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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Viinanen (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 87 to 106 (continued)

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

The Chair: We shall now continue our debate on cluster 4, “Conventional weapons”.

Mr. Silpathamtada (Thailand): The proliferation and illicit use of conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons remain a serious threat to peace, security, stability and development in many parts of the world. Many types of conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons are common, widespread and closely linked with armed violence, transnational crime, terrorism and human rights violations. It is therefore imperative for States to take responsible action, as well as for the international community to intensify its efforts to ensure against the illicit diversion of those weapons.

Thailand supports 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 believe that the Programme is a key multilateral framework in coordinating efforts of Member States to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

To effectively implement the Programme of Action at the national level, Thailand has strengthened its

domestic legislation and procedures to effectively monitor imports and exports, as well as to control any proliferation of illicit weapons. Thailand also stresses the importance of cooperation at the regional and international levels in information-sharing and exchange of best practices in addressing illicit small arms and light weapons, including technical know-how on the marking and tracing of weapons.

Thailand has also actively participated in the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on implementation held this year, and in other related activities. We are also preparing to participate in the Review Conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action to be held next year.

Thailand reaffirms its commitment to implementing the Programme of Action and to cooperating with the international community in combating the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

On conventional weapons, we also report to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms on a regular basis — a submission that is voluntary and that helps to increase transparency in armaments. The reporting of Member States constitutes an important confidence-building measure in maintaining peace and security.

Common standards to prevent illicit arms transfers can curb irresponsible arms use. Thailand welcomes the preparatory work leading up to the negotiations in 2012 on the arms trade treaty, which will help to ensure the responsible transfer of conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons and minimize the social

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and humanitarian impacts of the flow of such illicit weapons.

In our view, discussions and negotiations on the treaty, as well as on any other international legally binding agreements on arms control and disarmament, should be pursued within the framework of the United Nations. Such an approach would produce an outcome that is universally accepted and can be widely and strictly implemented. In that connection, Thailand looks forward to participating in the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty next year.

Certain types of weapons generate indiscriminate effects and produce adverse humanitarian impacts on innocent civilian lives. Thailand ratified the Mine Ban Convention, in 1998, contributing to the realization of a world free of anti-personnel mines. We are fully committed to our obligations under the Convention — mine clearance, promoting the universalization of the Convention, victim assistance and mine risk education — and completed our obligation on stockpile destruction in 2003.

Thailand expresses its readiness to work with all parties, and its appreciation of all the technical and financial assistance received under article 6 of the Convention. However, continued assistance from the international community is important to enable us to fulfil our obligations under the Convention in the specified time frame. Once our task is completed, we are determined to use our know-how and remaining resources to assist others in need. Thailand will participate in the eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, to be held in Cambodia from 28 November to 2 December, and wishes the Meeting all the success it deserves.

Thailand supports the principles underlying the Convention on Cluster Munitions, at the heart of which are humanitarian concerns. Although we have not yet adhered to the Convention, we have continued our serious engagement on this issue. A workshop was recently held in Bangkok to raise awareness and broader understanding of the Convention across Thai agencies and civil society.

Last month, we also participated as an observer in the second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held in Beirut. Most important, we actively contribute our efforts towards victim assistance, awareness-raising and providing education on this issue to people who are prone to be affected.

The risk and threat posed by the proliferation of conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons, as well as those associated with certain types of conventional weapons, are strongly evident and relevant. Resources invested in addressing those problems could be spent on more productive activities for societal benefits. Thailand stands ready to cooperate with all Member States in addressing and tackling those common global challenges in order to maintain international peace and security and promote social and economic development.

Mr. Mihut (Romania): Romania is honoured to have worked together with Germany as co-author of draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.35, entitled “Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures”. Let me add a few thoughts to yesterday’s eloquent presentation by Ambassador Hoffmann.

In December we will mark the thirty-first year since the adoption of resolution 35/142 B, entitled “Reduction of military budgets”. That important resolution established the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, which is as relevant as ever in the current international circumstances. Therefore, in a world that is changing at an accelerating pace, the Instrument should not lag behind; it needs to be adjusted accordingly.

In the same vein, my country welcomes the hard work carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts set up by resolution 62/13. My delegation is pleased with the significant results of the Group’s activity, reflected in a substantial report agreed by consensus by its members. I thank Ambassador Claus Wunderlich for his presentation of the report and for his stewardship as Chair of the Group.

The draft resolution submitted this year by Germany and Romania was inspired by the recommendations in the Group’s report (A/66/89) and aims to generate Member States’ support to improve the reporting system.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to express my delegation’s gratitude to the sponsoring countries, and to invite others to join the list of sponsors. My thanks also go to our German colleagues for their cooperation and leadership in this matter. My country hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote, as in previous years.

Mr. Jerman (Slovenia): Since I am speaking for the first time in the Committee at this year's session, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, and your fellow Bureau members, on your election. We also express our happiness at seeing the representative of a European member State chairing this important Committee.

I should like to shorten my statement and hope that the circulated text will be reflected in the Committee's report.

Allow me to elaborate our national views on some pertinent issues in the conventional weapons field.

First, let me say a few words on the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the most recent international legal instrument in this field. Slovenia welcomes the successful outcome of the second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held in September in Lebanon's capital, Beirut. We are satisfied with that, and in general with the success achieved in the Convention's short life. At the second Meeting, brilliantly organized by Lebanon, the parties set up an important institutional infrastructure. We hope that before the next meeting of States parties, in Oslo next September, States parties will establish a functioning secretariat — the Implementation Support Unit — which will have its seat in Geneva.

Slovenia also supports all efforts for the universalization of the Convention. We call upon all other States signatories to ratify the Convention as soon as possible.

Slovenia, as a committed State party to the Convention, is doing its best to fulfil its commitments. Therefore, on 27 July, Slovenia finally destroyed its entire stocks of cluster munitions and became a cluster-munitions-free country. In that way, we contribute to our common goal — a world free of cluster munitions.

Secondly, the Convention banning anti-personnel mines — the Ottawa Convention — is also high on Slovenia's disarmament agenda. That is why we put forward Ambassador Kovačič from Geneva for the post of Chair of the twelfth Meeting of States Parties, which will take place next year in Geneva. In that regard, we consider the Convention's universalization to be an important priority of States parties. We commend His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan for his work towards the universalization of the Convention.

We welcome Tuvalu, which a month ago became the 157th State party to the Convention. We also welcome the recent expression of support for the Convention by

Libya's Transitional National Council. We hope that Libya will become the next State party, thus paving a new avenue towards universalization.

All States parties must do more for the Convention's effective implementation, notably in the field of assistance to mine victims by implementing the Cartagena Action Plan. Slovenia will continue to assist mine-affected countries with the implementation of the Convention through activities of the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance, which is based in Slovenia. We are proud that the Fund has become an important player in the international mine action community.

I would also like to say a few words on the arms trade treaty (ATT). Next year we will gather here for the ATT Diplomatic Conference. Expectations in Slovenia are high; and we expect a successful conclusion of the ATT process. We hope to conclude a robust ATT — a new legally binding international instrument that will establish common international standards for transfers of conventional arms.

By regulating the legal transfer of conventional arms, an ATT would contribute to preventing the diversion of conventional weapons to the illicit market. For that reason, the treaty's scope, in terms of types of arms and activities covered, should be as broad as possible. The ATT should require all States to evaluate applications for arms transfers with the highest possible standards, including respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and a thorough analysis of the risk of diversion to unintended final users. The ATT should also include transparency and reporting requirements, monitoring and assistance provisions. We believe that such an ATT is possible.

Last, but not least, Slovenia commends Ambassador García Moritán for his work so far, and strongly believes that he should chair the Diplomatic Conference next summer.

The second important global event in the field of conventional weapons next year will be the Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We hope that that important Conference will conclude with concrete final documents and that we will start serious discussion not only on reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action, but also on possibly expanding

its scope, thus continuing the work that we started at the Conference in 2001.

Slovenia has participated regularly in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms for more than 15 years. Over the years, the Register has become an important tool for fostering international transparency in the field of arms transfers.

We note with regret that the number of national submissions to the Register continues to be low. In our view, we should aspire to increase the number of national reports to two thirds of United Nations Members. We believe that that is possible. Even small countries such as Slovenia that do not acquire or sell major categories of conventional arms can support the Register by submitting “nil” reports. Slovenia reiterates its long-standing position that the Register’s scope must be broadened by including new categories of conventional arms, notably small arms and light weapons.

Slovenia’s national experience with the implementation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe document on small arms and light weapons is reassuring. We have annually provided our figures on small arms for several years now, without jeopardizing our national security.

Finally, Slovenia continues to support the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, thereby recognizing the close link between security and development. Slovenia joined the supporters of the Declaration in 2006. Slovenia will participate in the second Ministerial Review Conference, to be held in Geneva on 31 October and 1 November.

In that context, we welcome the Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence. Slovenia appeals to all States, international organizations and civil society to achieve measurable reductions in armed violence in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, as agreed by our heads of State, by 2015.

Ms. Kiragu (Kenya): Kenya’s approach to the debate on conventional weapons has always been informed by the necessary balance between peace and security, on the one hand, and socio-economic development, on the other. Furthermore, Kenya’s position on conventional weapons disarmament is also informed by humanitarian considerations. In that regard, the grave threat posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons gives us reason to be concerned.

Kenya is a strong supporter of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and looks forward to robust engagement in the forthcoming Review Conference. We welcome the designation of Nigeria as Chair of the Conference and assure it of Kenya’s support as it undertakes that major task. It is our hope that the Conference will come up with an effective and pragmatic outcome that will serve to advance our common desire to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Equally, Kenya has been a strong supporter of the elaboration of an arms trade treaty (ATT), which we believe will contribute significantly to international peace and security. As we move closer to the 2012 Conference, let us not forget that the goal of the ATT is to arrive at a strong, global and legally binding treaty that will govern the trade in conventional arms.

Our unwavering support for the ATT process has been anchored in the belief that the principal objective of the ATT is to prevent irresponsible transfers of arms that undermine peace and security and negatively affect socio-economic development. In that connection, Kenya strongly welcomes and supports the exemplary work carried out in the three Preparatory Committee sessions, under the guidance of Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, whose wise leadership throughout the process has been invaluable. Indeed, it is our wish, and the wish of many in this room, I am sure, to see Ambassador García Moritán continue to lead us in moving the process forward. The Conference would be fortunate to have him as President-designate. The Chair’s papers arising out of the fruitful exchanges during the Preparatory Committee meetings are invaluable contributions to the ATT process. We believe that they can form a strong basis for the negotiations to come.

I conclude, Mr. Chair, by assuring you of my delegation’s full commitment to a meaningful disarmament process.

Mr. Bekele (Ethiopia): The progress made so far in achieving the goals of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, also known as the Mine Ban Treaty, is far from satisfactory. Despite the fact that more than three quarters of the Members of the United Nations have signed and acceded to the Treaty, landmines, and especially explosive

remnants of wars and armed conflicts, have continued to threaten human lives, directly and indirectly, in many ways. Moreover, there are no bright prospects for their full destruction and of an end to their further production.

It is more than obvious that the direct victims of anti-personnel mines are often innocent civilians, in particular the most vulnerable members of society, such as children. Farmers, refugees, internally displaced persons, families and returnees are also among the populations directly affected by landmines. Moreover, the negative impacts of landmines are not only physical in terms of human lives and casualties, with people being maimed and disabled; they are also psychological, social and economic, thereby affecting society as a whole.

Africa is one of the world's regions most affected by landmines. The presence of landmines, during conflicts or wars and long after they are over, unabatedly claims thousands of civilian victims every year. In addition to human casualties, the development efforts of most African countries are frustrated, and in some cases totally halted, due to uncleared mines and the existence of unexploded ordnance. Most of anti-personnel landmines and explosive devices are buried in the ground and stay there many years without being detected, causing continuous heavy casualties.

That is why Ethiopia strongly believes that clearing anti-personnel landmines must remain a critical element of the international community's mine action activities. Obviously, mine-affected countries need enhanced support for mine action operations and for mine risk education programmes to create community awareness of the adverse consequences of landmines remaining in the ground long after conflicts or wars are over. The role of the United Nations, Governments and organizations also needs to be further strengthened to eventually achieve a safe world, free from mines.

Ethiopia attaches the highest priority to the objectives of the 1997 Ottawa Convention on landmines, and believes that the use of anti-personnel mines is unacceptable, as they are indiscriminate weapons. As one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Convention, Ethiopia fully supports the international efforts to clear mine-affected areas and ensure the destruction of mines, with a view to completely halting their infliction of harm on innocent civilians and impeding development endeavours.

Ethiopia is one of those developing countries that continues to be seriously affected by landmines and unexploded ordnance left from past wars. It is making ceaseless efforts to ensure not only that those weapons do not cause human casualties, but also that they do not harm activities aimed at achieving food security and the safe movement of people in mine-contaminated parts of the country.

Since the establishment, in 2002, of the Ethiopian Mine Action Office, a legally mandated institution for the implementation of the Convention, the Government of Ethiopia, in collaboration with partner countries and organizations, has taken several important steps in support of its demining activities by adopting a national mine action plan.

Under the plan, various organizational structures and links have been established, and, with the deployment of survey teams and community liaison officers in the minefields, and the involvement of local communities and administrative authorities, the Government has undertaken large-scale demining efforts in areas infested by mines. Through those joint, concerted actions, valuable information and data have been collected to prioritize and plan demining operations. A large number of anti-personnel mines and other explosives buried underground have been found and destroyed.

Those demining activities address not only our humanitarian concerns, in particular, in terms of reducing civilian casualties, but also our efforts to ensure peace and security and carry out development activities in mine-affected areas. The results have been encouraging. Over the past year, nearly 59 square kilometres of land have been cleared of mines, and 55,000 different types of anti-personnel mines have been destroyed, thereby enabling more than 1 million people to benefit from farming, grazing and other developmental activities.

Despite that encouraging situation, we are still convinced that much remains to be achieved in terms of mine-clearing operations and carrying out educational and campaign programmes regarding the risks associated with mines. For our demining efforts to fully succeed, there is an urgent need for continued and enhanced support and cooperation from the international community through the provision of financing, training and equipment. We believe that the countries that produce the weapons have obligations under the treaty to give that support and cooperation.

Equally, mine survivors and persons with disabilities caused by mines need to receive more support in order to meet their basic living needs.

Ms. Adamson (United Kingdom): Before going into the substance of my conventional weapons statement, I would like to inform the Committee that yesterday in London we received the instrument of deposit from Burundi to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). That means that Burundi joins Mozambique as a new party to the BTWC. That is excellent news ahead of the Review Conference in December. We wish a warm welcome to Burundi on its accession to the BTWC.

Conventional arms issues remain as important as they ever were, perhaps even more so in the light of ongoing international events; and 2011 has seen us make more progress on the conventional arms agenda, not least on the arms trade treaty (ATT).

Since 2006, when the United Kingdom and the other co-authors — Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Japan and Kenya — introduced the original draft resolution on the arms trade treaty, significant progress has been made. That was not achieved by accident. More than 150 States supported the move to negotiations in 2009, and it is that overwhelming support that has driven the process forward. It is also a testament to the constructive engagement of Member States, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, which has made that progress possible. We would like to put on record our strong support for Ambassador García Moritán and our firm wish that he be elected President-designate for the 2012 Conference at the final Preparatory Committee meeting next year.

We have achieved much in the Preparatory Committee meetings of the past two years, and that work forms a solid base on which to begin formal negotiations in July. We support the Chair's text as the basis for moving forward. Not only is it broad in scope, which we welcome, but the criteria, being an essential part of a future treaty, are pertinent and relevant for consideration upon authorization of the export of arms.

There is only very limited time remaining before the crucial United Nations negotiating Conference in July 2012. It is essential that we use that time effectively. But it is important that the international community continue to work together as we approach the Conference to ensure we have the best chance of success in July.

The problems that we sought to address through an ATT in 2006 remain the same in 2011. If we fail to secure a robust and effective treaty in 2012 they will only become more acute: destroyed lives and livelihoods, displaced communities and hampered development.

The United Kingdom remains fully committed to securing a robust and effective, legally binding international arms trade treaty to address those problems. We urge all Member States to engage positively and constructively in the Conference next year. In that way we can address the problems of the unregulated trade in conventional arms by securing a treaty that will help to save lives and respect human rights, while supporting legitimate industry.

The United Kingdom welcomes the approach of the 2012 Review Conference of the small arms and light weapons Programme of Action as a key milestone in measuring the impact that has been made on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and also the Programme's impact on the humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of that illicit trade.

The United Kingdom has supported small arms and light weapons-related projects in 2011, both unilaterally and through the European Union. But we should also see control of small arms and light weapons in the broader context of conflict prevention, armed violence reduction and development strategies and interventions, so that a more integrated approach can be considered.

The United Kingdom is a signatory to the Ottawa Convention and has long since stopped using, producing, stockpiling and transferring anti-personnel mines. We are also a major contributor to the clearance of anti-personnel mines and other explosive remnants of war in areas of the world where their legacy threatens the lives of civilians and holds back the socio-economic development of affected communities.

In support of mine action, the United Kingdom has allocated more than £30 million for the period 2010 to 2013 to clearance programmes across the globe. We have also allocated an additional £10 million over five years for mine action in Afghanistan. In Libya the United Kingdom is supporting clearance work and control of abandoned explosive ordnance as part of our wider humanitarian assistance efforts. That emergency clearance, destruction and control programme aims to reduce the risk from explosive remnants of war to local populations and humanitarian aid workers.

In addition, in January 2012 we will launch phase II of our Falkland Islands demining pilot project. Phase II will see land released in accordance with international mine action standards, confirming the extent of some of the minefields near the capital, Stanley, accurately defining their boundaries and fencing them on all sides. The project will also confirm that other land within a current suspected hazardous area is free from all mines and other explosive remnants of war, and safely release it back to public use. Information gathered during the phase II pilot project will inform future mine clearance and land release activity. Technical details will be shared with the mine action community.

In the 12 months since the Convention on Cluster Munitions came into force, we have seen remarkable progress. Already, 111 States have acceded to the Convention, and 66 States have become States parties. The Convention came into force in the United Kingdom on 1 November 2010, which made us the thirty-second State party to the Treaty.

We were proud to participate in the first Meeting of States Parties, in Vientiane in December 2010, and more recently in the second Meeting, held in Beirut in September. It was very fitting that two of the countries most heavily affected by cluster munitions contamination — the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Republic of Lebanon — should preside over those meetings and drive forward the global ban on such weapons.

The United Kingdom remains strongly committed to the Convention. The United Kingdom has withdrawn all cluster submunitions — more than 38 million — from operational service, and is systematically destroying them ahead of schedule. Under current plans, it is our intention to have completed the total destruction of our cluster munitions by the end of 2013. We have destroyed some 65 per cent so far.

We also continue to take all appropriate opportunities, be they bilateral or multilateral, to promote the universalization of the Convention. Most recently this month, in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Cluster Munition Coalition, we hosted a workshop in London to promote the Convention among Commonwealth countries. We are committed to continue our work with States parties and civil society to free the world from the blight of cluster munitions.

The fourth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, to be held in November, provides an important opportunity to review the Convention's existing Protocols and focus on promoting compliance and universalization. We are also keen to see a satisfactory outcome emerge from the negotiations over a protocol VI on cluster munitions.

Finally, the United Kingdom, along with the other ATT co-authors, will submit a draft decision on the arms trade treaty. The draft will confirm the dates for the final Preparatory Committee session, next February, and extend its length from three to five days, to give more time to finalize both procedural and substantive matters. It is our hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Ms. Smolcic (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and associated States, namely, Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my own country, Uruguay.

The effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a matter of high priority and urgency for MERCOSUR and associated States. In that context, some steps are indispensable for the Programme's full application: the adoption of a legally binding instrument on identifying and tracing and on illicit brokering; the establishment of efficient systems for verification of end-user certificates; the establishment of an international framework for their authentication, reconciliation and standardization; and the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation and assistance and of national capacity-building as cross-cutting independent issues.

In addition, MERCOSUR and associated States understand that, by referring to the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, the Programme of Action should necessarily cover ammunitions and explosives. The Programme's effective application requires a comprehensive approach. Its non-binding nature should not represent an obstacle to its effective implementation.

The core role of the Programme of Action in the small arms and light weapons field requires strict and continuous follow-up by the international community.

MERCOSUR and associated States understand that the recommendations adopted at the fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action enable continuity of treatment on a range of issues, such as illegal trade across borders; international cooperation and assistance; strengthening mechanisms for monitoring the Programme of Action; and the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument. From that perspective, we consider as overriding the need for a comprehensive assessment of progress made in implementing the Programme of Action, 10 years after its adoption, as a contribution to the 2012 Review Conference.

Taking into account the primary responsibility to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit cross-border trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, MERCOSUR and associated States established, in 2001, the Working Group on Firearms and Ammunition. The aim was to share national experience, work on the harmonization of national legislation for the control of firearms and ammunition, and coordinate policies in this field.

That forum for exchange has become a useful tool for the coordination of positions of the States parties and associated States. Under the chairmanship of Paraguay, the Working Group analysed the updating of the legislation of the States of MERCOSUR and associated States on firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials, and discussed the status of the memorandum of understanding on the exchange of information on the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of arms, ammunition and explosives.

In that context, the Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers of MERCOSUR and associated States decided, in the framework of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), and following the decision by their Presidents to strengthen South America as a zone of peace, to establish the mechanism to build confidence and security. That involved developing and improving national systems for marking and tracing weapons, as well as active cooperation among UNASUR member States to resolve cases of diversion, smuggling and illegal use of weapons under their custody or from their territory.

MERCOSUR and associated States express their support for Colombia, South Africa and Japan in their annual presentation of the draft resolution entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its

aspects”, which this year is contained in document A/C.1/66/L.43. In the same vein, MERCOSUR and associated States highlight the need to address the problems related to the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market.

We also highlight the work of the Preparatory Committee for the 2012 Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, which met in three sessions — in July 2010, in February and March 2011 and in July 2011 — in accordance with resolution 64/48. We extend special thanks to the Chair of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina, for the leadership, tireless work and skill with which he led the discussions.

MERCOSUR and associated States believe that the outcome of the Conference should be agreement by consensus on a robust, effective and legally binding instrument that is negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis, to establish common international rules on the arms trade, with the highest international standards possible. Such regulation must not affect the right to self-defence recognized in Article 51 of the Charter, as well as the right of all States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and possess conventional weapons for self-defence and security needs.

MERCOSUR and associated States reiterate their support for efforts by the international community to regulate cluster weapons, in accordance with international humanitarian law, in order to significantly reduce such weapons’ humanitarian, social and economic consequences on civilian populations.

In addition to supporting the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions, which entered into force last August, States parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons should maintain the necessary support for the continuation of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, which should continue to consider the issue with regard to the adoption of a protocol to that Convention.

We also reaffirm the need to eliminate anti-personnel landmines. In that regard, we welcome the efforts and the results in demining and assistance to landmine victims in the region, which were made possible by cooperation between our countries, as was the case in joint clearance carried out in Peru and Ecuador.

MERCOSUR and associated States view positively the results of the second Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention, including the adoption of the plan of action for the period 2010 to 2014 and the Cartagena Declaration. We hope that the Convention's Implementation Support Unit will be strengthened so that it may perform its functions.

MERCOSUR and associated States believe that confidence-building measures are an important tool for the consolidation of peace and security. The South American region pioneered the implementation of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. For many years, the States of the region have been committed to strengthening the existing consultation and assistance mechanisms on security and defence matters, to promoting their progressive delivery and to improving cooperation in security and confidence-building measures and improving their implementation.

MERCOSUR and associated States reiterate the importance of continuing to promote an enabling environment for arms control and the limitation of conventional weapons, allowing each member State to devote more resources to its economic and social development, taking into consideration compliance with international commitments and their legitimate defence and security needs.

Since the fifty-ninth session, MERCOSUR and associated States have supported the biennial draft resolution presented by Argentina on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, which contributes to the electronic database and facilitates assessment of the progress achieved in the elaboration and implementation of such measures at the global level.

Mr. Kmentt (Austria): Unlike with nuclear weapons, where the international community is struggling to find a way towards meaningful disarmament negotiations, the area of conventional weapons has seen some significant multilateral progress in recent years. We have made important headway in introducing and anchoring humanitarian considerations into the disarmament context by banning and stigmatizing some of the most insidious weapons, such as anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. We have also made significant progress in addressing the long-term impact of past use of such weapons, and we have introduced into the discussion a stronger focus on victims and assistance to victims.

Much has also been achieved in addressing the complex issue of small arms and light weapons. The coming months will again see a very dense calendar of major events in the field of conventional weapons. Austria will continue to be very active and committed to all those processes.

Austria firmly supports the negotiation of an arms trade treaty (ATT), a legally binding international instrument establishing the highest common international standards for the transfer of conventional weapons, aimed at preventing the illegal arms trade and regulating the legal arms trade. We welcome the work that has been done so far in the preparatory process and the overall constructive approach that has been taken by all participating States.

Let me express, in that context, our appreciation of the chairmanship of Ambassador García Moritán of Argentina, and say that we would fully support him as President of the Diplomatic Conference. We hope that the outcome of the negotiations will be a universal ATT with a wide scope regarding the types of arms and activities covered.

Arms exports should be measured against the highest standards, such as respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as the risk of diversion. Furthermore, we consider a high degree of transparency to be an important element of a future ATT.

To contribute to broad participation in the ATT negotiating process, in February 2010 Austria hosted a regional seminar on the ATT, organized with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, and a concurrent non-governmental organization conference.

Small arms and light weapons cause death and injury to hundreds of thousands of people every year, mostly to civilians. The illicit trade in, and excessive accumulation of, such weapons adversely affect regional and international security and stability, fuel conflicts and armed violence and threaten the lives of individuals.

Austria, as an arms-producing and exporting country, feels a special responsibility, and is committed to working with all Member States in addressing those challenges within the framework of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons.

Austria has supported a number of projects in the small arms field in Africa, the continent worst

affected. In addition, the Austrian army supports small arms stockpile management projects in Africa and the Balkans.

We look forward to the 2012 Review Conference on the Programme of Action, which will assess the level of implementation and strive to further improve it. We will work constructively to make progress at the Review Conference, in particular in the areas of marking and tracing.

Austria welcomes the continuous progress in the universalization and implementation of the Mine Ban Convention and is committed to it and to implementing the Cartagena Action Plan. Despite significant progress, much remains to be done. Universality remains one of the highest priorities, and we appeal to all States outside the Convention to accede to it as soon as possible.

Important challenges remain in the areas of clearance, and particularly in the area of victim assistance. Nevertheless, the Mine Ban Convention is, in our view, one of the key accomplishments of recent years, both as a real disarmament instrument and as an important development in international humanitarian law. The effectiveness of the norm against anti-personnel mines goes far beyond the parties to the Convention.

While the Mine Ban Convention came about as a result of the huge scale of landmine use and contamination in the 1990s, the Convention on Cluster Munitions to a large extent, offers the chance of prevention. There have been some unacceptable cases of the use of cluster munitions, such as in southern Lebanon in 2006. However, the scale of the cluster munitions problem is not the same as it was for anti-personnel mines in the 1990s.

We must preserve this major accomplishment of international humanitarian law and focus on its full implementation. In that context, Austria welcomes the growing number of ratifications of, and accessions to, the Convention as well as the declaration adopted at the Meeting of States Parties in Beirut last September. I take this opportunity to congratulate Lebanon again on the excellent organization of the meeting.

The upcoming Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) will review, clarify and strengthen existing CCW obligations and their implementation. However, most of the attention will be given to the negotiations on a CCW protocol on cluster munitions.

Austria's position on that process is well known. We will assess any potential outcome against its complementarity to and compatibility with the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We consider the approach followed so far to be flawed. The restrictions proposed in the Chair's text mean in fact a legitimization of all cluster munitions not covered by the proposal, all of which are known to cause terrible humanitarian problems.

In addition, we have serious reservations as to the adverse precedent created for international humanitarian law by establishing an alternative, and weaker, international norm on cluster munitions. We have therefore suggested, together with other States, a viable alternative approach as a potential result of the negotiation process. Currently, there is no consensus on any of the proposals, which is a requirement for reaching an outcome in the CCW context. We will remain engaged in working on a meaningful outcome that meets the criteria that I have mentioned.

In conclusion, I reiterate that Austria's approach to conventional weapons is driven by our overall policy priority on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. That was one of our key priorities during our recent membership in the Security Council, and we were very pleased that the adoption of the landmark Security Council resolution 1894 (2009), on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, was achieved during that time.

Austria will continue to work on conventional weapons following an approach that looks at the effects of the use of weapons on innocent civilians. We will work to consolidate established norms on conventional weapons, and are interested in serious discussions on threats to civilians posed by other weapons, such as the dangers of anti-vehicle mines or, more broadly, on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Ms. Balaguer Labrada (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Over recent decades, the development of conventional weapons has served to increase their destructive power, and they have become more sophisticated and deadly. We are concerned by the priority given in international forums to certain categories of conventional weapons, such as small arms and light weapons, to the detriment of others, such as sophisticated conventional weapons, whose effects are devastating.

The Non-Aligned Movement has often warned about the imbalance between industrialized and

developing countries with respect to the production, possession and trade in conventional weapons. It has stressed the importance of industrialized countries significantly reducing the production and trade of such weapons in order to promote international and regional peace and security.

Much remains to be done in order to achieve effective solutions in favour of international peace and security, on the basis of strict respect for the principles of international law and the Charter. We must therefore channel all our efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament.

Cuba accords high priority to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), owing to our significant support for the development of standards of international humanitarian law linked to proper attention to the security interests of States parties. That relationship has been a basic pillar of the proper functioning of the Convention, and it meets the urgent needs of the international community with regard to certain conventional weapons.

Cuba is a State party to the Convention and its Protocols I, II — original — and III, and has ratified amended article 1. We are considering signing Protocol IV, on blinding laser weapons, and Protocol V, on explosive remnants of war, to help achieve the universalization of the Convention and its Protocols.

Cuba expresses the importance of the validity of the original Protocol II, on certain conventional weapons, as many States parties still adhere to that legally binding international instrument. We are ready to continue to discuss the relationship between original Protocol II and the new instrument that emerged as a result of the amendments made, and adopted in, 1996. Any solution must be the result of a political process.

Cuba attaches high priority to general and complete disarmament, with strict and effective verification, given the highly destructive power of not only nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, but also modern conventional weapons.

One topic in the Committee's work on certain conventional weapons has been the negotiation of an additional protocol on cluster munitions. We recognize the great complexity of this matter, as we must achieve the necessary balance between humanitarian concerns and the diversity of security interests of the parties to the Convention. Cuba has reiterated that, because of

their indiscriminate effects, the use of such weapons leads to great civilian losses, mostly among children, and therefore they should be banned completely. It is very unlikely that better technology alone could resolve the humanitarian problems that such weapons raise.

We highly appreciate the negotiating efforts of the Group of Governmental Experts, which should continue its work — which is already well advanced — to produce a document regulating and limiting the use of such weapons within the framework of the CCW. Producer countries as well as user countries should be covered. Cuba hopes that we can overcome the current challenges, especially for the well-being of the victims of cluster munitions, who need radical solutions with immediate, positive effects.

As a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Cuba fully shares the legitimate humanitarian concerns associated with the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of all kinds of mines. But any measure to resolve the problem must equally take into account the legitimate right of peoples to defend themselves and to protect their territory from aggression.

It is well known that my country has for five decades been the victim of a policy of continuous hostility and aggression by the world's largest military super-Power. As a result, Cuba cannot give up the use of such weapons, which would guarantee the preservation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with the right of legitimate self-defence, recognized in the Charter.

That is why Cuba is not a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We shall continue to fully support every effort to maintain the necessary balance between humanitarian issues and national security interests directed towards eliminating the terrible effects on the civilian population and on the economy of many countries through the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of anti-personnel landmines.

Cuba urges all States in a position to do so to provide financial, technical and humanitarian assistance for the removal of landmines and for the social and economic rehabilitation of their victims.

Cuba believes that to eradicate the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the short and medium

term we must examine its deep-rooted causes. We are concerned that international efforts focus primarily on tackling the manifestations of the phenomenon in developing countries, and do not fight its deeper causes: increasing poverty and a lack of opportunities for all.

Cuba defends the legitimate right of States to manufacture, import and maintain small arms and light weapons in order to meet their security and self-defence needs, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter. At the same time, we call for the adoption of more effective measures to prevent and combat the illicit trafficking of such weapons, to prevent their use by those who engage in terrorist and criminal activities at the international level.

The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons has severe social, humanitarian and economic consequences for many countries, whose right to life, peace and sustainable development is seriously compromised. Cuba will continue to support the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We have fully complied with our commitments, and we cooperate in the practical initiatives and measures under the Programme.

International assistance and cooperation are essential for all Member States in fully complying with the Programme. In our view, international cooperation and assistance must be the focus of the work of the Programme's 2012 Review Conference.

With regard to the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Cuba emphasizes the need for the process to be carried out within the framework of the United Nations in a balanced, gradual, transparent and inclusive manner and on the basis of consensus. There can be no room for hasty or forced decisions.

The question of the transfer of conventional weapons is complex, with important economic, political and legal implications, as well as security issues, for all States. Therefore, we cannot have simplistic or preconceived formulas. The instrument must contain general standards so that all countries can properly carry out their import, export and transfer of conventional weapons without affecting their national security interests.

The proposed elements of an ATT must be achievable goals that are universally accepted, and

should not divert us from the objective of strengthening prevention mechanisms and tackling the illicit trafficking of weapons. The opinions of all States must be properly taken into account in the process.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): In the interests of time, I shall deliver a slightly truncated version of my statement.

New Zealand welcomes the intensified focus evident at present on ways to diminish the harm to human security and the damage to national, and indeed international, stability that conventional weapons can inflict.

Irresponsible, or diverted, arms transfers contribute significantly to armed conflict, the displacement of people, transnational crime and terrorism, and the prospects in many regions for peace and development.

Some say that global attention on weapons of mass destruction — weapons with an undeniably “bigger bang” — has for too long crowded out global efforts to tackle very pressing problems, such as the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Whether or not that is true, and whether or not our current attention is overdue, we have no doubt that both an arms trade treaty (ATT) and strengthened implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects would be highly beneficial to human security and sustainable development in many parts of the globe.

The next 12 months hold out the promise of significant advances on conventional weapons issues. For us, the schedule of forthcoming meetings — for instance, on the ATT — does not represent the artificial imposition of deadlines. Rather, it represents the promise of necessary action in the face of what many colleagues here have depicted as a humanitarian crisis in their countries.

Cluster munitions have been the subject of a number of recent meetings, and will be again during the forthcoming Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to be held in Geneva next month.

For New Zealand, the Convention on Cluster Munitions continues to provide the gold standard for any effort by the international community to address the humanitarian suffering caused by cluster munitions. Last month's Convention on Cluster Munitions Meeting

in Beirut showcased the impressive strides that have been made in universalizing the Convention and the solid progress in implementing its provisions.

New Zealand is pleased to continue in our role as the Convention's coordinator on national implementation measures. To assist States parties, or prospective States parties, we recently developed two tools, namely, a checklist of national laws or measures that could usefully be reviewed for compatibility with the Convention's obligations, and a very short two-page example of model implementing legislation. Both are particularly applicable to small States that have not been affected by past use or possession of cluster munitions.

The negotiation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions was the direct result of a strong recognition of the dangers of cluster munitions, weapons which are widely regarded as unreliable, inaccurate and indiscriminate. Awareness of the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of cluster munitions has also been the impetus for considering the possibility of standard-setting on those weapons in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

In that regard, I cannot help but note the cautionary words delivered here on 11 October by the observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross that,

“in the field of international humanitarian law we would consider it regrettable if new norms were adopted that would contradict rather than complement the Convention on Cluster Munitions and would allow the development and use of specific types of cluster munitions that are likely to perpetuate the humanitarian problem.”
(A/C.1/66/PV.9, p. 21)

Clearly, an important evaluation process will be necessary for all Convention supporters during the November Review Conference as to whether or not there is an important humanitarian dividend from the adoption of a protocol VI.

I have already remarked on the highly destabilizing effects of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It remains the greatest humanitarian and security threat for many United Nations Members. Ten years into its existence, the United Nations Programme of Action can rightly claim some successes. However, international efforts to implement the Programme remain incomplete.

Next year's Review Conference provides an important opportunity to address the full range of issues and to reinvigorate the United Nations small arms process. A key focus must be on practical measures to support implementation. The recent Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts, which New Zealand chaired, set some directions in that regard. A successful Review Conference is essential for the continued credibility and effectiveness of the Programme of Action process.

We will meet early next year for the final session of the Preparatory Committee, and then in July for the Diplomatic Conference to conclude and adopt an arms trade treaty. New Zealand has no doubt whatsoever about the significant humanitarian dividend that will flow from a robust arms trade treaty, both globally and also in our own region. Its successful conclusion is a priority for the New Zealand Government. We are committed to working intensely over the coming year to ensure a successful outcome.

The implementation framework put in place by the ATT will be a very important part of the treaty. As a contribution to the debate on this issue, New Zealand issued a non-paper on implementation for discussion purposes earlier this year. The full text is available from the New Zealand delegation.

Assistance with capacity-building, especially for small States, such as New Zealand's Pacific island neighbours, will be key to the treaty's implementation. The Pacific region rightly attaches considerable importance to the successful conclusion of the ATT. At last month's meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum, hosted by New Zealand, as its current Chair, Forum leaders welcomed progress in the Preparatory Committee process and, wishing to ensure a strong and proactive voice for our region in the concluding negotiations, expressed support for the development of a common Forum position on the treaty.

Much of the progress on the ATT to date has been due to the leadership of the Chair of the process, Ambassador García Moritán of Argentina, who has conducted our work in a very inclusive and transparent manner. His skill in capturing the key concerns and predominant views of the United Nations membership is very evident in the composite Chair's draft paper that he circulated in July. We believe that the text has provided us with an excellent foundation — a reference guide, as Ambassador García Moritán described it

yesterday — that will considerably shorten the distance to be travelled next July as we move forward and conclude the ATT. We hope very much for Ambassador García Moritán's continued leadership as Chair of the Diplomatic Conference.

In conclusion, it remains the firm hope — indeed, the expectation — of my delegation that when we meet at the next session we will all be able to look back over the preceding year and justifiably claim that our work on conventional weapons made a significant improvement in global frameworks for human security.

Mr. Rawat (India): India believes that global measures on conventional arms control contribute significantly to international peace, security and development, as well as to the goal of general and complete disarmament.

As a State party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and all of its five Protocols, including Amended Protocol II, on anti-personnel landmines, India attaches particular importance to carrying forward the CCW process, which offers a unique forum for progressive controls over certain categories of weapons through international consensus-building and cooperation. The CCW has proved to be a dynamic instrument of international humanitarian law. We hope that we can further strengthen it at the forthcoming Review Conference in November, including through the successful conclusion of the negotiations on a draft protocol on cluster munitions.

India has always exercised the highest degree of responsibility in conventional arms transfers. We have contributed regularly to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms since its inception, in 1994, and have participated actively in deliberations in the Disarmament Commission and elsewhere on conventional arms transfers.

India also contributed to the recent work of the Group of Governmental Experts on reporting of military expenditures.

India's security interests have been affected by illicit and irresponsible transfers, especially of small arms, light weapons and explosives. The illicit trade in conventional arms is a major factor in armed violence by organized criminals and terrorists. We believe that priority must be given to combating and eliminating the illicit trade in such arms. That implies the full

and effective implementation of existing obligations of Member States, in particular those flowing from the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, strict national control over production, adequate marking, international cooperation in the tracing of illicit arms, effective management of stockpiles, and export controls and their strict enforcement. We hope that the Conference in 2012 to review the implementation of the Programme of Action can uphold the commitments undertaken by Member States and give further momentum to their full implementation.

India has participated actively in discussions in the Group of Governmental Experts, the Open-ended Working Group and the three Preparatory Committee sessions on the proposed arms trade treaty. We believe that a legally binding instrument that establishes international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms should contribute tangibly to preventing, combating and eliminating the illicit trade in conventional arms.

The Charter provisions for self-defence imply that States enjoy the right to engage in the trade of arms, including export to another country, in accordance with relevant international obligations. In India's view, establishing and exercising control over the trade in conventional arms is a matter of national responsibility, which States should discharge on the basis of their obligations under both national and international law, and in the light of their legitimate security and foreign policy concerns.

We thank Ambassador García Moritán, who has led the ATT Preparatory Committee with great skill, for his briefing to the Committee. The discussions in the Preparatory Committee have demonstrated the continuing technical and political difficulties involved in seeking to construct a single, unified instrument to govern all conventional arms transfers. We continue to believe that a step-by-step, pragmatic, realistic and consensus-driven approach will enhance the prospects of a universally accepted instrument.

India supports the vision of a world free of the threat of landmines, where individuals and communities can live in a safe environment conducive to development, and where mine survivors are fully integrated into their societies. Since 1997, India has discontinued the production of non-detectable anti-personal landmines

and has observed a moratorium on their transfer. We are contributing to international demining and rehabilitation efforts. We support the approach enshrined in Amended Protocol II of the CCW, which addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States with long borders.

However, we are fully committed to the eventual elimination of anti-personnel landmines. The availability of militarily effective alternative technologies that can perform cost-effectively the defensive function of anti-personal landmines will facilitate the achievement of that goal. India has been participating as an observer in the meetings of States parties to the Ottawa Convention since the Review Conference held in November 2004, in Nairobi. We will be doing so again at the forthcoming meeting of the States parties in Phnom Penh.

India also shares the international community's concerns about the humanitarian impact of the irresponsible use of cluster munitions. We believe that the use of cluster munitions is legitimate if it is in accordance with international humanitarian law. Accordingly, we support the negotiation of an instrument in the CCW that strikes a balance between military and humanitarian concerns.

We welcome the progress that has been made by the Group of Governmental Experts under the chairmanship of Minister Gary Domingo of the Philippines on negotiating a draft text, and we look forward to concluding those negotiations at the fourth Review Conference, so that we can add another edifice to the CCW framework.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Mali to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.18.

Ms. Diallo (Mali) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that I take the floor, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of Mali, on your election to chair the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I assure you of my delegation's full support in steering the Committee's work. I also pay heartfelt tribute to Ambassador Miloš Koterec for his excellent work as Chair last year.

The delegation of Mali fully associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

On behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mali thanks the Secretary-General for the actions that the Organization has taken under his leadership to provide assistance to States in halting the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

I would like to recall some of the measures that ECOWAS has taken to address the serious threats to peace and security resulting from the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons. I should also like to emphasize the importance of the ECOWAS small arms control programme, thanks to which almost all the member States of our subregional organization have set up national committees to control small arms. The programme has allowed ECOWAS member States to acquire border control equipment, such as scanners for ports and airports, and weapons detectors, as well as training and communication tools. All of that equipment is necessary to effectively fight the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

By way of follow-up, a plan of action for the implementation of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials for the period 2011-2015 was adopted at the sixty-fourth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers, held in Abuja from 31 May to 2 June 2010.

At the national level, I should like to recall the words of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mali, who stressed in the General Assembly on 23 September the security challenges in the immense Sahelo-Saharan Strip, which Mali shares with several other countries. The area must tackle the proliferation of small arms and light weapons as well as all kinds of trafficking, which is fuelled by organized crime networks working in collusion with terrorist groups.

Regrettably, the crises that our continent has experienced recently favour the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. More than ever, our States, which experience the adverse consequences of conflict situations, need all the assistance available in order to tackle the threat posed by the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, which also threatens civilian populations, especially vulnerable sectors, as well as the stability of our institutions.

Therefore, on behalf of States Members of the United Nations that are members of ECOWAS, under sub-item (k) of agenda item 98, Mali would like to introduce the annual draft resolution entitled

“Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them”. Draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.18 is an expression of the political will of our States to create conditions for true security within our area.

The First Committee has always adopted similar draft resolutions without a vote. Given the international situation and the relevance of the issue, therefore, the delegation of Mali is certain that the Committee will not depart from the tradition of adopting by consensus this draft resolution, which calls upon the international community to provide technical and financial support to strengthen the capability of civil society organizations to take action to help combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as to support the implementation of the ECOWAS Convention, whose entry into force, on 29 September 2009, we welcome.

Beyond the West African subregion, the draft resolution reflects the determination of countries in Africa and across the world to work together to curb the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

In response to the many challenges faced by the international community, and particularly by the most vulnerable States, ECOWAS remains convinced that the fight against the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons is essential and requires the broadest possible support.

We thank the States that are already sponsors of the draft resolution for their support for our common struggle, and remind delegations that the list of sponsors is still open for sponsorship.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d’Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that I speak in the First Committee, I sincerely congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on behalf of my delegation, on your election. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau, and assure you of my delegation’s full cooperation in successfully carrying out your mandate.

My delegation endorses the statements made at the beginning of our work by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The vast uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons is a direct cause of the instability in African States, and consequently of the perpetuation of poverty and the culture of violence. Small arms and light weapons are cheap, light and easy to use, transport

and conceal. As everyone knows, conflict situations are fuelled by the almost unlimited availability of small arms and light weapons, which are present in civil wars, terrorist acts, organized crime and gang wars.

In 2001, we all welcomed the response of the international community to this scourge, namely, the adoption by Member States of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That international instrument paved the way for action at the national, regional and global levels, and set out the goals to be achieved, particularly in terms of marking and tracing, trade and brokerage, and end-use verification of munitions and stocks.

In West Africa the member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) reflected that international will by turning the existing Moratorium regarding small arms and light weapons into a legally binding instrument to regulate their transfer and manufacture: the ECOWAS Convention on the transfer of small arms and light weapons, which has been in force since September 2009. .

The issue of conventional arms control is at the heart of the issue of the security of people and assets in West Africa. The States of the subregion continue to suffer the devastating consequences of the proliferation and illicit trade in conventional weapons. Since 1990, civil wars and conflict situations in West Africa, fuelled by light weapons and other conventional weapons, have claimed thousands of victims, destroyed an untold amount of assets and infrastructure, caused serious damage to the environment and led to the massive displacement of populations and refugees.

More recently, in Côte d’Ivoire, the deaths of 3,000 people in the country’s post-electoral crisis were predominantly linked to the use of conventional weapons. Côte d’Ivoire is gradually emerging from the crisis. The challenge of security sector reform remains a priority. In response, the Government, in accordance with the relevant provisions of Security Council resolution 2000 (2011), is implementing identified actions, with the support of the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire , other intergovernmental organizations and bilateral partners.

Moreover, due to the subregional dimensions of the situation in Côte d’Ivoire, particularly the question of security at the western border with Liberia, the solutions are envisaged as part of a system of collective

security. Accordingly, a summit of heads of State of the Mano River Union took place on 17 July in Monrovia, bringing together President Alassane Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and President Alpha Condé of Guinea. During the summit, the heads of State reiterated their willingness to cooperate more closely to strengthen regional peace and security.

The same thinking was behind the mini-summit held in Abuja on 10 September, which brought together the heads of State of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal, with a view to reviewing the security situation at the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. The West Africa heads of State again stated their determination to stop the criminal activities of non-State armed groups, and also to eradicate the existence and circulation of small arms and light weapons. That mini-summit was followed by a meeting of chiefs of staff of ECOWAS armies, on 4 and 5 October.

We call on all Member States to follow in the footsteps of ECOWAS and work towards vigorous international action against the illicit trade in light weapons and their ammunition, which have become real weapons of mass destruction. The time has come to take steps to effectively combat this scourge.

My delegation is pleased by the progress made since the adoption of the Programme of Action. We are particularly pleased that the Firearms Protocol has entered into force and that the General Assembly has adopted the International Tracing Instrument, which allows illicit light weapons to be identified and traced.

My delegation also welcomes the important role played by the Implementation Support Unit in strengthening the capacity of focal points, or national commissions, devoted to the issue of small arms and light weapons, as well as by all civil society actors.

We therefore continue to call for an integrated approach to combating cross-border organized crime. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the West Africa region is facilitated by the inability of our States to effectively control their borders owing to a lack of resources, inadequate training of personnel and a lack of cooperation and information-sharing between States.

Therefore, as our States prepare to meet that huge challenge they must be able to rely on the international

community's readiness to help them by strengthening its cooperation and technical and financial support, while leaving it to Governments and local actors to evaluate the implementation of programmes already planned.

On another matter, it is no secret that we need coordinated measures to determine the true quantity of weapons produced and sold, in order to combat all cases of possible abuse. To that end, my delegation has great hopes for the final success of the negotiations leading to the expected establishment in 2012 of an arms trade treaty, which should provide legally binding international norms allowing real control of the international transfer of conventional weapons.

My country, which recognizes that the trade in conventional weapons is an extremely complex issue, has followed with great interest all the negotiations since 2006 through to the holding, last July, of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the drafting of the treaty. Today, it has to be recognized that the international community must, given its responsibility with regard to arms transfers, consider bolder steps if it is to make the expected progress towards an arms trade treaty.

Côte d'Ivoire therefore calls on States to overcome their differences and agree on the substantive elements of an arms trade treaty, particularly with regard to its aims and objects, criteria, implementation, holding of registers, transparency, international cooperation, victim assistance and implementation support. My country remains convinced that the best way to achieve the desired results is to adopt a participatory, comprehensive, tangible and phased approach.

In conclusion, my country believes that the arms trade treaty should cover both light weapons and munitions. It should be possible to ban any arms transfers to non-State actors, and above all to rule out any arms transfers if there is a substantial risk of their being used to perpetrate or facilitate the commission of acts of violence, violations of international humanitarian law, human rights violations or acts that hamper socio-economic development.

Mr. Pöhlö (Finland): Finland joins all other delegations in welcoming the Chair of the arms trade treaty (ATT) Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán. We also commend Monday's informal meeting, where delegations had an opportunity to exchange views directly with Ambassador García

Moritán and Ambassador Claus Wunderlich on their respective important fields of work.

Ambassador García Moritán has chaired the ATT Preparatory Committee skilfully and in a constructive atmosphere. Finland, as one of the co-authors of the draft resolution on the arms trade treaty, would like to see him at the helm of the 2012 United Nations Conference.

From the very beginning, Finland has been one of the most active supporters of the ATT. We have noted with satisfaction the strong engagement by Member States and various regional groups in the preparation of basic elements of a legally binding arms trade treaty. Engagement by all is necessary in achieving our goal, namely, an effective international legal instrument to regulate the arms trade.

The Chair's draft paper reflects well the work done so far, and would constitute an excellent basis for the final stage of the treaty negotiations. Therefore, we believe that the Preparatory Committee should submit it to the 2012 Conference.

The illicit trade in, and excessive accumulation of, small arms and light weapons has a negative humanitarian impact and contributes to conflicts and their escalation. Global efforts are required to tackle this matter. An excellent tool for those efforts is the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which will celebrate its tenth anniversary this year.

Finland looks forward to the 2012 Review Conference of the Programme of Action. We are convinced that the Conference will be successful in finding ways to intensify the implementation of the Programme of Action. Effective implementation is the key to its success.

We welcome the report (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3) adopted at the fourth Biennial Meeting of States and the report (A/CONF.192/MGE/2011/1) adopted at the open-ended meeting of governmental experts held in New York in May. The reports constitute a good basis for the work to be done at the Review Conference.

Finland made a political commitment in 2004 to accede to the Ottawa Convention in 2012. The Parliament of Finland is currently processing the issue. Although Finland has not been a party to the Convention, it has already supported its implementation

through humanitarian mine action. Mine clearance, the disposal of explosive remnants of war, the destruction of stockpiles and victim assistance remain topical challenges globally. We have supported such action in concrete terms in seven countries — three in Asia and four in Africa. We will continue our support for humanitarian mine action in the future.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Albania to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.4.

Mr. Jorgji (Albania): As this is the first time that I take the floor, Mr. Chair, I should like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and to assure you of my delegation's support in your efforts for the successful conclusion of this session.

Albania believes that action towards strengthening the international framework for the legal trade in conventional weapons, as well as towards preventing and combating the illicit traffic in such weapons, is a major contribution to a safer and more prosperous world.

The year ahead is marked by a series of important events, including the negotiation of the arms trade treaty and the Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Progress is also expected in the framework of the universalization and implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and on the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

My delegation welcomes the progress achieved during the preparatory process on the elements of an arms trade treaty (ATT), under the valuable leadership of Ambassador García Moritán of Argentina. Such a treaty will establish a much-needed legally binding international instrument with the highest common standards for transfers of conventional weapons. We look forward to a successful United Nations conference on an ATT next year.

The illicit production, stockpiling and trade in small arms and light weapons continues to pose a serious threat to international security and development everywhere in the world. Albania reiterates its commitment to the Review Conference of the Programme of Action. Following the positive

results of the meeting of governmental experts in May, chaired by Ambassador McLay of New Zealand, we look forward to the successful conclusion of the 2012 Review Conference.

Albania, as one of the Oslo signatories of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, welcomes its entry into force in August of last year. Furthermore, my delegation welcomes the action plan for the period 2010 to 2015, adopted at the first Meeting of States Parties, held in the Lao People's Democratic Republic in November 2010, as well as the Beirut declaration and the progress made during the second Meeting of States Parties, held in September.

To date, the Convention includes 66 States parties, while the total number of States parties and signatories has reached 111. We are encouraged by the growing trend of ratifications and accessions, and call upon other States to become States parties.

The Mine Ban Convention is another important element of humanitarian disarmament. Besides the total ban of the production, use and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines, it requires the destruction of all existing stockpiles, the clearance of all mine-contaminated areas and assistance to mine victims. Thanks to the Convention, the use of anti-personnel mines has decreased dramatically, land is being cleared and released to local communities for normal human activity in dozens of countries, victims of mines are being assisted, and there are fewer and fewer casualties each year.

Since its opening for signature, in 1997, the Convention has achieved a great degree of universalization. To date, it includes 157 States parties, comprising more than 80 per cent of the United Nations membership. At the same time, the majority of the remaining 39 States that are not party to the Convention do not use, produce or stockpile anti-personnel landmines.

While noting the increased support for the Convention, the international community has expressed its concern about the recent cases of the use of anti-personnel landmines by some Governments. We call on those countries, and all others, to refrain from ever using anti-personnel landmines, as they have devastating effects on civilians and hamper the economic development of affected areas long after conflicts are over. The success of the global ban on anti-personnel landmines demonstrates that their humanitarian impact

and the damage they cause clearly outweigh any limited military utility that they may have.

Since becoming a party to the Ottawa Convention, in February 2000, Albania has done its utmost to implement the Convention — by destroying anti-personnel mines, clearing minefields, assisting victims and survivors and promoting the universalization of the Convention. From January 2001 to April 2002, Albania completed the destruction of its stockpile of almost 1.7 million anti-personnel mines. Following demining efforts spanning almost a decade, in 2009 Albania declared itself a mine-free country after the clearance of a total of 102 contaminated areas covering more than 15.2 million square metres. None of that would have been possible without the support provided by a number of countries and international organizations, to which Albania is very grateful.

Victim assistance was one of the main priorities of the Albanian presidency of the tenth Meeting of States Parties. In that regard, in line with the Cartagena Action Plan, in June Albania hosted an international symposium on strengthening international cooperation on mine victim assistance, with the participation of 91 representatives from 43 Governments, various related non-governmental organizations, civil society and academic circles. The symposium also appreciated the valuable contribution of several mine victims.

With respect to the universalization of the Mine Ban Convention, the Albanian presidency, as coordinator of the universalization contact group, has been promoting the Convention in close collaboration with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Belgium, in Belgium's capacity as coordinator of the universalization contact group.

My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate its appreciation for the professional work and dedication of those that I have mentioned, as well as of all other entities and non-governmental organizations that tirelessly continue to work on the ground serving the humanitarian purposes of the Convention.

Albania welcomes the accession of Tuvalu to the Mine Ban Convention, last September, and looks forward to the implementation of the commitments made by Finland and Poland to accede in 2012. We especially encourage States to take the final step in the light of the upcoming eleventh Meeting of States Parties, which will be held in Phnom Penh from 28 November

to 2 December. We wish every success to the upcoming Cambodian presidency. That event should provide a great opportunity to advance the full implementation and universalization of the Convention. At the same time, we call upon all States that have not acceded to or ratified the Convention to do so without delay.

In conclusion, this year, Albania, Norway and Cambodia have submitted draft resolution A/C.1/66/L.4, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction". The draft resolution calls upon States to accede to and implement the mine ban treaty, giving a strong focus to the Convention's humanitarian dimension.

The text presented this year has no substantial changes from last year's resolution 65/48, except for some technical updates. Since it was first introduced, 14 years ago, the draft resolution has gained increased support. Last year it reached the highest level of support ever, with 165 votes in favour in the General Assembly. We call on all Member States, especially those that are not party to the Treaty, to vote in favour, thereby showing support for the humanitarian principles of the Convention.

Mr. Fasel (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Switzerland stresses that Member States should give conventional weapons the same attention as nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Our common endeavours with regard to conventional weapons have an important impact on reducing armed conflict and armed violence, as well as on increasing human security and sustainable development. Challenges in the area of conventional weapons remain important, and a number of forthcoming events will provide an opportunity to make progress, if we find the political will.

The Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) will be an important event on next year's disarmament agenda. We will work to ensure that the tireless efforts of the past few years are crowned by the conclusion of a robust, comprehensive and legally binding treaty that will effectively address the different aspects of the international arms trade.

Although negotiations on a treaty text still lie ahead, we consider the draft papers of the Chair of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, to be an excellent starting point. They contain a

wide range of valuable ideas put forward by delegations during the Preparatory Committee meetings that reflect many crucial aspects that Switzerland wants to see incorporated into the treaty.

The future arms trade treaty should cover all conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons as well as ammunition and explosives. The process of issuing export licences must take into account criteria such as international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, the potential impact on the sustainable economic and social development of the recipient country of the weapons in question, and the risks of abuse and diversion.

The Review Conference in 2012 of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects must provide, after the failure of 2006, a convincing outcome. In terms of process, we expect the Review Conference to build on the final outcome documents of the third and fourth Biennial Meetings of States and on the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts. With regard to substance, we hope that States will critically review the global implementation of the Programme of Action as well as of the International Tracing Instrument, and come up with a road map for the continued implementation of those instruments.

This year also marks the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Register of Conventional Arms. Switzerland attaches particular importance to the Register, which is the main transparency instrument at the global level. We welcome and support the creation of a new web platform for the Register, which will facilitate the submission of national reports and improve access to the data collected, thereby enhancing the Register's relevance.

Such improvements are important in view of the decreasing level of participation in the Register in the past few years. The group of governmental experts that will begin to meet in 2012 to address the continuing operation and further development of the Register will have to address that issue. In order to inform the work of the group, we urge all States that have not yet done so to communicate their views to the Secretary-General on whether the Register's failure to include small arms and light weapons directly affected national decisions on participation, which was a question put to Member States in the 2009 resolution on transparency in armaments.

The Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will decide next month on a protocol on cluster munitions. Despite our common efforts over the past few years, we have reason to fear that the document to be discussed will not sufficiently meet the humanitarian concerns about such weapons, nor meet the requirements for an effective arms control and disarmament instrument.

In our view, the protocol on cluster munitions must be consistent with existing norms of international humanitarian law and have an immediate effect on the ground, effectively helping to protect civilians and members of international missions from the indiscriminate effects of cluster munition remnants. States parties must be able to better understand the practical implications of the provisions of the draft protocol. Users and producers are strongly encouraged to increase transparency in the negotiation process and to provide information on the qualitative and quantitative impact on their stockpiles of the draft protocol.

With regard to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, its universalization is solidly on track. The Convention has successfully concluded a first annual intersessional process and made progress at the second Meeting of States Parties, held in Lebanon a few weeks ago. Following a joint initiative by Norway and Switzerland, States parties are working on an agreement with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining regarding the hosting of a small but efficient implementation support unit to help facilitate implementation of the Convention and reinforce its positive effect on the ground.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is making steady progress in achieving a world free of mines. We strongly condemn any new employment of these indiscriminate weapons, and urge all Member States to sign up to the Convention's norms. Switzerland, as co-Chair with Colombia this year of the Convention's Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Awareness and Related Technologies, calls for increased combined clearance efforts at both the national and international levels. The challenge of clearing all mines can only be met by increased national ownership by affected States parties and by a continued readiness of donor States parties to provide assistance.

It is crucial that the upcoming eleventh Meeting of States Parties, to be held in Phnom Penh, address the various implementation challenges. The Cartagena

Action Plan of 2009 provides an excellent road map for that purpose. It is equally important to ensure financial stability for the Implementation Support Unit, an important tool in the provision of assistance to States parties in tackling implementation issues and one that has greatly contributed to the Convention's success.

Switzerland will therefore continue in the years to offer support for the implementation mechanisms, for the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, and for concrete projects regarding mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. We call upon all States parties to keep up the momentum in support of those two Conventions, which are particularly positive examples of our capacity to deal with pressing challenges.

We are also given an opportunity to move forward by the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. Its goal is to raise awareness of the negative effects of armed violence, and to increase understanding of the close links between preventing and reducing armed violence and advancing human security and development. The Declaration's 109 signatories have committed to take tangible and demonstrable steps to reduce the incidence and causes of armed violence by 2015.

On 31 October and 1 November, the second Ministerial Review Conference on the Declaration will be held in Geneva, under the auspices of the President of the Swiss Confederation and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. We look forward to welcoming in Geneva representatives at the highest possible level of the signatory States of the Declaration and of those that have endorsed the Oslo Commitments. Together, we shall work to integrate the issue of armed violence more closely into development activities.

Mr. Gumende (Mozambique): As this is the first time that I take the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and express my confidence that under your able leadership our deliberations will produce successful outcomes.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and that of the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We all agree that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons constitutes one of the challenges of today's world, as it represents a serious threat to peace, security, stability, safety and development in many developing countries, particularly in Africa. That illicit trade has become a major factor in endangering lives of innocent civilians and in the destruction of public and private property.

We therefore note with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects since its adoption, in 2001, as reflected in the report (A/66/177) of the Secretary-General. The Programme has served as an excellent framework for concerted global efforts aimed at building international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

As part of our commitment to realize the objectives envisaged by the Programme of Action, Mozambique has adopted a programme to mitigate the arms risk and control small arms and light weapons, as well as a mine action plan, instruments from which derive all national activities in this domain. Our programme, which is part of our development agenda, entails a comprehensive strategy aimed at short-, medium- and long-term activities to reduce the negative impact of crimes involving small arms.

We view the implementation of the Programme of Action as a step forward in the consolidation of peace, security and stability and the preservation of law and order within the country and beyond its borders. We are aware of the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon. Our endeavours to prevent and curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons are therefore multisectoral and engage not only the Government but also all relevant civil society stakeholders. In fact, civil society plays an important role in civic education to raise awareness among local communities of the risk of illegal arms ownership, an element that is combined with safety and human development.

In addition, a well-known initiative is being carried out by various Government institutions under the Office to Support Women and Children Victims of Domestic Violence and under the United Nations Development Programme. The initiative aims, on the one hand, to disseminate the legal framework on domestic violence and, on the other hand, to prevent the use of small arms and ammunition in domestic violence.

Furthermore, the Government has in place a project that entails a system to control weapons, ammunition and firearms, in both Government and civilian possession. That project includes software and professional training, specifically to administer the programme.

Financial constraints limit our commitment to have the programme implemented as a whole. Nevertheless, we are confident that our traditional partners will continue supporting our efforts to achieve the goal of eradicating the illicit traffic of small arms and light weapons.

At the regional level, Mozambique has carried out Operation Rachel, conducted annually with the collaboration of the military and law enforcement agencies of the Republic of South Africa, which represents a remarkable example of fruitful cooperation between neighbouring countries in the area of public security. The Operation has resulted in the recovery and destruction of hidden caches of firearms — a legacy of the armed conflict that ended in 1992 — and has so far resulted in the destruction of approximately 30,000 different types of firearms and more than 1 million rounds of ammunition and other related materials, thereby contributing to enhanced security and safety in the region.

In conclusion, we commend the political momentum generated by the ongoing negotiations to conclude an arms trade treaty, which my country has been following with special attention. We hope that the negotiations will have a fair basis and will culminate in a strong treaty that addresses developing countries' main concerns in that important domain.

Mr. Cassidy (Indonesia): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

At the outset, the Movement reiterates its founding principles and reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms for their self-defence and security needs. The Group expresses its concern about unilateral coercive measures and stresses that no undue restriction should be placed on the transfer of such arms.

NAM recognizes the significant imbalance in the production, possession and trade in conventional weapons between industrialized and NAM States, and calls for a significant reduction in the production, possession and trade of conventional weapons by

industrialized States, with a view to enhancing international and regional peace and security.

NAM remains deeply concerned about the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world. The Movement recognizes the need to establish and maintain controls over private ownership of small arms. It calls on all States, in particular major producing States, to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited to Governments or to entities duly authorized by Governments, and to implement legal restrictions and prohibitions preventing the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

NAM encourages all initiatives by States to mobilize resources and expertise as well as to provide assistance to strengthen the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. NAM emphasizes the importance of the prompt and full implementation of the Programme of Action and in that regard stresses that international assistance and cooperation are essential. It expresses disappointment at the inability of the United Nations Conference to Review the Progress made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in New York from 26 June to 7 July 2006, to agree on a final document.

NAM notes the fourth Biennial Meeting of States, held in New York from 14 to 18 June 2010, which considered the Programme's national, regional and global implementation. The Movement encourages all States to consider, as appropriate, the recommendations of the final document of that Meeting, while emphasizing that the procedure followed to adopt the final outcome of the fourth Biennial Meeting should not represent a precedent for the future.

The Movement reaffirms the total validity of the Programme of Action, and encourages NAM delegations to coordinate efforts in the United Nations with a view to reaching agreement on a follow-up to the Programme in order to ensure its full implementation.

The group calls for the full implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, which was adopted by the General Assembly.

NAM continues to deplore the use, in contravention of international humanitarian law, of anti-personnel mines in conflict situations aimed at maiming, killing and terrorizing innocent civilians, denying them access to farmland, causing famine and forcing them to flee their homes, eventually leading to depopulation and preventing the return of civilians to their original place of residence.

The Movement calls upon all States in a position to do so to provide the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance to landmine clearance operations and the social and economic rehabilitation of victims, as well as to ensure full access of affected countries to material, equipment, technology and financial resources for mine clearance.

NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and its Protocols encourage States to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols.

Furthermore, NAM States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction invite those States that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Convention.

The Movement also recognizes the adverse humanitarian impact of the use of cluster munitions, and expresses sympathy with cluster munitions-affected countries. It calls upon all States in a position to do so to consider providing the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance to unexploded cluster munitions clearance operations, and the social and economic rehabilitation of victims, as well as to ensure full access of affected countries to material, equipment, technology and financial resources for unexploded cluster munitions clearance.

NAM takes note of the continued consideration of the issue of cluster munitions in the context of the CCW. While recognizing different views on the issue, NAM States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions invite those States that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Convention.

NAM also underlines the importance of the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 65/55, taking into consideration the possible harmful effects

to human health and the environment caused by the use of weapons and munitions containing depleted uranium.

With regard to the subject of a future arms trade treaty, the Movement recognizes the need to address the problems relating to the unregulated trade in conventional weapons and their diversion to the illicit market. As such risks can fuel instability, international terrorism and transnational organized crime, NAM supports the taking of international action to address the problem. There should be respective responsibilities for both exporters and importers to address the current situation, based on the principles established in the Charter, and in a non-discriminatory manner.

In view of the complexity of the issues of conventional arms transfers, further consideration of efforts within the United Nations framework to address international trade in conventional arms transfers is required on a step-by-step basis in an open and transparent manner to achieve, on the basis of consensus, a balance that will provide benefit to all, with the principles of the Charter at the centre of such efforts.

Mr. Obisakin (Nigeria): My delegation would like to reiterate its confidence in your experience and tact, Mr. Chair, in the conduct of our debates and negotiations so far. We believe in your ability to steer this ship to a useful destination, despite the differences of opinion expressed here.

Nigeria of course associates itself with the Non-Aligned Movement statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia.

Our delegation notes with satisfaction the noble intention behind the numerous draft resolutions on the subject of conventional weapons. In effect, that demonstrates that there is a clarion call for Member States to urgently address and redouble efforts to properly articulate the role of conventional weapons vis-à-vis the security needs of States, peoples and organizations. There is, however, a need to reflect on the number of draft resolutions needed to embrace the confidence-building measures being promoted to address the process of arms build-up and proliferation, as well as a reduction in armaments.

We therefore feel compelled to raise a number of questions. For instance, what do we consider to be acceptable when it comes to the proportion of combat aircraft, aircraft carriers, battle tanks, missiles of all ranges, mortars, small arms and light weapons and other

armaments needed to defend the territorial integrity of States? How many draft resolutions do we require to come to the realization that the world's weapons stockpile is presently oversupplied?

It is most troubling to note that States have reshaped the true objective of Article 51 of the Charter. Nigeria continues to express deep concern at the magnitude of human casualties and unbearable suffering — especially among children, women, the aged and all other vulnerable categories of humankind — as a result of the illicit trade, proliferation, use and misuse of small arms and light weapons in Africa, including their negative impact on the continued efforts of sub-Saharan Africa to maintain peace and security and facilitate development. Nigeria is willing to partner with all States to work out an acceptable formula for dealing with the challenges associated with the misuse of small arms, especially across the West African subregion.

The illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons has a direct negative impact on the West African subregion. That is why Nigeria has expended more than \$10 billion in the past 20 years on efforts to stem the tide of recurrent conflicts fuelled by the illicit circulation of an estimated 8 million small arms and light weapons in the subregion. The Committee will no doubt agree that that is a monumental financial outlay, which few developing countries with equal socio-economic challenges may be willing to expend in the pursuit of peace and security beyond their shores. It is partly for that reason that my delegation considers small arms as our weapons of mass destruction and mass destabilization, in view of the devastation we have witnessed as a result of their misuse in our region and the destabilizing effects on our socio-economic development.

In addition to the gross negative effects on growth and development, while no one should be put in harm's way as a result of the actions of others, ordinary Nigerians and Nigerian personnel have borne the brunt and made the supreme sacrifice across the subregion as a result of the illicit trade and indiscriminate use and gross accumulation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion. In our bid to reverse that negative trend and unnecessary loss of life, Nigeria has resolved to remain visible in our various commitments to the maintenance of international peace and security.

We face enormous challenges of the illicit trade and proliferation of small arms, not least in my

country, where we have established a successful amnesty programme in the Niger Delta area to address the problems associated with militancy. My delegation recognizes how the illicit trade in small arms and their ammunition wreaks havoc around the world in terms of their indiscriminate use and misuse by all kinds of disparate end-users, especially non-State actors, ranging from havoc committed in acts of terror through attacks on civilians and peacekeepers, organized crime, hijacking of humanitarian and relief convoys to many more such vices.

Nigeria has been wholly committed to the fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, as demonstrated by our accession to the 2005 Protocol on the issue, as well as the 2001 Programme of Action. At the regional level, Nigeria played a significant role in the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States small arms Moratorium and the Convention that was subsequently signed in 2006. My delegation also participated actively in the debate on the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/255) on small arms to the Security Council on 25 April.

Nigeria has resolved to continue to seek assistance in areas where we lack the capacity, including the call to assist developing States in the implementation of the key elements of the Programme of Action, in line with the principles of the third Biennial Meeting of States and the useful outcome of the fourth Meeting.

My delegation is encouraged by the success of the meeting of governmental experts held in May, and looks forward to the Review Conference in 2012. My delegation welcomes the support given to Nigeria to chair the 2012 Review Conference, and calls on States to assist the Chair-designate as she consults widely towards a successful outcome to the Conference. Nigeria, of course, will be visible and forthcoming in addressing the provisions of the Programme of Action, in addition to providing useful support and assistance to the Chair-designate on the aspects of human, material and financial resources.

We call on the international community to lend its support to the efforts to establish an arms trade treaty (ATT), as Member States convene the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2012 with a view to establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons. We expect no less than a treaty that provides the legal basis for international trade in conventional weapons.

Nigeria salutes the sagacity of Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, and especially his efforts to reconcile highly divergent views on an ATT. As we say in Nigeria, "When you're under the orange tree and you pick an orange, if it turns out to be sweet and nice nothing stops you from taking more." We expect to see him in the Chair. My delegation assures him of our unflinching support as we convene in New York for the last Preparatory Committee meetings, in February, and the Conference in July 2012.

My delegation wishes to inform you, Mr. Chair, that Nigeria has acted in compliance with resolution 64/84, of 10 December 2009, entitled "Assistance in mine action", as an important component of the Ottawa treaty. The conduct of all mine action activities in Nigeria has been in accordance with the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS), or IMAS-compliant, as was attested to by the Implementation Support Unit, which visited my country in March.

The Government of Nigeria also intends to widen the 2009 Cartagena Action Plan. A national sensitization programme was organized in September to bring attention and focus to the plight of the victims of anti-personnel landmines in Nigeria, with a view to attracting further attention and assistance from the United Nations.

In the onerous efforts to locate and remove landmines in the country, the Government of Nigeria has so far expended an amount equivalent to \$4,497,000 on the project through various national mine programmes. Nigeria has also ensured that mine-action programmes are gender- and age-sensitive under the aegis of a national stakeholders committee at the interministerial level.

For the sake of effectiveness, Nigeria's mine action centre operates under the close supervision of the Ministry of Defence. The centre continues to assist victims to acquire or enhance skills, monitors the progress of victims pursuant to empowerment and capacity-building measures and works closely with the presidential task force on the control of small arms and light weapons. Some of the repercussions of the civil war in Nigeria that ended in 1970 are still evident today.

Legislative processes are also ongoing to ensure domestication and build capacity to discourage the deployment of landmines in future conflicts. Despite those efforts, however, Nigeria has not benefited from any form of technical or financial assistance from

the world body. We look forward to a more effective collaboration with the United Nations in that area.

Finally, we undoubtedly confront many challenges in the efforts to curb the illicit trafficking in, and use of, conventional weapons. However, we believe that, together, we will win the struggle to ensure lasting peace for humankind.

The Chair: I remind delegations of my wish that they honour the recommendation to limit their statements to 10 minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

Mr. Maalim (United Republic of Tanzania): As this is the first time that I take the floor during this debate on disarmament, let me express my heartfelt appreciation to you, Mr. Chair, and to the Bureau for leading these deliberations successfully. You can count on the full cooperation of the delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

My delegation associates itself with the African Group statement delivered by the representative of Nigeria, as well as with the Non-Aligned Movement statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia. We also welcome the statement of the Caribbean Community, delivered by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago on 17 October, in support of the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the arms trade treaty (ATT).

While the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania fully supports the disarmament of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as expressed in our statement on the matter, we wish to state in no uncertain terms that people in my country and neighbouring countries suffer daily from the indiscriminate misuse of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons in all their aspects. Representatives present in the Committee and other members of the international community must have heard of, or witnessed in various ways, the horrendous wars and criminal activities occasioned by conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, on populations — in the Great Lakes region of Africa, in particular, and on the African continent in general. Foreigners, including tourists, have not been spared the horror and death.

Conflicts, trans-border crime, terrorism and piracy have, besides human interests, been exacerbated by the use of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. The United Nations, Africa and its

subregional organizations have had to spend resources to combat those vices. Only recently, the United Nations has spent money that it needs on mediation processes in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The African Union has had to include the provision of a standby brigade in its peace architecture.

All other regions of the world are forced to spend financial resources to deal with menacing actions orchestrated by various human elements that expel peace and security from their countries, with concomitant losses of lives, property and money. In all the conflicts that we can recall, the use of small arms and light weapons has been a common occurrence. Our people therefore consider conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, to be the true weapons of mass destruction.

The United Republic of Tanzania does not wish to see continued loss of life, property and money caused by conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. No one wishes to see continued loss of life, property and money in that way. It has happened, and happens, to others, but it can also happen to any of us or our dear ones. So together we must stop it.

It is our conviction that, in addition to human greed, poverty and the need for political aggrandizement, the denial of fundamental freedoms and rights is a major cause of the use of conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons. Disarmament should take into consideration every aspect. That calls for closer cooperation and collaboration between the First Committee and others. All of us want the next generation of humankind to enjoy full peace and security.

Next year, besides the envisaged Arms Trade Treaty Conference in July, there will be several activities focusing on disarmament. In particular, my delegation calls on the Committee and the international community to render full support to Nigeria in hosting and co-Chairing the Review Meeting of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons. We welcome the outcome of the ATT Preparatory Committees, chaired by Ambassador García Moritán of Argentina, and that of the Governmental Group of Experts, chaired by Ambassador Jim McLay of New Zealand.

Disarmament is within our reach; we only need to muster the requisite political will to make it happen. The United Republic of Tanzania pledges to play its part.

Ms. González-Román (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Over the coming months, there will be three very important events in the field of conventional weapons, namely, the fourth Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed To Be Excessively Injurious Or To Have Indiscriminate Effects; the Diplomatic Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty; and the Review Conference of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Spain reiterates its commitment to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its five Protocols. We call upon countries that have not yet done so to ratify that important international instrument. We welcome all the efforts to implement Protocol V, on explosive remnants of war. The next Review Conference, to take place in Geneva in November, will give us an opportunity to clarify and strengthen the obligations of States parties.

Spain welcomes the positive results achieved by the arms trade treaty Preparatory Committee, as well as the commitment to the process shown by Member States, and highlights the great efforts of Ambassador García Moritán in organizing the Preparatory Committee, which he chairs. We express our support for his continuation of that task.

The Spanish delegation believes that the arms trade treaty should achieve the greatest adherence possible, because only with a high degree of universality can it attain its objectives and prevent conventional weapons from endangering security and destabilizing States and regions, or give rise to human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law.

With respect to the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the fight against their illicit trafficking, Spain attaches great importance to the development and implementation of the entire Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We therefore support the instruments stemming from it, such as the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Spain is also committed to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition,

supplementing the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the only universal legally binding instrument concerning firearms.

As for trafficking in small arms and light weapons, Spain agrees with its European Union partners that there should be a two-pronged approach, namely, entailing combating illicit trafficking and regulating the legal trade.

As an important part of our contribution to international peace and security, Spain continues to firmly support all mutual confidence-building, transparency and predictability measures with regard to conventional weapons agreed within the United Nations framework and at the regional and subregional levels. In that context, we value the adoption of mechanisms along those lines, such as the Register of Conventional Arms and the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, as well as regional instruments. Spain attaches great importance to such measures, as we are convinced that they are the most effective way to promote the transparency and confidence needed to reduce and prevent tensions and conflicts between States.

In the past few years, important steps have been taken with regard to humanitarian disarmament, through the Ottawa Convention, on anti-personnel mines, and the Oslo Convention, on cluster munitions. Spain is firmly committed to both Conventions, since the humanitarian reasons for their adoption should prevail over the possible advantages of such weapons.

With regard to anti-personnel landmines, my delegation highlights the progress achieved in the universalization and development of the Ottawa Convention in banning the production, use and transfer of such mines. The Review Conference in Cartagena de Indias gave renewed impetus to our efforts. Spain reaffirms its commitment to the Cartagena Action Plan and the goal of universalizing the Convention.

Spain opposes the use, development, production, acquisition and stockpiling of cluster munitions. My country was one of the first to sign and ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which entered into force on 1 August 2010. Two years earlier, on 11 July 2008, Spain decided to implement the Convention provisionally and unilaterally. Our commitment goes beyond what was agreed in the Convention; it is a commitment to the basic principles and standards of international humanitarian law.

In taking that clear position Spain welcomes the decisions adopted at the second Meeting of States Parties, held recently in Beirut. In cooperation with Mexico, Spain will do its best to coordinate the Working Group on Cooperation and Assistance, with a view to the holding of the third Meeting of States Parties, which will take place in Oslo in September 2012.

Spain's commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament in the field of conventional weapons is unquestionable. My country is determined to continue to play an active role, with other States, bodies and international stakeholders in this area, which is very important for States' security, both internal and international.

This statement, as well as others made by Spain, can be seen on the Committee's website, QuickFirst.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Next year will occupy a special place in the United Nations conventional weapons agenda. There will be a number of important international gatherings, the most significant being the Review Conference on implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Conference on the international arms trade treaty (ATT).

The top priority in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is to enhance the practical performance of the Programme of Action. We intend to work together for maximum implementation, and if necessary to complement the Programme with tangible measures to block channels through which such weapons can fall into the hands of illegal actors.

We favour continuing the ATT process within the United Nations. We share the eagerness after the 2012 Conference to reach a truly effective document adopted by consensus and geared towards tackling problems linked to the uncontrolled proliferation of conventional weapons.

On transparency issues, we believe that the main task of the existing instruments, above all the Register of Conventional Arms, should be tracing and identifying destabilizing accumulations of weapons, in the interests of ensuring stability and international security.

Acknowledging the importance of technical aspects, such as expanding and registering categories of weapons, we note the need to strengthen the political

aspect of the Register as a means of increasing transparency and confidence.

We are in favour of further bolstering the Convention on inhumane weapons. The fourth Review Conference of the Convention, to be held in November, will be an important milestone in its operation. We are determined to take an active role in its work and in the adoption of important, substantive decisions geared towards further bolstering the Convention.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of the work of United Nations forums directly depends on the harmony of our actions. To be truly effective they need to be focused on decision-making, which as a whole helps prevent conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, from falling into the illegal trade. Also, it should be based on the broadest possible consensus among Member States.

The Russian delegation is ready to support the relevant draft resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly geared towards consolidating international efforts in this sphere.

Mr. Yuvan (Israel): I take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your beneficial and instrumental work.

Israel has been calling upon the international community for many years to conclude a legally binding norm that will comprehensively ban the transfer of arms to terrorists, instead of the unsatisfactory piecemeal approach that prevails currently. A clear and comprehensive norm banning the transfer of arms to terrorists should be created alongside the demand for concrete steps to be taken.

We have suggested ways to overcome the long-standing dispute over the definition of a terrorist, mainly through the use of the 13 already agreed conventions regarding terrorist activities. The issue is certainly no less relevant today than it was in 2007, when Israel presented its paper on this topic in the Conference on Disarmament. Be it through the mechanism of the arms trade treaty (ATT) or in the context of the Conference's agenda item 7, entitled "Transparency in armaments", the international community must act decisively and in unison on this all-important issue.

In that context, Israel welcomes the successful finalization of the preparatory process of the arms trade treaty, under the able leadership of Ambassador García Moritán. It is Israel's view that the negotiations

planned for next summer could eventually lead to the creation of a good legally binding instrument, provided that the following principles are endorsed by all parties to the negotiations. They are as follows.

The ATT should have high and robust standards on export control. It should include concrete measures in order to combat arms transfers to terrorists and to non-State actors. The decisions on arms exports must remain under the full responsibility and sovereign considerations of States.

The illicit trade and uncontrolled transfers of small arms and light weapons have severe destabilizing effects and humanitarian consequences. Israel welcomes the successful outcome of the open-ended meeting of governmental experts held in May, the first meeting of its kind focused on marking, record-keeping and cooperation on the tracing of small arms.

Israel is ready to play its part and to engage constructively with other Member States to contribute to the success of the next Review Conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, to take place in 2012. That success could be yet another step to bolster our resolve to prevent the transfer of arms to terrorists and reduce the human suffering caused by this phenomenon.

Very shortly we shall gather in Geneva for the fourth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, under the able guidance of Ambassador Ganev. The meeting will set the stage for the next review cycle of this important Convention. Even more important, it will decide the fate of the sixth protocol, on cluster munitions, after more than four years of concerted and serious negotiations.

Unfortunately, some Member States are working actively to thwart the efforts to conclude a legally binding instrument that will have real impact on the ground and significantly advance the humanitarian cause. We hope and trust that Member States will remember the humanitarian cause, and bring those negotiations to fruition.

As a State party to the Convention and its Amended Protocol II, Israel has taken concrete measures aimed at reducing the potential adverse consequences of the use of anti-personnel landmines, thereby striking an appropriate balance between humanitarian concerns and legitimate security needs.

In that respect, in addition to the moratorium imposed unilaterally by Israel in 1994 on the sale and transfer of anti-personnel mines, in March the Israeli parliament enacted the minefield clearance law, which sets out a statutory framework for the clearance of minefields not essential to Israel's national security, and establishes the Israeli National Mine Action Authority. The Authority is tasked with the formulation and implementation of multi-year national mine action plans, and with determining national demining specifications, while taking into consideration, inter alia, the international mine action standards endorsed by the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action.

Unfortunately, as long as the regional security situation continues to impose a threat to Israel's safety and sovereignty, the need to protect Israeli borders, including through the use of anti-personnel mines, cannot diminish.

Finally, Israel would like to emphasize its deep concern over the widespread illicit proliferation of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), which pose an ominous threat to civilian and military aviation alike. As a country that narrowly escaped the shooting down of one of its civilian passenger aircraft, in Mombasa in November 2002, Israel is all too aware of the dangers that MANPADS present when they fall into the wrong hands, especially those of terrorists. It is high time the international community allocated the necessary time and energy to address this grave problem properly, by focusing on the best ways to prevent such weapons from reaching unauthorized and irresponsible recipients. That requires legal, political and practical measures.

The Chair: We shall continue and conclude the debate on the cluster on conventional weapons tomorrow.

I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Ms. Poroli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply with regard to what the representative of the United Kingdom said about the question of the Malvinas Islands.

The Argentine delegation reiterates everything that the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade

and Worship of the Argentine Republic told the Special Committee on Decolonization on 21 June.

The Argentine Government recalls that the Malvinas, South Georgia, the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas are an integral part of Argentine national territory, and that, being illegitimately occupied by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, they are subject to a sovereignty dispute between the two countries, as is recognized by several international organizations.

The illegal occupation by the United Kingdom led the General Assembly to adopt resolutions 2065 (XX), 3160 (XXVIII), 31/49, 37/9, 38/12, 39/6, 40/21, 41/40, 42/19 and 43/25, all of which recognize the existence of a sovereignty dispute referred to as the question of

the Malvinas Islands, and to call upon the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations in order to find as soon as possible a peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute.

The Special Decolonization Committee has repeatedly expressed itself in the same sense, most recently through the resolution adopted on 21 June. A similar pronouncement was adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States on 7 June.

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

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.