe that States must implement those measures and reflect relevant developments in their national reports. My delegation, in a preliminary approach, believes that this item should be included in the agenda for the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States, to be held in 2010, thus giving an efficient and timely follow-up to the decisions taken in the framework of the Programme of Action.

Despite the recent success achieved by the Programme of Action, it is worth remembering that we must make every effort to take concrete actions against the illicit trade in weapons and ammunition and address with determination the issue of armed non-State actors and terrorist groups that receive and traffic in a huge number of arms that they use to attack civilian populations and democratic institutions.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) establishes commitments that States should make and measures they should adopt to prevent weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors. We must now make the necessary efforts to ensure that such measures are extended to conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons.

To my country it is clear that we have not attacked the root of the problem, which is that national, subregional and global actions to prevent both conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State armed actors, although constructive, have been slow and inconsistent, and that a broader vision and more determined action are needed.

Lax national legislation that makes it easier for non-State armed actors and common criminals to acquire weapons and ammunition not only causes violence, insecurity and human suffering, but also facilitates violations of international arms embargoes, stimulates supply and makes dealing in illegal weapons even more profitable.

Another aspect that deserves to be highlighted is the misuse or wrongful use of legally acquired weapons. Many recent incidents involving firearms are the result of legal weapons being poorly guarded or inadequately secured.

We cannot ignore the need to reduce the causes of the demand. Therefore, it is important to develop a culture of peace, promoting a reduction of the power that weapons provide in a society by recovering States' monopoly of force through a strengthening of the rule of law. We need to be more proactive, more accountable and more action-oriented. Colombia therefore considers it necessary to substantially enhance the Programme of Action, focusing on the needs of States.

We must support the work civil society has been doing to develop each of the complex aspects of the fight against the illicit trade and against abuse of the possession of firearms and ammunition. Civil society is actively engaged in the work of raising awareness within populations on the needs of disarmament. In this regard, praiseworthy community efforts have been made.

As a country that was part of the Group of Governmental Experts, flawlessly chaired by Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina, Colombia reiterates the importance of the international community's having a legally binding instrument on the arms trade, one providing transparency and establishing greater controls, which are essential to the work of preventing and combating the illicit trade. This phenomenon takes many lives each year, and takes up significant economic resources that could otherwise be allocated to development.

Above all, we believe that an arms trade treaty must reflect the right of all countries to produce, export, import, transfer and possess conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, in keeping with Article 51 of the Charter. It must also recognize the right of States to acquire weapons to meet their legitimate security needs. An arms trade

treaty should also reflect the obligation under the Charter to promote and observe international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Colombia believes that the treaty can be applicable only if it includes the points of view, interests, needs, rights and obligations of all actors involved in the chain of the legal arms trade. It must take into account the responsibilities of each actor when it comes to preventing the legal market becoming illegal.

An arms trade treaty should also include a comprehensive system to control the international movement and cross-border transport of all conventional weapons, including small arms, light weapons, spare parts, ammunition, explosives and related parts and other accessories, with their respective technology.

Further, any regulation of the arms trade must include a clear mandate to enable the effective implementation of United Nations embargoes, establish mechanisms to prevent the diversion of weapons and ammunition to non-State actors, and ban any transfer in contravention of legal obligations under international law and norms.

Finally, Colombia supports the spirit of the draft resolution (A/C.1/63/L.39) on this matter. We consider it necessary that a broad discussion be held to generate a constructive exchange of ideas to consolidate the process towards the adoption of an arms trade treaty.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): Our intervention under this cluster, “Conventional Weapons”, will be focused on small arms and light weapons, an issue that is of the utmost importance to my delegation.

We consider that the time is right for a renewed interactive engagement geared towards comprehensive regulation and elimination of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as they contribute to the escalation of global military expenditure.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), world military expenditure has risen to \$1.34 trillion. It is also a well-known fact that 3 billion people, or half the world’s population, live on less than \$2.5 a day. This situation is a further demonstration that global production and sales of weapons have continued to ignore the grave political, humanitarian and strategic realities and consequences of the escalation of arms production. It also ignores the

nexus between disarmament and development. That consideration led the General Assembly at its 1978 special session on disarmament to describe such spending as a “colossal waste of resources” (A/S-10/4, para. 16). It therefore called for a reduction in military spending, with the hope that such cuts would be reinvested in efforts to fight hunger and poverty and improve the human condition.

The current global financial crisis portends further complication and aggravation of the socio-economic conditions of developing countries. My delegation believes that the more we ignore these realities, the more the United Nations risks losing its responsibility of being the conscience of man.

We are agreed that it is the legitimate and fundamental right of sovereign States to produce and procure arms for legitimate national defence and security needs. It is, however, imperative that such arms be controlled to prevent their diversion from States and licensed traders to non-State actors and illicit end-users.

When the 2005 decision (60/519) on an international instrument on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons was adopted, Nigeria expressed its desire to see that politically binding instrument transformed into a universal and legally binding instrument that would make our world a safer place for all. My delegation was therefore gratified by resolution 61/89 of December 2006, “Towards an Arms Trade Treaty”, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to set up a group of governmental experts and to seek the views of Member States on the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. The 28-member Group of Governmental Experts has since submitted its report (A/63/334).

It is important to state that our subregion continues to witness conflicts of various dimensions as a result of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Indeed, it is reported that for every African there are seven illicit bullets and three guns targeted at him or her. This is scandalous, especially at a time when an unacceptably high ratio of the world population still lives below the poverty line. My delegation reaffirms that the illicit trade and diversion of these weapons constitute a major impediment to

peace and stability and to the economic development of many developing States. We have therefore consistently advocated international measures to check the proliferation of these weapons at national, regional and international levels.

In this regard, Nigeria remains convinced of the absolute need for a universal, legally binding instrument in the form of an arms trade treaty that would put in place a mechanism or framework to ensure that licit small arms and light weapons are not delivered into illicit networks. It would also ensure that exporters, manufacturers or brokers whose arms are found in illicit markets are held accountable for such action.

Closely related is the need to have end-user certificates and international regulation of arms brokering activities that would control illicit cross-border movement of arms, particularly in existing and potential conflict and post-conflict situations. They require strict monitoring and enforcement of arms embargoes. We believe that effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are equally essential for those already in conflict or post-conflict situations.

My delegation welcomes the report on the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 14 to 18 July. Nigeria, however, wishes to stress the urgent need to pursue with vigour the implementation of the aspects of the framework as it pertains to international cooperation, assistance and national capacity-building, stockpile management and surplus disposal and illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons. We urge Member States to recommit themselves to full implementation at the national, regional and international levels. We further urge our development partners to make adequate provision of financial and technical assistance to speed up the implementation process by developing countries.

Former United States President Eisenhower once stated:

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of

its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.”

Those words are still as true and germane today as when they were uttered on 16 April 1953.

The current global crises are clarion calls to our consciences to curb the illicit circulation of arms and weapons. We need to look beyond the narrow prism of national commercial interest and embrace the more compelling and globally strategic reasons of practical solidarity with the international community on this issue. There is an urgent need to alleviate the unnecessary sufferings imposed on innocent victims of small arms and light weapons.

The arms trade treaty therefore remains the most credible solution to the tragedies that have come to bear on innocent victims. In this regard, Nigeria stands ready to work in tandem with like-minded members of the Committee in bringing about the adoption of a draft resolution on the treaty. The time is now.

Mr. Ugorich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We are certain that the only reliable way to reduce the grim consequences of the use of conventional weapons is in the broadest possible multilateral approach to addressing problems of disarmament and arms control.

In the sphere of small arms and light weapons control, Belarus believes that it is important to focus on implementation of existing instruments, including the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons and the International Instrument on marking and tracing.

Belarus welcomes the adoption of the outcome document of the Third Biennial Meeting of States regarding implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms.

We agree that there is a need to continue in the United Nations the discussion on issues of monitoring small arms and light weapons, including the illicit brokering activities in, and supplies of, man-portable air-defence systems.

Belarus has established an effective system of State control of the trade, use and destruction of small arms and light weapons. Currently, together with a number of other countries, under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe,

we are carrying out a major project to enhance the security and safety of small arms and light weapons storage. We thank donors that have assisted us in implementing the first phase of the project.

Within implementation of our obligations under the Ottawa Convention, Belarus still faces a complex challenge in terms of disposing of more than 3 million PFM-1 mines. Their destruction, using the open detonation method, will have harmful consequences for the population and the environment. There is no experience in the world of destroying a large number of mines of this type. We have repeatedly emphasized that Belarus does not have the capacity to address the problem of destroying such mines without assistance from the international community. Belarus acceded to the Ottawa Convention on the understanding that such assistance would be provided.

Work is under way with the European Commission to agree the conditions for a project of international assistance that could help Belarus meet its obligations under the Convention. We are being as flexible and responsible as possible. Our hope is that donors will also demonstrate a constructive approach.

Belarus shares the humanitarian concerns of the world community on the problem of the use of cluster munitions against non-combatants and civilian infrastructure.

Nor is there any doubt of the importance of devising measures to monitor the arms trade in order to prevent deliveries to non-State actors and ensure regional stability. Crafting new international instruments for conventional arms control in those areas should be carried out in the United Nations in a phased and open discussion. Negotiating such international arrangements without taking into account the views of the key producers and possessors of such weapons might negatively impact the universality and viability of future treaties. Belarus favours working out mutually acceptable international arrangements taking into account the views of all interested parties, based on consensus.

Mr. Smith (Fiji): I wish to thank the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on an arms trade treaty, Ambassador Moritán, for the comments and views he expressed yesterday on its work and for its report (A/62/278 and addendums).

In making this short statement, my delegation wishes to reiterate its overall commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, while acknowledging the inherent right of States to acquire conventional weapons for legitimate self-defence, as enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter, and for law enforcement needs, including peacekeeping, in accordance with international law and standards.

We note the comments by Ambassador Moritán on the arms trade treaty. We agree that there is undoubtedly a need for a universally accepted arms trade treaty that will better regulate the trade in conventional arms, in terms of establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

In this regard, we welcome the establishment of an open-ended working group, which we hope will commence discussions soon, here in New York, towards a truly global arms trade treaty. We hope that the group will be inclusive and will consult widely with Member States, especially with Missions based in New York. We agree that only through international cooperation and common language can we have a truly global arms trade treaty.

Fiji wishes to express its deep concern regarding the negative impact of conventional weapons. As a non-manufacturer and non-exporter of conventional weapons, and as a country that is not a large-scale importer, it finds itself in a position to urge Member States to show increased transparency and take confidence-building measures regarding conventional weapons. Indeed, a core element in preventing conflict and securing peace and stability is transparent reporting by Member States on their conventional weapons. This is realized through national reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditure.

Regrettably, only 88 national reports on conventional arms were received by the United Nations last year. Furthermore, only 74 national reports on military expenditure were received. These are fairly low compliance figures that do not augur well for confidence-building measures. We again urge Member States to provide national reports to both the Register and the Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditure.

My delegation is of the view that the problem of illicit proliferation and use of small arms and light

weapons is one of supply and demand. The international community has often sought solutions to the question pertaining to the demand for small arms and light weapons, yet much still needs to be done to address the question pertaining to the supply — and, indeed, the manufacture — of small arms and light weapons, which are often surplus to the genuine defence needs of Member States and which in our view are being produced more for proliferation and profit. The international community needs to do more to address the manufacture and supply of such small arms and light weapons if we are to make progress in stopping the illicit trade in them.

I thank the Chairman of the Third Biennial Meeting of States to review progress 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 for his report and comments this morning. The conference, held in July in New York, could not agree on a final outcome document. While we understand that it is perhaps a temporary setback, it is still of concern to my delegation.

In addition, and as part of the “in All its Aspects” part of the Programme of Action, there is a need for a follow-up mechanism to fully address the illegal acquisition and use of conventional weapons by non-State actors.

Likewise, technical and financial assistance must be forthcoming from the international community to assist small States to implement the Programme of Action.

The fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is merely one part of the equation. Readily available ammunition, often sourced from surplus stocks, is the other part of the equation that is most often the catalyst that causes so much mayhem and destruction. Here, too, lies the problem of supply and demand — demand met by illegal trafficking, which in turn prolongs conflict. The international community must consider further steps to enhance cooperation in order to ensure that surplus stockpiles of ammunition are either destroyed or better secured.

It is a sad fact that anti-personnel mines continue to be used in conflicts around the world today. Despite this setback, some progress has recently been made. A total of 156 States have now either ratified or acceded to the Ottawa Convention. In this regard, we welcome

our Pacific neighbour, Palau, which last year became a State party to the Convention. Notwithstanding this, there is still an urgent need to promote the universality of the Convention. Fiji does not produce, use, stockpile or transfer anti-personnel mines. We therefore encourage States that have not signed or ratified the Convention to do so without delay. We must honour our commitments.

We wish to place on record our sincere thanks and appreciation for the work of the demining teams around the world.

I also thank Ambassador O’Ceallaigh for his report and comments on cluster munitions. Fiji does not manufacture, use, stockpile or transfer conventional weapons that are deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects.

Furthermore, we voice our strong support for the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols. In keeping with this support, we participated actively in the Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions held in Dublin in May, which concluded negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the manufacture, use, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians.

We reiterate our support for achieving the noble humanitarian goal of prohibiting cluster munitions which cause unacceptable harm to civilians, and therefore encourage all like-minded States to sign the treaty in Oslo, Norway, on 3 December.

Ms. Pesämaa (Finland): As this is the first time Finland has spoken in the First Committee, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair. You and your Bureau can rely on our cooperation and support.

Finland fully associates itself with the statement made by France on behalf of the European Union.

Finland considers the outcome document of the Third Biennial Meeting of States regarding the implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms a successful step forward in aiming at more effective implementation of the Programme in order to combat the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. We recognize the excellent manner in which Ambassador Čekuolis conducted the work in a spirit of cooperation. The outcome document gives us many concrete ways to enhance cooperation and take our work forward. We

consider it important that the work continue in the vein of the biennial meetings.

The recommendations by the 2007 Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering should also now be implemented at all levels, including national as well as regional levels. As we believe that cooperation at the regional level is crucially important, we have set small arms issues as one of the priority areas of our ongoing chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Emphasis is placed on both normative and project work.

We have also been pleased by the ratifications of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on small arms, which demonstrate a strong regional commitment on small arms issues. As a member of the ECOWAS Advisory Board on Small Arms and Light Weapons, we continue to support the ECOWAS efforts on small arms issues, and hope that the Convention will soon enter into force.

Finland welcomes the efforts of the international community to address the humanitarian concerns about the use of cluster munitions. The new Convention negotiated in Dublin is a remarkable milestone in developing international humanitarian law, and it will constitute an important tool for addressing the challenges of victim assistance and clearance of cluster munition remnants in affected areas. We regard it important now that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons also achieve results that will further contribute to the humanitarian cause on the ground.

Finland has from the very beginning been a strong supporter of a legally binding comprehensive arms trade treaty. The overwhelming support for the treaty draft resolution in 2006 convinced us that there is political will for taking the issue forward. The Group of Governmental Experts was able to finish its work with a consensus report.

We take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Moritán for his professional work as the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts. Having been a member of the Group, we consider the report a promising step forward. However, further steps are needed. A new draft arms trade treaty resolution setting the framework for future work is now necessary. Faced by the intolerable consequences of irresponsible arms transfers, we need to make sure that the work on the

treaty makes substantial progress. Finland is strongly engaged in the treaty process, which should proceed effectively within the United Nations framework.

Ms. Mosley (New Zealand): The most significant advance in the field of conventional weapons this year was the successful adoption of a new international Convention on cluster munitions, which prohibits the use, transfer, stockpiling and production of the weapons and also incorporates strong provisions for victim assistance and clearance.

The new Convention, endorsed by over a hundred States at its adoption in May, demonstrates the value of a committed partnership of disarmament, humanitarian and civil society experts in order to achieve substantive results for civilians on the ground. It also illustrated the fundamental interconnection between disarmament and humanitarian concepts, and reinforced the value of using a humanitarian perspective to inform approaches on issues which might previously have been limited to traditional arms control frameworks.

New Zealand is proud to be a member of the Core Group driving the Oslo Process, and will sign the Convention on 3 December in Oslo. We urge as many States as possible to sign in December, and are greatly encouraged by the large number of States which have already publicly indicated that they will do so.

We need to ensure that any outcome under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) complements the substantial humanitarian achievement of the Convention on cluster munitions. We paid careful attention to the statement by the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Committee on 14 October, which outlined what it would see as complementary measures on cluster munitions that could be pursued in the CCW, and look forward to further discussion on such measures at the November CCW meetings. We continue to have reservations about the current approach being taken in that Convention's Group of Governmental Experts on cluster munitions.

New Zealand was pleased that the Third Biennial Meeting of States to consider the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons was able to agree on a number of detailed measures for furthering the international community's work on small arms and light weapons. The results concluded in July put the implementation of the Programme of Action back on a firmer footing after a few uncertain years, and demonstrate that significant political will exists to

tackle the illicit trade and the significant problems it creates. New Zealand is a strong supporter of the proposed arms trade treaty.

We have been encouraged by the progress made in the Group of Governmental Experts over the past year, and look forward to the progression of this work during 2009. We thank the Chairman of the Group, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, for his briefing on the Group's work at yesterday's meeting, which illustrated the significant momentum at national and regional levels for a new treaty. New Zealand remains committed to achieving a legally binding instrument governing the trade in conventional weapons as the outcome of the arms trade treaty deliberations.

New Zealand is committed to the full implementation of the anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention. We have been proud to serve as co-Chair for victim assistance issues during 2008. The November Meeting of States Parties will demand States parties' full engagement in order to ensure that current implementation challenges are effectively addressed.

In particular, States parties will need to collaborate closely to ensure that those States experiencing challenges in meeting their mine-clearance deadlines are supported through the extension request process to enable the full implementation of their article 5 obligations as soon as possible. The Analysing Group, of which New Zealand is a member, has worked closely with States submitting an extension request to this year's Meeting of States Parties. This process, in its first year, has at times engendered spirited discussions, but it has hopefully served to keep States focused on the wide range of implications related to the extension of deadlines for mine clearance.

States will also need to consider how best to assist those States which have not yet been able to complete the full destruction of their stockpiles in accordance with the time frames specified in the Convention.

The gains made thus far under the Mine Ban Convention in terms of clearing mined areas, destroying stockpiles and assisting victims have been enormous, and have qualitatively improved the lives of many civilians living in environments affected by conflict. As the Convention moves into its second decade, States parties will need to continue their close cooperation with international organizations and civil society on all of the Convention's core obligations. Recent reports relating to the potential new use of landmines are of concern and need to be addressed.

States parties should use the opportunity of the Meeting of States Parties to reaffirm their commitment to the Convention, and work together to ensure that the Second Review Conference next year agrees a clear action plan for future implementation efforts.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the Committee): I wish to draw attention to information note A/C.1/63/CRP.3, the first such note for this session.

On behalf of the secretariat, I apologize to the sponsors of a number of draft resolutions issued today. Owing to a technical error, the main sponsor was excluded from the list of sponsors of draft resolutions A/C.1/63/L.7, L.12 and L.16. All three documents will be reissued.

Mr. Wang Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): According to our current agenda, the deadline for submitting draft resolutions was last Friday, and all countries should have submitted their draft resolutions by now. We have only received them up to draft resolution A/C.1/63/L.24. When shall we receive them all? I ask because next week we are to take action on them.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the Committee): The drafts will be issued in a staggered fashion throughout this week. We have been assured that all "L" documents will be issued no later than Friday this week. All drafts were submitted on time, and we are grateful for that.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.