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First Committee

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Chair: Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria)

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

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

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

The Chair: This morning, we still have 70 speakers remaining on the list for the cluster “Conventional weapons”. However, before continuing with the list of speakers on that cluster, in accordance with its adopted timetable the Committee will first hear a briefing by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, His Excellency Mr. Paul Beijer of Sweden. The note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is contained in document A/71/259.

I take this opportunity to warmly welcome Ambassador Paul Beijer to this meeting. Following his statement the Committee will change to an informal mode to afford delegations the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. Thereafter, the Committee will continue listening to statements on the cluster “Conventional weapons”.

Mr. Beijer (Sweden), Chair, Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation

and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms: This year is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. It was conceived in 1991 as a measure to build confidence by increasing transparency around the export and import of major conventional weapon systems. As such it has been a successful effort. Over the years, 117 States Members of the United Nations have reported to the Register, and it has provided inspiration for a number of regional transparency mechanisms. But at the same time, in recent years reporting to the Register itself has been declining, which should be a matter of concern to all Member States.

The Register wisely contains a provision for assembling a Group of Governmental Experts on a triennial basis to review the operation of the Register, and I have the honour of chairing this year’s session, working together with experts from Austria, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Group was supported very ably by an extremely knowledgeable and professional team from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The task of a Group of Governmental Experts for the Register is twofold: to study whether the Register and its definitions are up to date in the light of technical developments and developments in the nature of armed conflict; and to consider how the current declining trend of reporting to the Register could be halted, or

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preferably reversed. I am pleased to be able to report that I feel the Group has managed to make positive contributions in both these areas.

If we start with the Register itself, all seven categories of equipment that are currently part of the Register were reviewed by the Group, and several changes were made to reflect ongoing developments. The Group has recommended amending the definition of category IV, "Combat aircraft", by adding a new sub-category for separate reporting of unmanned combat aerial vehicles.

The second issue that the Group studied in depth was the issue of reporting to the Register on exports and imports of small arms and light weapons. That is not a new issue. It has been discussed by many successive groups of governmental experts. The 2003 Group for the first time explicitly included the category of small arms and light weapons in the Register under the heading of "Additional background information", and there it has stayed.

This year, against the backdrop of increasing global awareness of the role played by small arms and light weapons in destabilizing regional situations, exacerbating or prolonging conflicts, causing humanitarian suffering and undermining social and economic development, the Group discussed the pros and cons of increasing the status of small arms and light weapons in the Register by making it an eighth category. This concept was discussed both as a technical change to the Register, reflecting the evolving nature of armed conflict and armed violence, and also as a means of making the Register more relevant to the concerns of Member States and thereby, hopefully, stimulating a higher level of reporting.

The Group had a very fruitful discussion, in my view, and the report provides quite a full description of the different arguments put forward for or against the inclusion of small arms and light weapons as an eighth category. In the end it was not possible to reach consensus for adding small arms and light weapons as an eighth category. It was felt by some participants that more information was needed on the potential positive and negative effects of such a move. In a very constructive spirit, the Group instead decided to move small arms and light weapons out from under the heading of "Additional background information" on a trial basis, setting it up as a separate category next to the traditional seven categories, as it were.

The Group agreed that this seven-plus-one solution was a way to provide more information for a continued discussion of this issue by the next group of governmental experts. In a very real sense, it is now the reaction of the Member States in this room that will determine the next step. We are genuinely seeking to establish whether the new visibility for this important category will encourage more Member States to report to the Register or whether it will have no impact, or even a negative impact.

On the second topic of reinforcing the relevance of the Register and halting or reversing the declining trend in reporting, the Group made a number of practical recommendations, as we believe that this decline is a matter of serious concern. The one I would put first is precisely the change in the status of small arms and light weapons, which responds to the concerns of States Members of the United Nations grappling with the problems specifically linked to this category. But the Group also made recommendations aimed at encouraging Member States to explore possible synergies between the Register and other existing transparency instruments on the understanding that reporting fatigue is a real issue for many Member States.

The Group also recommended measures to enhance the role of national points of contact to the United Nations Register, increase the effectiveness and stability over time of national reporting mechanisms, and to strengthen support for the Register by the Office for Disarmament Affairs in the Secretariat. To increase the frequency of so-called nil reporting, which in terms of the confidence-building purpose of the Register is just as important as reports on exports or imports, the Group recommends that the concept of rolling nil returns be introduced. This concept is explained in detail in the report itself.

That is just a very brief summary of some of the main conclusions and recommendations by the Group. I recommend the full report to member States for further study and reflection on whether measures at the national level could contribute to maintaining the Register as an important element in the United Nations contribution to international peace and security.

The Chair: I thank Ambassador Beijer for his statement.

I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations the opportunity to have an interactive discussion on

the briefing we have just heard, through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 10.10 a.m. and resumed at 10.15 a.m.

The Chair: The Committee will now resume its consideration of the cluster on “Conventional weapons”. I urge all speakers once again to kindly observe the time limit of five minutes when speaking in their national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of a group. The Committee will continue to use the buzzer to remind delegations when the time limit has been reached. I remind members that there are 70 speakers on the roster.

Mr. Mackay (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour today to deliver, on behalf of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) — Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Belarus — a joint statement on implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the fight against such trade.

States members of the CSTO recognize the importance of supporting stability and security in the region of its responsibility and throughout the world, which could be threatened by the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons. Member States express their commitment to a strict fulfilment of their obligations under the Programme of Action and the fight against proliferation, which is the basis for coordination of international efforts in this area. Member States are undertaking concrete and consistent steps to implement the Programme nationally, including by developing and implementing legislation and adopting regulatory measures aimed at curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Member States emphasize the important role of regional organizations, in particular the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in combating the illegal trade and spread of small arms and light weapons. We welcome the progress made in implementing OSCE projects aimed at eliminating excess supplies of small arms and light weapons and increasing the security of their storage. Member States are open to cooperation with all interested countries, groups of States and international organizations to

prevent and eliminate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all aspects and in the fight against it.

Mr. Chirapant (Thailand): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Viet Nam and my own country, Thailand.

ASEAN recognizes the indiscriminate consequences and the growing illicit proliferation of conventional weapons. Each year, more than 200,000 civilian casualties are caused by small arms in conflict situations, which render these weapons the real weapons of mass destruction. The people of ASEAN and beyond continue to be adversely affected by the illicit transfer of conventional weapons as well as the presence of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war. Their impact extends beyond crime, threatening peace and security and hampering economic and social progress, including the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals.

ASEAN supports the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as it addresses the proliferation of deadly weapons that continue to claim many lives. We welcome the discussions held at the sixth Biennial Meeting of States Parties in June, particularly on international assistance and cooperation towards a more efficient control of small arms and light weapons globally, and look forward to positive outcomes from the third Review Conference in 2018. We also reiterate the importance of the legitimate right and authority of every sovereign nation to the use of conventional weapons for internal security and territorial integrity.

ASEAN takes note of developments within other frameworks and international legally binding instruments. These include, first, the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Geneva earlier this year, emphasizing the importance of the universalization and implementation of the Treaty; secondly, the sixth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, reviewing the progress and challenges of the Convention’s implementation; and lastly, the fifteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition

of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, to be held later this year in Santiago, Chile.

From the regional perspective, ASEAN Ministers continue to address concerns on conventional arms, including arms smuggling, through the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime and the ASEAN Regional Forum. In addition to the annual meeting of ASEAN police chiefs, the ASEAN Forensic Science Institute, founded in 2015, also helps to promote law-enforcement cooperation and information exchange for forensic investigations.

We also welcome the inaugural meeting of the Steering Committee of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre at its headquarters in Phnom Penh on 21 September. The Centre serves as a regional centre of excellence in addressing the humanitarian aspects of unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war in interested ASEAN member States. It also contributes to promoting cooperation within ASEAN and other countries, as well as with relevant institutions, including the United Nations Mine Action Service and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

Lastly, ASEAN notes that in the conventional weapons agenda there are striking gender and age elements where women and children are victims and are disproportionately affected. We urge all prevention and victim assistance efforts to take this into account and to include the voices and perspectives of all victims.

Mrs. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): I deliver this statement on behalf of 60 States, including my own, France. The complete list of States is available on the hard copy that we have distributed in the room and posted on PaperSmart.

On the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary 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, our countries wish to reiterate their grave concern regarding the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread.

Small arms and light weapons have killed more people than any other weapon. They are responsible for more than 500,000 deaths per year and account for more than 90 per cent of victims in armed conflicts. As recognized in 2001 in the framework of the

Programme of Action, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences and poses a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels. Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals explicitly cites the objective of significantly reducing illicit financial and arms flows by 2030.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects continues to sustain conflicts and to exacerbate armed violence, undermine respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and fuel terrorism and organized crime. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons therefore constitutes a major security concern for our countries. We are firmly convinced of the need to continue to strengthen our collective action and coordination in this regard.

We reaffirm the inherent right to individual or collective self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, and the right of each State to manufacture, transfer and retain small arms and light weapons for its legitimate self-defence and security needs, as well as for its capacity to participate in peacekeeping operations in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

We welcome the various initiatives on small arms and light weapons taken by the international community over the past few years, including the adoption and implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. We are committed to working constructively in the run-up to the third Review Conference in 2018.

The International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons is another practical tool, and we will continue to engage on its implementation. We further welcome the adoption and entry into force of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the adoption and entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), whose scope includes small arms and light weapons. The ATT aims at promoting cooperation, transparency and responsible action in the legal trade in conventional weapons, ending the diversion of arms and building

confidence among States. It contributes to reducing human suffering. It is an essential instrument that must be effectively implemented by States parties. We will work together to promote its universalization.

While each of these international instruments has its own focus and membership, they complement each other. Our countries are committed to working towards their universalization, which, alongside their full and effective implementation, is the best guarantee of coherent and efficient international action.

Progress made by the international community in the past few years in preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects has helped to lay the foundations for a solid framework, but more needs to be done. We believe that it is now necessary further to pursue this engagement, in particular by strengthening the efficiency, coordination, coherence and sustainability of actions carried out at the local, national, regional and international levels. We are committed to pursuing our efforts in the following areas.

First, we recognize that the challenge posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects is multifaceted and requires action, *inter alia*, on trafficking, destabilizing accumulation, stockpile security, illicit reactivation, marking and tracing, trade regulation and licensing and border control, as well as conflict prevention and resolution. Additionally, the promotion of a meaningful participation and representation of women in policymaking, planning and implementation processes should be promoted. These different dimensions call for international commitment to a comprehensive and sustainable approach.

Secondly, mindful of the fact that Governments bear the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, we stress the need to step up efforts to identify the origins of illicit trade and find ways of addressing them. That includes the establishment, where they do not exist, of practical laws, effective national regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control, including measures to criminalize under domestic law the illegal manufacture, possession, stockpiling and trade of small arms and light weapons within their areas of jurisdiction. Existing international instruments offer an adequate framework to address these efforts, including through the exchange of experience and best practices.

Thirdly, we also recognize the important contribution of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and industry, in assisting Governments to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, *inter alia*.

Fourthly, we reaffirm that international cooperation and assistance are critical to achieving a homogenous level of action in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Assistance in implementing standards and best practices needs to address, *inter alia*, the adaptation of normative frameworks, the establishment of national structures and procedures, and the development of training. Assistance practices also need to be inclusive throughout the project cycle and sustainable beyond the period of donor support. We are committed to promoting collaborative, focused and targeted work to identify relevant needs, including through mechanisms aimed at better coordinating efforts, improving consultations, exchanging information and fostering cooperation.

Fifthly, pursuing efforts to increase transparency in the framework of international, multilateral, regional or subregional instruments is an important element in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Many States highlight their transfers in the framework of international, multilateral or regional instruments. We wish to pursue our efforts in that direction and encourage other States to do so. In this regard, we encourage States to report their transfers of small arms and light weapons within the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Additionally, and in the lead-up to the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action, we call on States to submit their voluntary national reports in a timely manner.

We acknowledge the efforts already under way at the regional and subregional levels, which have demonstrated their usefulness. We are resolved to reinforce regional cooperation, including through mechanisms aimed at better coordinating efforts, improving consultations, exchanging information and strengthening cooperation on law enforcement, border control and customs in order to counter the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Finally, we reaffirm the need to fight the delivery of small arms and light weapons to terrorist groups and are committed to identifying means to intensify and accelerate international cooperation in this area. As part of these actions, we will remain vigilant, in order

to build on the prevailing consensus on issues related to small arms and light weapons so as to improve together the international response to this challenge, including through the resolutions adopted at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Körömi (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its member States have a long-standing commitment to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). The fifth Review Conference will provide a renewed opportunity to take important decisions for the next review cycle. The universalization of the CCW and its Protocols, and full compliance with their provisions, remain among our priorities. The European Union attaches high importance to transparency and building confidence in the implementation of Protocol V.

We express our concern over the increasing global impact of improvised explosive device (IED) attacks worldwide and their indiscriminate use and effects in particular in the perpetration of terrorist acts. We welcome the political declaration on IEDs. We also welcome the First Committee draft resolution on countering the threat posed by IEDs (A/C.1/71/L.68/Rev.1).

The CCW is the relevant forum in which to discuss future developments in the field of weapons technology, including lethal autonomous weapons systems. We appreciate the consensual adoption of the recommendations to the fifth Review Conference of the 2016 Group of Experts. We hope that these will lead to the establishment of a group of governmental experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems in 2017.

We are concerned about the humanitarian impact and the heavy consequences for social and economic development of the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of mines other than anti-personnel mines, while acknowledging that they can be used as legitimate weapons provided appropriate safeguards are present

to ensure the protection of civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law. We believe that further expert discussions in the CCW are valuable.

We are concerned about allegations of the recent use of air-delivered incendiary weapons against targets located within a concentration of civilians in Syria.

We consider the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to be a landmark instrument that provides for robust and effective common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, making it more responsible and transparent and reducing the illicit trade of arms and their diversion. We are committed to its universalization. In addition, the ATT was ground-breaking in reaffirming the concept of gender-based violence as a factor to be taken into account when making export assessments.

The EU welcomes the successful outcome of the second Conference of States Parties to the ATT in Geneva in August and the adoption of decisions on the Voluntary Trust Fund, the reporting templates and the establishment of the working groups on transparency and reporting, implementation and universalization. It is now time to build on this important groundwork to address notably the challenges of effective implementation and universalization.

The EU is already implementing a dedicated programme to assist 16 countries across Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia in strengthening their arms-control systems in line with the requirements of the Treaty. The EU intends to continue such support in the years to come. The EU is promoting actively the universalization of the Treaty.

The diversion, illicit trade and unauthorized use of small arms and light weapons constitute serious impediments to peace, security, growth and development in many parts of the world. The EU reiterates the importance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, which remain essential for further action to tackle illicit small arms and light weapons. We also support the Security Council's resolutions on small arms and light weapons and on women and peace and security. The active and equal participation and leadership of women in peace

and security decision-making are crucial to achieving peace, security and sustainable development.

The EU provides considerable assistance through a number of projects to various countries to strengthen the action against the accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons. The European Union welcomes the cross-regional declaration on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, delivered by France on behalf of a large group of States, reiterating the international commitment to deal with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The EU notes with satisfaction the role and importance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which is marking its twenty-fifth anniversary this year. The United Nations Register continues to be a great transparency and confidence-building measure in the field of the conventional arms trade.

The European Union fully shares the objectives of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and will continue to support its implementation and universalization. We reaffirm our aspiration to meet the goals of the Convention by 2025. We are deeply concerned about allegations of use of anti-personnel mines by States parties and appeal to all States and non-State actors to refrain from their use.

As the world's largest humanitarian donor, the EU will continue to provide assistance, in particular related to the clearance of unexploded ordnance, including mines and sub-munitions, as well as to the destruction of surplus munitions, assistance to victims and mine-risk education in the worst-affected countries and regions of the world. In the EU a gender-based approach, in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), is also part of our humanitarian actions. The EU welcomes the assumption by Italy of the chairmanship of the Mine Action Support Group for the current biennium.

The European Union supports the humanitarian goal of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and calls upon all actors to fully observe the principles of international humanitarian law. We take note of the Dubrovnik Action Plan, which identifies key challenges to be addressed by the States parties to the Convention. We recall that States parties have agreed by consensus to implement their outstanding obligations as soon as possible, with the aim of implementing all before 2030. We take note of the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the

Convention on Cluster Munitions" (A/C.1/71/L.22). We welcome the recent announcement by France, Germany and Italy of the completion of the destruction of their stockpiles well ahead of the set deadline.

The EU considers the contribution of civil society, academia and international organizations a valuable part of our work on conventional-weapon issues. We also acknowledge the contribution made by industry. The EU and its member States will continue to contribute actively to the discussions in various disarmament and non-proliferation forums. Several EU member States have taken up important offices to support progress in this area.

Ms. Beckles (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM reiterates that it is not a manufacturer, exporter or large importer of conventional weapons, but it has not been spared the destructive effects of the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons and associated ammunition. We continue to be adversely affected as a result of this cross-border illegal activity, which is linked to illegal drug trafficking, money laundering and cybercrime, among other things. Experience has taught us that these unfortunate realities can be successfully confronted if we adopt a collaborative approach.

In this spirit, CARICOM has established regional mechanisms and frameworks to coordinate its efforts to deal with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. These include the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, which was established as part of a management framework and is mandated to give effect to the regional crime and security agenda.

Likewise, the CARICOM Heads of Government issued a declaration on small arms and light weapons in 2012, which emphasized the important role to be played by States that manufacture small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in preventing their diversion to the illicit trade. The States members of CARICOM wish to reiterate that position and remind all States that manufacture such weapons of the responsibility to increase their efforts aimed at reducing the possibility of their diversion for illegal purposes. We are, however, encouraged by the forward momentum over the past year to regulate and monitor conventional weapons. At the same time, we urge continued global efforts to address these threats.

CARICOM member States have previously stated that the adoption and entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) ushered in an era of hope for our region, as small arms and light weapons are included in the scope of this international legally binding instrument. We note with satisfaction the progressive measures that have been taken within the ambit of the Treaty since its entry into force. We wish to highlight in particular the convening of the second Conference of States Parties to the ATT in August. A number of CARICOM member States participated in that Conference, and we are pleased at the establishment of the Voluntary Trust Fund and the decision of the Conference to create an ad hoc open-ended working group on the effective implementation of the ATT. Through the working group, we look forward to the sharing of experiences, challenges and best practices in the area of implementation of the Treaty.

CARICOM urges all member States that have not yet done so to take the necessary steps to ratify the ATT. Security challenges are best tackled when we work in concert with each other, and it is evident that a collective approach is needed to stem the illicit trade in conventional arms. We remain committed to supporting the work of the United Nations in this area.

CARICOM welcomed the successful conclusion of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in June. Under the leadership of the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, the Meeting considered the many dynamics involved in the implementation of the Programme of Action. As small island developing States whose sustainable development is intricately linked to the safety and security of its people, CARICOM welcomed references in the outcome document to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, particularly overt references to Goal 16 and target 16.4.

We believe that a good foundation has been laid for the third Review Conference in 2018, and we intend to participate meaningfully in those deliberations as well. We view the Programme of Action and the ATT as mutually reinforcing and have joined many other States, particularly during the recently concluded sixth Biennial Meeting, in advocating that, as States begin to implement the ATT, its links with other instruments will be important.

CARICOM, cognizant of the complementarities between the ATT and the Programme of Action, and in the light of its capacity constraints, is seeking to identify practical measures that allow harmonized implementation of the ATT and the Programme of Action. In this respect, the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security has worked with States members of CARICOM to draft model ATT legislation. That legislation explores synergies between the ATT and other international instruments relating to arms control, including the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. CARICOM continues to embrace the support provided by regional United Nations organizations such as the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. That organization has supported and assisted States members of CARICOM in capacity-building measures and technical assistance programmes, and we look forward to continued collaboration.

We are also mindful of the indispensable role of women and the engagement of civil society in helping to combat the spread of small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, CARICOM members remain committed to working as members of the Committee to address the challenges posed by the proliferation, misuse and unacceptable harm caused by small arms and light weapons and their ammunition as well as other categories of conventional weapons.

Mr. Al-Hamdani (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): We align ourselves with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/C.1/71/PV.15).

We are aware of the challenges and disastrous effects of the use of conventional weapons. We must therefore multiply our efforts at the international level to universalize adherence to the relevant texts. We recently joined 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, in the light of the traumatic effects of their indiscriminate use, and to its Protocol. We have made commitments and will submit national reports according to the schedule.

The indiscriminate proliferation, illicit trafficking and accumulation of small arms and light weapons are a source of concern. They undermine the peace and

security of societies and countries and threaten human life, stability and security. We therefore reiterate the importance of activating the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In Iraq, for example, we support the voluntary exchange of information among countries to build capacities and in order to combat and meet these challenges.

The problem of the proliferation of anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance and cluster munitions is extreme, given its disastrous effects on the environment and economic development. My country is among those most affected by mines. This problem has become even more complex because of the Da'esh bandits and terrorist groups that plant mines on the vast swathes of territory they control in order to undermine the Iraqi forces seeking to liberate the populations of those lands.

We welcome all efforts to establish a zone without mines, bombs or unexploded ordnance. We also call on donor countries and international organizations to cooperate and consult with the Government of Iraq and other officials on these matters with the aim of ensuring that support and assistance are given to the recipients. Iraq needs the assistance of the international community to address the problems it is facing with respect to landmines, booby traps and weapons of war.

Mr. Sano (Japan): It has been nearly two years since the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) came into force. The number of States parties to the Treaty has reached 87, which demonstrates the international community's recognition of its noble purpose. Japan welcomes the fact that the ATT is firmly spreading its roots. However, the universalization of the Treaty is still a challenge, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Japan will work towards a wider adherence to the Treaty in cooperation with other States and civil society.

Having successfully concluded the second Conference of States Parties in August, thanks to the presidency of Ambassador Emmanuel Imohe of Nigeria, we should now focus on the effective implementation of the Treaty. Sufficient support by the Secretariat will be essential, and international cooperation should be strengthened for States in need in order to facilitate their capacity-building efforts in implementing the Treaty obligations. Japan, as a member of the Management Committee, will continue to support the implementation of the Treaty and looks forward to

working under the Finnish presidency towards the third Conference of States Parties.

With respect to small arms and light weapons, I should like to commend Ambassador Courtenay Rattray of Jamaica for his excellent stewardship as the Chair of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States in June. Japan emphasized the importance of stockpile management; synergy between the ATT and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; regional cooperation and women's participation; as well as the utility of national reports in matching needs with resources. Japan recognizes the growing need and demand among States for international cooperation and assistance, which will contribute to achieving the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

Bearing in mind that the Third Review Conference will be held in 2018, Japan will continue to work closely with other States and civil society to tackle the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Japan also welcomes France as President-designate of the Review Conference. We reiterate our support for the joint statement made by France concerning the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe it will contribute to enhancing political momentum in the international community to continue our unwavering efforts for this important issue. In this connection, I call on all member States to extend their support to the annual draft resolution on small arms and light weapons drafted by Colombia, South Africa and Japan so that it can be adopted again by consensus this year.

Japan appreciates the Belgian presidency's successful leadership of the fourteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction in December 2015. We would like to express our appreciation of their commitment to the Convention, including the participation of Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid in the fourteenth Meeting of States Parties.

Japan attaches importance to mine-action programmes and has donated approximately \$670 million in 51 countries and regions since 1998. Japan will continue to support the political goals laid

out in the Maputo +15 Declaration, adopted at the Third Review Conference in 2014, with an emphasis on the clearance of unexploded ordnance, risk reduction education, and especially the role of women.

Japan congratulates the Dutch presidency on the success of the sixth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in September, as evidenced by the adoption of the political declaration. We attach particular importance to universalization of the Treaty and international cooperation and assistance.

We recognize the growing interest in the international community regarding the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems and commend the leadership of Germany in the third informal meeting of experts, which deepened our understanding of the issue through an interactive exchange of views. Japan supports the recommendations of the third informal meeting of experts and further discussions at the fifth 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 in December, for a better understanding of the main elements, including identification of characteristics, elaboration of a working definition of lethal autonomous weapons systems and the application of international law.

Lastly, I should like to mention the matrix of contributions due under various disarmament treaties that was prepared by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and distributed here on 3 October. Japan received invoices for its dues at various times between August and October, and has been making every effort to take the steps necessary to settle them expeditiously.

Mr. Hall (United States of America): Let me begin with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Register, and it is worth reflecting for a moment on what it has accomplished. By any measure, the Register has been a resounding success, establishing a global norm of transparency and accountability in military matters and reinforcing civilian control of the military. To date, some 170 countries have reported to the Register, and it is estimated that its reporting captures more than 90 per cent of the international trade in conventional arms.

Groups of governmental experts are convened every three years to discuss the Register's relevance and its

continuing operation. The 2016 Group of Governmental Experts made significant progress, making the first substantive changes to the Register since 2003. It changed the definition of combat aircraft to include armed unmanned combat aerial vehicles explicitly. More importantly, it concluded 16 years of discussion in the Groups of Governmental Experts on small arms and light weapons by agreeing on a trial basis to include reporting transfers of these weapons alongside transfers of the traditional seven categories of the Register. That means that the Register now includes the weapons that States throughout the world regard as being threatening and destabilizing in excessive quantities. We look forward to discussion in future Groups of Governmental Experts about how the additional of small arms and light weapons reinforces the Register's role as a global confidence-building measure promoting international peace and stability. The United States urges all States to support the Register by reporting.

The second Conference of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was held from 22 to 26 August in Geneva and built on the success of the first Conference of States Parties by agreeing to establish subsidiary bodies on implementation, transparency and reporting, and universalization. It also selected the first head of the secretariat, Mr. Dumisani Dladla of South Africa, established the Voluntary Trust Fund to fund capacity-building for and assistance with implementing the Treaty and selected Finnish Ambassador Klaus Korhonen as the President of the third Conference of States Parties. My country looks forward to working with Ambassador Korhonen and with others in ensuring that the ATT meets the needs of State parties and signatories alike.

The United States is a high contracting party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and all of its Protocols. We view the CCW as an important instrument that has been responsible for bringing together States with diverse national security concerns. In 2016, the high contracting parties continued important discussions on improvised explosive devices and lethal autonomous weapons systems. We look forward to continuing those discussions at the fifth CCW Review Conference, to be held in December.

The United States continues to urge all Member States to implement fully the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument. We

must continue to focus on the technical implementation challenges of existing commitments if the international community is to be successful in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We look forward to working with Member States as we prepare for the 2018 Review Conference.

The global threat posed by man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) remains significant. Due to continued instability in the Middle East and Africa, terrorists have gained unprecedented access to shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, which pose a serious threat to civil and military aviation throughout the world. The United States is cooperating with partners throughout the globe to secure those missiles, prevent their smuggling by extremists and protect the targets that terrorists seek to attack. Many years ago, the United States established strict export controls over the transfer of all MANPADS. In addition, since 2003 the United States has cooperated with countries throughout the globe to destroy more than 34,000 excess, loosely secured or illicitly held at-risk MANPADS missiles and thousands more launchers, in more than 40 countries.

In conclusion, the United States has been the world's single largest financial supporter of humanitarian mine action and remains committed to eliminating loosely secured or otherwise at-risk conventional weapons and munitions. Since 1993, we have provided more than \$2.6 billion to more than 95 countries for conventional weapons destruction, including clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnance, the disposal of excess small arms and light weapons and munitions and improved security for conventional-weapon storage.

Mr. AlMutairi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to emphasize its support for the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.15)

The State of Kuwait expresses its grave concern about the illicit and unregulated trade in small arms and light weapons. The uncontrolled proliferation of these weapons has many socioeconomic, security and humanitarian consequences. It endangers peace, security, stability and sustainable development internationally, regionally and nationally. We call upon Member States to exert more effort with regard to the international instrument to combat that dangerous phenomenon in order to prevent the delivery of such weapons to non-State actors. We reiterate our

commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. We emphasize that cooperation is the main pillar of the Tracing Instrument.

Mr. Isnomo (Indonesia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The State of Kuwait, while welcoming the entry into the force of the Arms Trade Treaty, emphasizes the need for the implementation of the Treaty to conform with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the legitimate right of States to self-defence, as well as maintaining the balance between importing and exporting States. We call for addressing the considerable imbalance in the production, acquisition and trading in conventional weapons between industrial and developing countries. The colossal technological developments in the field of autonomous lethal weapons require the international community to accord due attention to the causes of the fear and the legitimate queries concerning the possible legal, social and ethical dimensions of the use of robots in the military field, particularly given the obstacles facing the international disarmament machinery in tackling such urgent matters. We therefore need to discuss the matter seriously in all its legal, ethical and humanitarian dimensions, with a view to establishing the controls necessary for the development and use of industrially smart technology in the domain of autonomous weapons and enacting rules to regulate their acquisition and use.

Mrs. García Guiza (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Conventional disarmament and arms-control issues are of paramount importance to Mexico. Conventional weapons are the weapons that take the highest toll in terms of the number of deaths and victims throughout the world. Mexico believes it essential to refer to the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. This illegal activity undermines peace and security, hinders development and prolongs violence and human suffering. That is why the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes in its Goal 16 a universal commitment to reduce the flows of illicit weapons in the world. Our efforts at the national level to counteract the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are fully linked to our priority of ensuring the security of all persons and their development.

My country reiterates its support for the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat

and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a global trade, and the activities of traffickers undermine the security of most States throughout the world. Mexico is also very concerned about weapons-trafficking across borders. We believe that this situation requires the firm commitment and cooperation of all States so that we can identify trafficking routes and the mechanisms used to circulate these weapons. That is where strengthening border controls becomes essential. In order to strengthen such controls, we need to put into practice specific national and regional measures that will help us, from the perspective of shared responsibility, to counter the illicit cross-border trade in small arms and light weapons.

In addition, it is necessary to emphasize that controlling ammunition continues to be the major pending issue facing the Programme of Action. Mexico supports the implementation and strengthening of the Programme of Action and will actively participate in its upcoming Review Conference in 2018. We look forward to achieving tangible results that will help to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all their aspects.

In the framework of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Mexico will continue to promote transparency measures related to the Palermo Protocol and will also promote international cooperation in the exchange of statistics with respect to marking, tracing and locating firearms. We believe that these are key elements that will ensure the Protocol's full implementation.

Along the same lines, we highlight the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). By establishing standards for conventional weapons transfers, the Treaty aims to contribute significantly to eliminating the diversion of weapons for illegal purposes. The Treaty's importance obligates us to continue to call for its full implementation and universalization. Mexico calls for State parties to work to that end. Moreover, Mexico acknowledges the importance of the instruments at our disposal. However, we emphatically underscore that they are not enough. We need to redouble our efforts to combat a grotesque illicit market that enables conventional weapons to fall into the wrong hands — for example, those of organized crime networks and terrorists.

That is why Mexico has proposed holding discussions on the establishment of a mechanism to review, in a cross-cutting manner, the United Nations instruments on conventional weapons. As a starting point, Mexico has proposed that each forum identify synergies for the implementation of national measures. My country's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Claudia Ruiz Massieu, at the second Conference of States Parties to the ATT, proposed establishing a group of independent experts. That group would assess the magnitude, flows and impact of transfers of small arms and light weapons and would then present recommendations to States parties to the Treaty and to the General Assembly. We will continue to explore options in that regard, for we are convinced that we must be able to count on appropriate analyses and recommendations to be able to assess the situation, including a road map on a broad-based strategy for the Organization to be able to put an end to this illicit trade. In that regard, my delegation will work to strengthen the existing dialogue and to exchange ideas so that we can find alternatives to make progress on this initiative, which we consider to be crucial.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions has made a proven contribution to international peace and security. It has established the highest standard of prohibition of the use, manufacture, transfer and stockpiling of such weapons. Mexico welcomes the achievements made in stigmatizing and eliminating cluster munitions.

In order to contribute to the progressive development of international law, Mexico promotes efforts in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in order to discuss the ethical and technical dilemmas posed by new technologies. Mexico hopes that the fifth Review Conference will produce proposals that will make it possible for the Convention to identify shared solutions to the great humanitarian challenges facing the international community.

Lastly, Mexico welcomes the daily efforts made by international organizations and civil society on this issue, for their contributions are crucial for peace. My country calls on the membership to continue to work to achieve a safer, fairer and more peaceful world.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to draw the First Committee's attention to the fact that our ground-breaking document — the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to

disarmament in 1978 (resolution S-10/2) — includes a firm and very reasonable requirement in the process of achieving general and complete disarmament, that is, to pay equal attention to all aspects of arms control. Therefore, implementing agreements that regulate questions on the use of conventional weapons is no less important than compliance with the obligations of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

In questions of conventional-weapons control, the central place belongs, in our view, to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Russia is a consistent supporter of strengthening the regime established by the CCW and its five Protocols. In fact, that is the only international instrument in which we see a balance between humanitarian concerns and the national security interests of State parties. We believe that universalizing the Convention and its Protocols is the most effective way to strengthen its regime. This question, along with a careful analysis of States' implementation of their obligations under the Convention, must be of central importance at the upcoming CCW Review Conference in December.

Overall, we support initiatives to consider, on the CCW platform, questions having to do with the emergence of new types of conventional weapons. At the same time, we believe that this would be beneficial only once we have developed a clear understanding of the subject under discussion. Therefore, we still have major doubts regarding the advisability of establishing a group of governmental experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems. It is no secret to anybody that the results of the last three rounds of informal discussions on this issue could not be called encouraging. However, we will be prepared to discuss this and other themes that will be included on the agenda of the two main committees of the Review Conference.

Russia shares the purposes and principles of the Ottawa Mine-ban Convention. We continually participate in international efforts on humanitarian demining. A recent vivid example of successful work in that regard by the Russian armed forces was the operation on sweeping the terrorist-freed Syrian town of Palmyra, which, by the way, is on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. Moreover, the international anti-mine centre of the armed forces of the Russian Federation has been up and running since May 2015. One of its key aims is to train specialists, including foreign

specialists, on humanitarian demining and countering the growing threat of improvised explosive devices.

Russia is also making consistent efforts to reduce its own stocks of anti-personnel mines. For example, we totally eliminated an entire class of this type of weapon, which means more than 10 million units. At the same time, for objective reasons in some areas of unrest along the Russian border, as the Committee understands, is the longest one in the world — anti-personnel mines are for us still a reliable means to ensure national security and defence. Therefore, for reasons of national security and defence, we cannot join the Ottawa Convention.

On another note, we view the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions quite negatively, for it only formally declares a ban on cluster munitions. In our view, that document cannot pretend to have the status of an effective international instrument because an entire class of high-technology, but no less deadly, cluster munitions remains outside its scope. Moreover, the Convention cynically allows the use of cluster munitions in conducting joint combat operations with those States that are not bound by any obligations. Such a situation reduces the significance of the Convention to zero. Therefore, Russia considers that document only as an example of double standards in the area of arms control and of unfair competition. In other words, it is only an attempt to impose the redistribution of market shares for this type of fully legal weapon. We will be speaking consistently against any positive reactions regarding the Oslo Convention.

On the other hand, we comprehensively support the 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. We associate ourselves with the statement in that regard delivered earlier today by the representative of Belarus on behalf of the States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons is to date the only specialized global instrument in combating the illegal trade of small arms and light weapons. We are convinced that the potential of the Programme of Action is far from exhausted. Much remains to be done in order to improve its practical results. A significant lowering of the risk of the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons could be achieved by strengthening national control over all stages of the life cycle of those weapons,

from their production to their disposal, as well as by introducing a ban on the delivery of all forms of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized entities, as well as by fully regulating brokering activities, preventing unauthorized re-export and, of course, banning the production of weapons without licences or with an expired licence.

We look forward to a constructive discussion of all of those questions during the preparation and conduct of the upcoming Review Conference on the implementation process of the Programme of Action.

In conclusion, I should just like to say a few words on the international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). In our view, this document has demonstrated neither its viability nor its effectiveness. We all know that the standards of the ATT are significantly lower than those that are being used in the national export-control systems of leading arms-producing States. Serious questions are raised by the practice of the use of the Treaty as well. It is unacceptable when some parties to the Treaty continue, as though nothing had happened, to supply military goods to areas where there are internal armed conflicts, while other partners close their eyes to that. We do not understand why we need a document that has not been complied with since the first days of its existence. We believe that the Secretariat must provide an appropriate assessment of such an unhealthy situation.

Mr. Sene (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Senegal aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71/PV.15).

We are pleased to participate in this thematic debate on the cluster “Conventional weapons”, control over which is absolutely essential for maintaining international peace and security.

It should be pointed out that this meeting is being held in a context where there are still many flashpoints that continue to weaken peace throughout the world, particularly in Africa and in the Middle East. That is particularly the case in Sahel, a region that faces multifaceted threats, the most troubling of which are, among others, the proliferation of conventional weapons, illicit drug trafficking, the emergence of violent extremism and crimes committed by terrorist groups.

In the face of those acute security challenges, West Africa has undertaken a certain number of initiatives to harmonize legislation within our regional community and to bring about synergy so that we can more effectively work against the spread of small arms and light weapons. It is estimated that approximately 30 million small arms and light weapons are in circulation in sub-Saharan Africa today, many of them in the hands of insurgent groups that ignore the law. Given that those weapons serve to fuel conflicts, it is important that the international community continue to act to put an end to this gangrene that is eating up the social fabric, undermining institutions and setting back development in many countries and regions in Africa.

My country, which ratified the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), welcomes the holding of the second Conference of States Parties, which took place in Geneva last August. Senegal has an unstinting commitment to this important instrument, which seeks to regulate the international weapons trade to avert its disastrous consequences by focusing in particular on the promotion of transparency as well as the development of a culture of responsibility throughout the globe. Today more than ever, States must strengthen their cooperation to prevent and put an end to this trafficking. My country therefore appreciates the fact that the issue of gender-based violence is taken into account in the assessment of export applications and that assessing the risk of diversion will be considered a legitimate reason to refuse transfers.

Civil-society organizations in general, and non-governmental organizations in particular, have played a historic role in making people aware of this plague of arms. Their experience on the ground could be value added. The path our Government has chosen to travel is by establishing a national commission on small arms and light weapons, and we actively support the campaign “Let us control weapons”, initiated by civil society as part of promoting the ATT.

We should emphasize that, prior to the adoption of the ATT, we in the West Africa subregion undertook initiatives in which Senegal participated, in the framework of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in particular its moratorium, from 1 November 1998, on the import, use and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa, as well as the Bamako Declaration of December 2000 on the proliferation, circulation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. That was consolidated by the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and

Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, adopted on 14 June 2006 in Abuja, which entered into force in 2009 and which has now been strengthened by the ATT.

Senegal attaches great importance to universalizing the ATT, mindful that the successful regulation of the international trade in conventional weapons requires a maximum of countries to join the ATT. That is why, along the lines of contributing to the universalization of the ATT, we organized a seminar with the European Union from 5 to 6 May 2015 in Dakar to bring together all ECOWAS States, as well as other African countries, to encourage regional cooperation, share best practices and promote the involvement of civil society in educating people on the ATT. Dakar also hosted a vocational training course on building capacities for the effective implementation of the ATT for civil servants and the military for francophone African countries that had signed the ATT. I should like to emphasize that all those efforts obviously show the need for synergy on the part of the entire international community in order to universalize the ATT.

The proliferation, illicit transfer, accumulation and diversion of small arms and light weapons continue to jeopardize international peace and security and have devastating effects on populations in conflict and post-conflict situations, where civilians, and in particular women and children, are the major casualties. Therefore our attention should also be focused on the 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. The same goes for the 2005 International Tracing Instrument, the key to whose success resides not in the provisions of the texts but in the capacity and will of the Governments to follow them.

We also welcome the holding of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to review the implementation of the Programme of Action, which was held in New York in June and led to the adoption by consensus of an outcome document that contains recommendations aimed at promoting the implementation of the Programme of Action nationally, regionally and internationally, including measures in the area of the management of stocks and safeguarding of firearms. However, the lack of consensus with regard to the possible inclusion of the issue of munitions and their management in the Programme of Action was deplored by a number of

delegations, including ours, as well as a non-explicit reference to the ATT.

With respect to combating anti-personnel mines, Senegal is convinced that the implementation of the Ottawa Convention should remain a priority if we want to rid the world of these deadly, indiscriminate weapons. It seems wise to us that, as part of the technical and financial assistance provided to affected countries to help them to implement their demining programmes, particular attention should be paid to the socioeconomic reintegration of victims.

In conclusion, we believe that not possessing or destroying cluster munitions is the best way to respect the norms established by the relevant Convention and related texts, the entry into force of which marked significant progress on the path to protecting civilians and strengthening international humanitarian law.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Increasingly sophisticated and lethal weapons are being produced in our world. There is a stark imbalance that favours developed countries in terms of the manufacture, possession and trade in those weapons, which threatens stability and international peace and security. Paradoxically, some leading States in the manufacture, modernization, use and trade in conventional weapons with a high destructive capacity are attempting to impose international norms to limit and hinder the acquisition and use for legitimate defence purposes of some types of less-sophisticated conventional weapons, such as small arms and light weapons. We reject that double standard. The highest priority must be the regulation and control of the most sophisticated and destructive conventional weapons. Those weapons are the ones that cause the highest level of what is referred to as collateral damage in today's wars — causing thousands of innocent victims.

Cuba defends the legitimate right of States to manufacture, import and retain conventional weapons to meet their legitimate security and defence needs, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time, we advocate for effective measures to prevent and combat the illicit trade in such weapons. That requires further promoting and strengthening international cooperation and assistance in this area.

Cuba supports the adoption of a legally binding instrument that prohibits fully autonomous lethal weapons, including before they begin to be used.

Similarly, we need regulations on the use of weapons with a certain degree of autonomy that include the possibility of some degree of human intervention and control. At the very least, the use of lethal autonomous weapon systems would involve a serious risk for compliance with and observance of the norms and principles of international humanitarian law.

Cuba underscores the validity and full applicability of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the positive contribution and applicability of the International Tracing Instrument.

With regard to the Arms Trade Treaty, we believe that there are a number of ambiguities, imbalances and limits that undermine its effectiveness and efficiency. The Treaty confers privileges on States that export conventional weapons to the detriment of the legitimate interests of the rest of the States of the world, including in terms of national defence and security. The Arms Trade Treaty establishes subjective parameters that can be easily manipulated when it comes to approving or denying transfers. Unjustifiably, it does not prohibit the transfer of weapons to non-State and unauthorized State actors, despite the fact that they are the main source of the illicit trade in such weapons globally.

In conclusion, I should like to highlight that, just a few days ago — on 1 October — Cuba formally became a State party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which is consistent with our firm position in which we favour the full prohibition and total elimination of those weapons. Cuba condemns the use of cluster munitions, as we believe them to be incompatible with the principles and norms of international humanitarian law.

Mr. Carillo Gómez (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Paraguay. We express gratitude for the reports of the President of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States Parties to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We also express our gratitude to the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts for the report on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

The delegation of Paraguay reiterates its commitment to a coherent and comprehensive response to the multidimensional phenomenon of conventional

weapons and the challenges that presents for the international community. We call for the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) through adherence by the States that have not yet joined it, as well as for the adoption of a framework complementary to the Treaty that addresses the production of conventional weapons and a reduction in the numbers of existing weapons.

We also call for the universalization of other international instruments on regulating conventional weapons — for example, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Furthermore, we urge Member States to promote the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and welcome the results of the sixth Biennial Meeting, held recently. Moreover, we call on Member States to include munitions in their regulatory frameworks for small arms and light weapons.

The delegation of Paraguay highlights initiatives promoted in the First Committee to ensure the effective implementation of programmes of action and other international instruments. We therefore support the draft resolutions on the ATT, on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all their aspects, and on information on confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons, as well as the draft resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and weapons control, among others. My delegation highlights in particular the need to promote women's participation in debates, decisions and measures concerning conventional weapons.

With regard to complementary efforts in order successfully to address the challenges posed by conventional weapons, the delegation of Paraguay plays an active role in normative and coordination initiatives of the Organization of American States, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Southern Common Market. In that regard, I would highlight in particular the inter-American conventions against the manufacture and illicit trade in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials and on transparency in the acquisition of conventional weapons. Paraguay is party to those instruments. We also support the provisions of the 2015 Belén special declaration of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States on the illicit trade in conventional weapons, as well as the efforts of the working group on firearms and ammunitions of the Southern Common

Market, including its technical working group, both of which meet every other year.

The delegation of Paraguay reaffirms that Governments bear the primary responsibility to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We note, however, that that responsibility of Governments should not be interpreted to the detriment of the right to legitimate defence, individual or collective defence, of the States Members of the United Nations as set forth in Article 51 of the Charter. Nevertheless, an interpretation of the right to legitimate defence should not be used to justify a State rearming or having more weapons. My delegation calls on Member States to share here in the First Committee best practices and lessons learned with regard to promoting the control, limitation and elimination of conventional weapons, including other related aspects.

Finally, my delegation highlights the role of technical assistance, technology transfer and international cooperation for developing countries, especially in order to develop and strengthen national capacities to address conventional weapons issues in all their aspects, and in particular to develop their human resources in order, among other things, to be able to use new technologies for arms tracing, identification and marking and to set up databases. In that context, my delegation furthermore highlights the need to shift resources earmarked for the modernization of arsenals towards efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16.4, that is, to significantly reduce the flows of illicit weapons and to fight against all types of organized crime.

Mr. Ry Tuy (Cambodia): While I associate myself with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.15) and that made earlier today on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), I wish to deliver this statement in my national capacity.

The consequences of the rifts between nations in conflict or at war have had an impact on peaceful coexistence among their fellow human beings. Such conflicts will result in the taking up of arms. As a country that has emerged from a long period of internal conflicts, we know the suffering and consequences of the use of small arms. What worries us is that their low cost and ease of use make them available worldwide, which fuels conflict, produces civilian fatalities and

may hinder efforts at development. Ending arms flows requires strong international norms, including the core United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Such commitments have been revitalized as a result of the outcomes of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States, held in June. That requires that we live up to our commitments at the national, regional and international levels.

Cambodia has integrated the Programme of Action into its national agenda in order to manage small arms and light weapons so as to ensure peace and security in the country. Cambodia shares the concern about the increase in the illicit manufacture, transfer and spread of small arms and light weapons, and most of all about the excessive accumulation and broader spread of such weapons. It is therefore important that we work collectively on arms control, prevention and the suppression of arms-smuggling across the region.

For its part, and with long experience in addressing small arms, Cambodia serves as a voluntary lead shepherd against arms and smuggling in the ASEAN region. Regionally, we are working to develop a draft ASEAN convention against trafficking in firearms. We believe that such a convention would complement the Arms Trade Treaty. The convention, which is set to take shape, would assist countries in the region to deal with our diverse national challenges in the fight against illicit trafficking in firearms. The convention's intent would also be to establish the criminalization of the offence of trafficking in firearms.

As a post-conflict country, Cambodia, one of the most landmine-polluted countries, is still suffering from unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war hidden underground, either in farm fields or along our borders. Although so far the victims of those explosives and landmines are fewer in number than in past decades, we still need to persistently accelerate activities on mine clearance. We therefore continue to count on support from our dialogue partners and agencies. Cambodia attaches importance to the Ottawa Convention.

On regional efforts, the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre, whose headquarters is based in Cambodia, looks forward to providing expert training in mine-related activities, as well as to facilitate cooperation with other countries as well as relevant institutions, including the United Nations Mine Action

Service and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): Jamaica aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

We accord great importance to the consideration by the First Committee of this agenda item. For decades, small island developing States like ours have sought to highlight the significant impact that the transfer, accumulation and misuse of illicit small arms and light weapons have on our societies. It tears at our social fabric by disrupting family structures, while also instilling fear and mistrust. It robs us of valuable human resources and diminishes our productive capacities by way of the wanton destruction of lives. It threatens our economic viability and negatively impacts our socioeconomic development by diverting much-needed resources from other developmental priorities. In short, the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons shatters peaceful societies by undermining security and the rule of law.

The prevalence of illicit guns and ammunition feeds the monster of crime and violence that is rampant within various parts of our island, and indeed throughout the Caribbean region. Countries like ours are unfortunately situated in a strategic geographical zone that is exploited easily by narco-traffickers, who conduct a lucrative guns-for-drugs trade. Our prime location has facilitated and enabled the exchange of weapons across our porous borders and has enriched an ever-increasing network of organized criminal gangs. Jamaica therefore has a keen and vested interest in efforts aimed at regulating international transfers of illicit conventional arms and the prevention of their misuse, diversion and trafficking.

We have made a deliberate and conscious effort to work with partners at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels to effectively respond to the challenges posed by conventional weapons. And we are encouraged by the action that has been taken to date. The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the successful convening of the second Conference of States Parties, in August, represents an example of one such significant achievement. We are pleased with the progress being made to ensure that institutional and other arrangements are in place for the effective implementation of the ATT. We urge Member States

that have not already done so to become a party to the Treaty.

In furtherance of our commitment to implementing the ATT, Jamaica intends to draft a regulatory framework to govern the movement of conventional arms within our territory and undertake further amendments to our firearms act to improve transparency and efficiency, in keeping with our regulatory framework for the controlled use of small arms among private citizens. We will also acquire equipment and tools to assist in the detection, interception and seizure of conventional arms at our ports of entry.

We are equally pleased that the sixth Biennial Meeting of States concluded successfully in June, and are honoured and privileged to have spearheaded the process and the deliberations that subsequently ensued. The adoption of a consensus-based outcome document serves to highlight the international community's renewed commitment to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in those weapons.

We support the continued mainstreaming of gender into our consideration of this agenda item. The evidence is clear regarding the devastating impact that the use of conventional weapons has had on women and children within conflict settings. The prospects for meaningful progress to be made on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping will not be realized if the gender dimension is not placed at the centre of our efforts.

Similarly, we must continue to work assiduously towards mainstreaming the prevention and combating of trafficking in conventional arms into our broader development efforts. Through its Vision 2030 National Development Plan, as well as through our commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Jamaica has always seen merit in such an interdependent approach. We hope that the requisite level of cooperation and assistance will also be in place to complement efforts in that regard.

I conclude by recalling and recognizing the sterling contribution made by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) in support of our efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The level of support and cooperation that has been provided is invaluable. Just recently, for example, Jamaica, in partnership with the Centre, hosted a special workshop on forensics ballistic

collaborative competency testing, which included participants from all over the Caribbean. Along with fellow CARICOM countries, we have also been the beneficiaries of capacity-building assistance in maritime security, airport security screening, firearms stockpile-management and destruction, as well as in training for security and justice-sector personnel. We are deeply appreciative of that consistent support, which has been sustained for the past 30 years.

One of the most enduring features of the nature of the engagement that Member States have with the Regional Centres is that they have remained faithful to their mandate of responding to requests that are country- and demand-driven. That has engendered a partnership based on mutual respect. We are committed to maintaining and furthering our collaboration with UNLIREC in the years to come.

Mr. Nath (India): India associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/71/PV.15).

India shares concerns about the illicit transfer of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, to terrorists and non-State actors, which is a major threat to international peace and security and an impediment to the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects outlines a realistic approach to address this problem through cooperative efforts at the national, regional and global levels. India supports taking forward the Programme of Action on the basis of consensus among all States parties. India welcomes the conclusion of the second Review Conference with the adoption of the outcome document by consensus. We note with satisfaction the successful conclusion of the sixth Biennial Meeting on the implementation of the Programme of Action, held in New York in June. We have taken note of the statement on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons made by the representative of France on behalf of a group of States today. We welcome its emphasis on the fight against the dissemination of small arms and light weapons to terrorist groups and for intensifying international cooperation in this area.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) remains the only forum of a universal character

that brings together all the main users and producers of certain conventional weapons, thereby ensuring that the instruments that emerge have greater prospects for making a meaningful impact on the ground. India is party to the CCW and its five Protocols and remains committed to the CCW's objective of progressively strengthening the role and principles of international humanitarian concerns and military necessity of States. India will contribute to the success of the CCW Review Conference later this year.

India supports the vision of a world free of the threat of landmines and is committed to the eventual elimination of anti-personnel landmines. India participated as an observer at the third Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention, held in Maputo in 2014, and at the fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, held in Geneva last year. We support the approach enshrined in the Amended Protocol II to the CCW, which addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States with long borders. India has discontinued the production of non-detectable anti-personnel landmines and observes a moratorium on their transfer. We are also contributing to international demining and rehabilitation efforts.

Amended Protocol II is a useful framework for addressing the issue of improvised explosive devices, which are increasingly being used by terrorists and illegal armed groups. We welcome the initiative by Afghanistan to put forward a draft resolution on the issue, and we are pleased to be a sponsor of it.

The CCW should continue considering ways and means for progressive development of the rules of international law applicable to advanced conventional weapons that have devastating and indiscriminate effects. In that context, we support continued discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems in the CCW on the basis of the mandate agreed at the meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems in April this year, consistent with the objectives and purposes of the Convention. We feel that such systems should be assessed not just from the viewpoint of their compatibility with international law, including international humanitarian law, but also from that of their impact on international security if such weapon systems are disseminated.

India supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures. India was not part of the 2016

Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register. We are studying the report of the Group of Governmental Experts and its recommendations.

India has strong and effective national export controls governing the transfer of conventional weapons, which conform to the highest international standards. India continues to keep under review the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) from the perspective of our defence, security and foreign policy interests. During the negotiations on the Treaty, India raised concerns on a number of gaps that remained in the final text, in particular the imbalance in the rights of exporting and importing States and in curbing the flow of arms to terrorist and non-State armed groups. Perhaps it is too early to draw definitive conclusions. Focus on the implementation of the ATT by its States parties should not detract from reporting to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which appears currently to be the case.

Ms. Saggese (United Kingdom): In the interests of saving time, I shall read out an abridged version of the United Kingdom statement. The full text will be posted on the United Nations website.

The United Kingdom remains committed to playing a leading role in international efforts on conventional arms control across the full range of issues and in support of the numerous instruments and arrangements designed to deliver greater global security. It is in our collective interests that those instruments function properly and with the necessary financial support. We therefore encourage all participating States to the many conventions to pay their contributions at the earliest opportunity, as the United Kingdom has done.

First and foremost, the United Kingdom is pleased to be part of the development and operations of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The priority now is to work together to address the Treaty's objective and priorities, in particular understanding and tackling the challenges of effective implementation and universalization. We thank Finland for offering to chair the third Conference of States Parties, and we offer Ambassador Korhonen our full support.

The United Kingdom believes that universalization must remain a priority until the Treaty is truly global. We encourage all States that have not done so to make ratification or accession a national priority. The Treaty cannot make an impact unless and until it

is effectively and widely implemented. Over the past year, we have funded nearly £200,000 worth of projects in support of ATT implementation — with projects focused specifically on ratification, accession and effective implementation.

When States fail to control the supply and sale of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, they not only jeopardize the safety and security of innocent people worldwide, including a disproportionate number of women and children, but also fuel instability, threaten international peace and security and exacerbate criminal activity such as poaching and the illegal trade in wildlife. That is why the United Kingdom welcomed the inclusion of small arms and light weapons and ammunition in the scope of the ATT, acknowledging that efforts to better regulate legitimate transfers also contribute to the prevention of diversion, unauthorized re-export and illicit trade. We supported the adoption of Goal 16.4, which is aimed specifically at reducing illicit arms flows in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Kingdom continues to provide technical and financial support to States looking to improve their controls against diversion and illicit proliferation. This year we have committed more than £1.6 million for weapons and ammunition management and counter-proliferation projects.

The United Kingdom remains committed to the humanitarian goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We are deeply concerned by the reports of cluster munitions use over the past year and call on all the actors involved to cease using these weapons. We supported the political declaration agreed at the sixth Meeting of States Parties this year under the skilful leadership of Ambassador Van der Kwast of the Netherlands, which condemned the use of cluster munitions by any actor in conformity with article 21 and sets out the aim of achieving the Convention's goals by 2030.

On landmines, the United Kingdom announced on 14 September the commitment of a further £20 million to continue the removal of anti-personnel mines from the Falkland Islands. A significant part of the new project will consist of a technical survey which aims to provide a more accurate picture of the clearance challenge that remains. We look forward to providing more information on this next phase of clearance work at the Meeting of States Parties in Santiago and will keep the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,

Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction updated on progress throughout.

For more than 20 years, the United Kingdom has supported some of the worst-affected countries throughout the world in clearing landmines and explosive remnants of war after conflict. In 2016 alone, the United Kingdom's main action work in developing countries resulted in the removal of more than 22,000 landmines and explosive remnants of war and released more than 37 million square metres of land, which resulted in people having better access to basic services and increased economic opportunities, as well as enjoying improved safety. The United Kingdom's projects reached more than 115,000 additional people through mine-risk education activities. The United Kingdom also worked in Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Iraq and Ukraine to strengthen the ability of national authorities to manage their own landmine and explosive remnants of war programmes.

The United Kingdom took part in the productive informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems in April this year on the United Nations Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). We thank Germany and Ambassador Biontino in particular for once again leading discussions, and we support the recommendations to the Review Conference.

Despite the informal discussions and the research that has been done to date, it is clear that further work is needed in this area, and we believe that it should occur within the CCW, owing to its wealth of technical, military and diplomatic expertise. As Chair of Main Committee I at the CCW Review Conference and Chair-designate for the CCW meetings next year, the United Kingdom will do its utmost to support Ambassador Janjua to ensure a successful and forward-leaning outcome at the CCW Review Conference in December.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our encouragement to all States here to make ratification of, or accession to, the Arms Trade Treaty a matter of priority, so that together we can create common standards in the international arms trade and stem illicit flows. An effective Treaty that is fit for purpose has the potential to save hundreds of thousands of lives, improve the livelihoods of millions and complement global efforts to curb the illicit trade in wildlife.

Ms. Pobee (Ghana): Ghana aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/71/PV.15).

All Governments need conventional weapons to protect their citizens. However, the proliferation and abuse of conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, continue to undermine peace and security as well as sustainable development.

Supplying small arms and light weapons, particularly to non-State actors, in a volatile world that is experiencing significant fragility, organized crime and terrorism, is indeed not the route to be taken by those truly committed to sustainable peace and development. These acts breed instability and insecurity and they weaken our common quest for a world free from war, a world where human rights are guaranteed and a world dedicated to socioeconomic development. We therefore wish to reiterate our appeal to arms-producing countries to ensure that the supply of small arms and light weapons is limited to Governments and entities duly authorized by them. Our collective efforts to combat terrorism will not achieve the desired results if we continue to supply arms to non-State actors.

Ghana remains fully committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

We stress the need for full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. In this context, we welcome the successful convening of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in New York in June of this year. We note with satisfaction that the meeting made an urgent appeal to address as soon as possible challenges confronting the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including the need for enhanced international cooperation and assistance and the implications of new developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design.

During the aforementioned meeting, Ghana and another 47 like-minded States called for the regulation and control of ammunition for small arms and light weapons to be included in the implementation of the Programme of Action. We will continue to pursue this matter in the appropriate multilateral forums, since the real value of such weapons depends on the availability of ammunition. Ghana also called for the broadening of assistance and support for small arms and light weapons control initiatives to include developing countries that have not emerged out of conflict.

Regional organizations and civil-society groups play a critical role in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. In West Africa the implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials by the regional body has been very useful in preserving peace and security in the region. We reiterate our call for increased technical and financial assistance to civil-society groups to enable them to continue with the good work they are doing in the West African subregion.

Similarly, the role of women in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons cannot be overemphasized. In this regard we welcome Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), adopted on 13 October 2015, which encourages the empowerment of women to participate in the design of efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty to regulate the global trade in conventional arms is one of the major achievements of the United Nations in recent times. Ghana ratified the Treaty on 13 May 2015 and is currently working on its legislative and regulatory framework to fully implement the Treaty. We welcome the outcome of the Second Conference of States Parties to the Treaty held in August this year and reiterate our call to States that are yet to sign and ratify the Treaty to do so as soon as possible.

We reiterate our call for the universalization of and adherence to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and 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. I am pleased to inform this meeting that the competent Ghanaian authorities are taking steps to accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Acting Chair: I now call on the representative of Chile, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.7/Rev.1.

Mr. Garrido Melo (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (see A/C.1/71/PV.15). We would further like to raise certain issues and views from the specific standpoint of our delegation.

Chile has actively promoted the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction as part of our ongoing effort to ensure the highest level of protection of human beings and their rights and dignity. For Chile, the Convention represents one of the highest levels of synergy between international humanitarian law and disarmament. In its capacity as Chair of the Convention this year, Chile is promoting a strengthened virtuous relationship from the human security perspective. That effort is part of our political desire to achieve a mine-free world by 2025.

Evidence of our commitment is manifested in the fact that we will host the fifteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, in Santiago, where we will review the progress made with respect to all articles of the Convention. My country has also proposed three thematic issues to be discussed: international cooperation, demining and gender, and the necessary security conditions and worthy efforts of deminers in all places where mine-removal work is carried out, in order to agree upon certain minimum standards, taking into account the reality of each country.

We take this opportunity to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction" (A/C.1/71/L.7/Rev.1), and call on all States to once again support this draft resolution. The draft resolution maintains the spirit and essence

of resolution 70/55, of 7 December 2015, and contains only minor updates. In particular, it calls on States parties and delegation participants to address issues arising from outstanding dues and on the basis of the recently implemented United Nations financial and accounting practices.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): Pakistan aligns itself with the Non-Aligned Movement statement made under this cluster (see A/C.1/71/PV.15).

The destabilizing effects of conventional weapons on regional and subregional stability and their catastrophic humanitarian toll underscore the need for continued action aimed at controlling these weapons. The history and politics of arms regulation require a comprehensive approach which takes into account priorities and security interests of all member States. The final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) provides clear direction in that regard in its paragraph 22:

“Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out on the balanced reduction of armed forces and of conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the need of all States to protect their security”.

There are several worrying trends emerging on the conventional-weapon horizon. The level and scale of global military expenditures tops the list. The present expenditure on international trade in conventional arms has crossed \$1.7 trillion. While the total budget of the United Nations is around 3 per cent of the world's military expenditure, around 33 per cent more is being spent on fuelling and exacerbating conflicts that it prevents or tries to prevent.

The reflection of the same troubling trend is mirrored at the regional level. South Asia is a sensitive region where one State's military spending grossly and vastly overshadows all others. It has every potential of fuelling instability and jeopardizing the delicate regional balance. We remain concerned over the growing transfers of conventional weapons, especially in volatile regions that are inconsistent with the imperatives of maintaining peace, security and stability. The policy of dual standards towards South Asia, based on narrow

strategic, political and commercial considerations must be eschewed.

Pakistan for its part is committed to the establishment of strategic stability in South Asia, which includes an element of conventional force balance. It neither wants nor is it engaged in an arms race in the region. Let me quote from our Prime Minister's statement delivered in the General Assembly last month:

“[W]e cannot ignore our neighbour's unprecedented arms build-up, and we will take whatever measures are necessary to maintain credible deterrence.”
(A/71/PV.11, p. 39)

Pakistan has developed the necessary legislative, regulatory, enforcement and institutional mechanisms to address the range of issues relating to conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons. An interministerial group addresses them in an integrated manner. Policy guidelines on the export of conventional weapons are in place, as well as a national evaluation mechanism for regulating their trade. We are taking additional measures to strengthen the enforcement regime, which covers imports and licensing.

Pakistan voted in favour of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We consider the ATT as a first step towards regulating trade and the transfer of conventional weapons and note its entry into force. We continue our national review of the Treaty. The ATT's success, effectiveness and universality, we believe, will be assessed on its non-discriminatory implementation, in particular its criteria and strict adherence by its States parties to the Treaty principles.

The Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) has become an indispensable element of the contemporary humanitarian, disarmament and arms-control machinery, as well as a forum to consider the best ways to protect civilians and soldiers from the effects of such weapons.

The success of the CCW lies in the delicate balance it seeks to maintain by minimizing human suffering without sacrificing the legitimate security interests of States. The CCW provides an ideal platform to deal with the subject of cluster munitions since it harmonizes the genuine humanitarian concerns with the security imperatives of States. Moreover, for

addressing the issue of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in a comprehensive and balanced manner the CCW provides the most appropriate forum. Pakistan shares the concerns about the acquisition and use by non-State actors and terrorists of small arms and IEDs.

Pakistan is honoured to preside over the fifth Review Conference of the CCW, to be held in December. We look forward to all States parties' constructive engagement in the process, including through timely contributions.

Mr. Verstedden (Netherlands): We look forward to the fifth 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 (CCW) in December. The discussion on lethal autonomous weapons systems over the past two years has been constructive and comprehensive but so far lacks a clear forward-looking direction. We believe, therefore, that now is the time to take the next step to better focus our deliberations, and to that end we strongly support the establishment of a group of governmental experts.

The Netherlands was proud to chair the meetings of Protocol V this year, as clearance of explosive remnants of war remains an important priority. To increase transparency reporting, the meeting moved forward on setting up a roster of military experts to assist with reporting on request.

The threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) is of growing concern. In many conflicts IEDs harm the civilian population in particular. We need to continue to address IEDs both in the CCW and the First Committee. In that regard, the Netherlands looks favourably on this year's IED draft resolution.

This year the Netherlands was honoured to serve as the President of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The main aim of our presidency was to give an extra push to the implementation of the Dubrovnik Action Plan, which is our common road map. Together with the Coordination Committee and the Implementation Support Unit, we worked hard to keep the forward momentum.

We strongly believe that it is possible to make cluster munitions a thing of the past. To this end we introduced a political declaration on implementation, including a final date for completion of all outstanding obligations by 2030. That declaration was adopted by consensus at the sixth Meeting of States Parties. We

also continued to work on the universalization of the Treaty by sending letters and making démarches in capitals. Now we have 100 States parties, and have set ourselves the goal to have 130 States parties by 2020. We therefore call upon all States that have not yet done so to join this Convention.

Since its entry into force, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has set a strong international norm against irresponsible transfers of arms. Now that most organizational and procedural issues are dealt with, the next Conference of States Parties should start to address substantive issues on universalization and implementation. The Netherlands contributes to assistance and outreach via the European Union, and nationally to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, the Control Arm ATT Monitor project, the sponsorship programme run by the United Nations Development Programme and the Stimson Baseline Assessment project. We welcome the recently established ATT Voluntary Trust Fund and will contribute to this new initiative.

This year, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has been in existence for 25 years. Over the past quarter century, the Register has made an important contribution to enhance transparency and to build confidence in the world of arms and arms transfers. We strongly encourage States to keep using this important and valuable instrument. We welcome the recent report of the Group of Governmental Experts on transparency in armaments (A/71/259) and its recommendations, particularly the recommendation to add small arms and light weapons as a separate category.

On the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, we are making progress towards our common goal to implement all outstanding commitments under this Convention before 2025. We look forward to continue these discussions at the fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, in Santiago de Chile. We strongly believe that a voluntary, more individualized approach aimed at cooperation and assistance may help in this regard.

The Netherlands is willing to do its part. With our new Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme, we have committed €45 million for mine- and cluster-munitions-related activities in 13 countries for the period between 2016 and 2020. Moreover, we contribute

€3 million annually to the United Nations Mine Action Service Voluntary Trust Fund.

The Netherlands agrees that small arms and light weapons deserve more attention. They are still responsible for most arms-related casualties worldwide. We support the declaration delivered by France on strengthening the international commitment to small arms and light weapons and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We support the international discussion on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. In our view, this discussion should focus on concrete and practical measures in order to limit casualties and damage. It is important that international humanitarian law be respected.

The Acting Chair: I now call on the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.52.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement of the European Union (see A/C.1/71/PV.15), but would like to highlight a few issues in its national capacity.

With a view to ongoing conflicts that continue to hurt civilian populations across the globe, a more robust effort to curb the unlawful use and destabilizing and excessive accumulations of conventional weapons is sorely needed. Germany takes the mandate of the First Committee in this respect very seriously and is actively engaged in its regional and global implementation. It also introduces this year's draft resolution entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures" (A/C.1/71/L.52) and asks for members' support.

Our commitment to promoting peace should be measured by our actions, that is, practical disarmament measures. We also welcome the progress made on the only global transparency instrument, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, during this year's session of the Group of Governmental Experts. We believe that the future inclusion of small arms and light weapons into the Register as a full category will make it a more valuable tool. Its future success depends on our participation and we stand ready to provide support for nations willing to contribute.

Let me turn to small arms and light weapons. Motivated by the Sustainable Development Goals,

especially target 16.4, Germany is actively promoting a global alliance against small arms and light weapons proliferation. We feel that better coordination is crucial for a more 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, so we try to partner with other interested states, the United Nations, regional bodies, non-governmental organizations and research institutions. A digital platform has been introduced this summer by our partner, the Small Arms Survey.

The meetings of the Group of Interested States, as stipulated in the draft resolution, serve as an open venue for dialogue, trying to analyse and match needs and resources. For the coming year, we plan increased attention towards empowering States to measure and implement Sustainable Development Goal 16.4.

We are also proud to see our partnership with the African Union on small arms and light weapons control prosper, with a special focus on the Sahel, at a technical as well as a political level. It proves our conviction that the responsibility for a successful implementation rests with the affected nations and regions. We stand ready to support these actions to which we have dedicated approximately €7 million in 2016.

Furthermore, Germany remains committed to promoting the universalization and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). It is a key cornerstone for regulating the global arms trade and hence an indispensable means for preventing the illicit transfer of arms. We therefore particularly welcome the establishment of the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund, which aims to support States in their efforts to implement the Treaty. Germany will contribute to the Trust Fund and continue its bilateral and multilateral implementation support measures.

With respect to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), Germany took over the presidency of the Convention on Cluster Munitions at the beginning of September. We would like to thank the Netherlands for its work as President over the past year. The use of cluster munitions in Syria and Yemen show the devastating effect and unacceptable humanitarian cost of cluster munitions. Thus, the Convention is needed more than ever to achieve our shared vision of a world free of cluster munitions. As President of the Convention, we will lead the efforts to universalize the Convention. We call on all States to ratify or accede

to the Convention and will reach out to States that have not yet done so. Another important aspect of our presidency will be the streamlining of reporting, needs assessment and international cooperation which will aim to increase reporting and help States parties fulfil their duties under the Convention.

The work done in the context 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 on lethal autonomous weapons systems has been extremely useful over the past three years. We would like to see a continuation of our common effort in this area. The next step will be to endorse the informal group of experts' recommendations at the Fifth Review Conference.

The proposed mandate by the experts captures the complex nature of the problem in its legal, technical and ethical dimensions. We think it is possible to arrive at a common understanding and chart a way forward in this ambitious undertaking. We hope that the recommendations will be formally endorsed by the high contracting parties at the Review Conference, and that this will lead to the establishment of a group of governmental experts in 2017.

Before concluding, please allow me to make an additional remark on an urgent matter concerning international peace and security. Germany fully endorses the press statement of the Security Council and condemns the latest failed ballistic-missile launch conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which took place on 14 October. The launch attempt is another violation of Security Council resolutions that explicitly prohibit North Korea's use of ballistic-missile technology. Germany strongly opposes these unacceptable provocations and supports all efforts of the international community to implement further significant measures. Germany also repeats its call to North Korea to immediately abandon its nuclear capabilities, ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction programmes in a verifiable manner that complies with international law and that comes without delay.

Mr. Castro Córdoba (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): One year ago, with the historic adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we ratified the crucial link between disarmament and development. We call for greater efforts in order to comprehensively

examine the complex regime of conventional weapons, which enables us to take final, concrete actions to achieve target 16.4 and make significant reductions in the illicit trade in such weapons. This will help to reduce armed violence and thereby benefit peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

In December, we will mark the second anniversary of the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and, at the recent Second Conference of States Parties to the ATT, we took important decisions on its institutional structure that will help us to achieve the Treaty's objectives and have a real impact on people's lives. However, we continue to observe many and very serious acts that violate the objectives of the Treaty. These are violations that are unfortunately being experienced directly by civilian populations in the Middle East and Africa. In our own subregion, we have lived through the painful reality of societies affected by armed violence, which are vulnerable to illicit trade in these types of weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons and their ammunition.

That is why those of us that are States parties have a huge challenge ahead, which is to effectively implement the Treaty. We should note that the State of Costa Rica is fulfilling its responsibilities in that regard. We need to increase synergies between the ATT and other complementary instruments such as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and we need to adopt legally binding instruments to combat the trade, marking, and illicit brokering in such weapons. We must develop robust and mandatory standards for the management of stockpiles so that we can put an end to the excessive levels of production of these weapons.

Accordingly, Costa Rica, thanks to cooperation and assistance from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the project sponsored by the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control and the European Union, is working on the effective and transparent management of the use of small arms and light weapons in the private security sector. Similarly, next year, we will begin an initiative to build national capacities in order to reduce the diversion by mail of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition, parts and components.

We welcome the outcome of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States Parties to assess the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. Even if illicit trade in these weapons persists, as do their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled proliferation, which in turn feeds armed violence and terrorism in many parts of the world and has significant humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences, we welcome the measures that were taken in the outcome document. These measures will help to ensure implementation of the Programme of Action in accordance with the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Costa Rica hopes that the fifth Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects will address the ethical, legal and technical concerns that have been raised since 2013 with respect to lethal autonomous weapons systems, which in our view are a violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. That is why at the next Review Conference we will call for the establishment of an open-ended working group of governmental experts to identify the steps necessary to make progress on an international convention that would prohibit these new types of conventional-weapons technologies.

We also believe that now is the time to move beyond mere words. We need to take action on the use of armed drones outside areas where there are active hostilities. We agree with the concerns expressed a few days ago by civil-society representatives, namely, that the use of unarmed aerial vehicles is often characterized by a lack of transparency, accountability or reparations for victims, thereby eroding democratic controls and international oversight of the use of force. In that regard, we support the initiatives of having a much broader debate on the humanitarian impact of armed drones, including the impact on human rights and international humanitarian law, on moral and ethical concerns based on the 2015 study by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, as well as on the efforts and recommendations made by the Human Rights Council.

Costa Rica highlights the role of civil society in issues relating to conventional weapons. We welcome civil society's contribution to identifying problems and its help in finding solutions. We call States' attention to the importance of addressing both the old and new challenges that the international community is facing.

Finally, I should like to emphasize that it is up to member States to join forces and collaborate on initiatives that allow us to respond to the challenges facing the international community and, in particular, the civilian population. The First Committee can count on Costa Rica's commitment to making progress on these objectives.

Ms. Naidoo (South Africa): Given the time constraints, we have restricted this statement to some of the most pressing issues in the field of conventional weapons.

The growing membership of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is evidence that many countries throughout the globe share the common vision and goals of the Treaty. The ATT sets high norms and criteria that States should adhere to when considering arms transfers, thereby preventing the illicit trade in conventional weapons, which exacerbates conflict and crime, especially in Africa. The Treaty's full and effective implementation and universality will tangibly contribute to promoting international and regional peace and security and reduce human suffering by addressing the scourge of armed conflict, which is too often directed at women and children.

South Africa's commitment to the ATT underpins its international role as a responsible manufacturer, possessor and trader in conventional arms. South Africa calls on all States that have not yet done so, especially the major conventional arms-producing and exporting countries, to ratify and accede to the Treaty in order to further promote its universalization.

South Africa participated in the sixth Biennial Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. South Africa recognizes that the implementation of the commitments under the Programme of Action has already had a marked impact on the illicit trade and circulation of small arms and light weapons, and is complemented by actions at the regional level, such as the Southern African Development Community's Regional Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials. As in past sessions, South Africa joins Colombia and Japan in presenting the omnibus resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (A/C.1/71/L.25).

South Africa remains fully committed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and the international humanitarian law principles enshrined in the Framework Convention and its Protocols. It looks forward to participating in the upcoming Fifth Review Conference. South Africa firmly believes that it is only through the universalization of the Convention that we will truly reduce the suffering caused by certain inhumane weapons. With so many States affected, especially by mines and explosive remnants of war, we encourage all States to sign and ratify the Convention and its Protocols. Likewise, we also call on States that have not yet signed and ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, especially those that continue to possess and use these weapons, to join the Convention without delay.

While artificial intelligence and robotics present both challenges and opportunities, we should be mindful of the possibility that weaponizing technologies that raise fundamental ethical, legal, operational and political questions. South Africa believes that the principles of international humanitarian law apply to the use of all weapons in all conflict situations, including lethal autonomous weapons systems. We support the recommendations to the Review Conference for the convening of a group of governmental experts to discuss such systems, which would deepen our understanding of the degree of human oversight or control that autonomous weapons require.

The use of explosive weapons in populated areas is yet another important issue that requires attention. It is imperative that we reaffirm the principles and rules of international humanitarian law that apply in all situations of conflict so as to prevent the senseless killing of civilians. In this context, we also recognize the increasing threat posed by the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and the growing humanitarian threat caused by IED incidents, which mainly affect civilian populations.

With regard to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, South Africa remains fully committed to the full implementation of all its provisions and the Dubrovnik Action Plan. It is important to continue to stigmatize the use of cluster munitions. The remnants resulting from the use of cluster munitions also have

a negative impact on the social and economic well-being of civilians. South Africa condemns the use of cluster munitions by any State or actor. There is a need to intensify efforts towards the universalization of this Convention as States that hold large stockpiles of cluster munitions and continue to produce these harmful weapons remain outside it.

Ms. Yaron (Israel): I will read an abridged version of my statement. The complete statement will be available on QuickFirst.

In the course of the last several years, the strategic situation in the Middle East has become ever more complex, uncertain and fragile. The Middle East serves, unfortunately, as a laboratory for terror activities where oppressive regimes, terrorist organizations, organized crime and other non-State actors continue to wreak havoc in a region that is already burdened by instability and violent extremism.

Israel regards the threat posed by conventional weapons and their proliferation as detrimental, as these weapons are being acquired and proliferate in the region in unprecedented qualities and quantities. They proliferate through various illicit means, are used widely and deliberately against civilian populations and have claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. It should be recognized that in our region some States encourage, support and back terrorist organizations, including through financing, training and the transfer of large quantities of sophisticated weapons.

In this context it should be emphasized that Iran uses proxy organizations to inflict terror and engage in hostilities in an attempt to gain regional dominance. In some cases, such as Syria, the regime uses its weapons, including missiles and barrel bombs, against its own population. Unfortunately, suffering and misery, death, siege and widespread displacement have become part of everyday life.

We are determined to counter this growing peril in the region, both individually and in collaboration with other stakeholders. Strict implementation of Security Council resolutions, international norms and standards, and national mechanisms is required. An important normative basis already exists in the form of Security Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VII.

The threat posed by the possibility of some weapons systems, such as man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADS), short-range rockets, mortars and

surface-to-air missiles, falling into the wrong hands is immense and should not be ignored. Their devastating effects have been clearly demonstrated in recent years, not only in the Middle East but also in other regions. These weapon systems, mainly MANPADS, have the potential to cause massive disastrous effects, including on the civilian population. Such weapons should therefore be in the hands only of responsible sovereign States that comply with the international norms and standards undertaken by them. Special responsibility to prevent unauthorized proliferation and abuse lies with exporting States that transfer weapons. Efforts to tackle this issue should be exercised at the national, regional and international levels alike.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is an important instrument in combating the illicit trade and diversion of arms. Israel welcomes the successful outcome of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States. While the Programme of Action recognizes the importance of implementation at the domestic level, it addresses at the same time the need to exert efforts in the regional and global spheres. Regional States that share vital interests should maintain open channels of communication for regional cooperation to promote the Programme of Action. In the Middle East, we unfortunately sorely lack such channels. Their importance is clear, especially during these times.

Israel values the mechanism of the United Nations Register and submits its reports annually. It is very unfortunate that in the Middle East region Israel is almost alone in submitting annual reports, and we urge other regional States to submit their reports.

Israel acknowledges the significance of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as a substantial achievement of the international community. The ATT demonstrates the commitment to promoting regulation of the trade in arms while taking into consideration that it is legitimate to acquire arms for self-defence when traded under the right standards and norms. As a signatory State, Israel supports the goals and purposes of the ATT. Many of the Treaty's principles and standards are already embodied in Israel's robust export policy and control mechanisms.

Lastly, Israel considers the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be

Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects to be an important instrument and the right forum for discussing many challenges in the conventional sphere, as it strives to strike the necessary balance between military necessity and humanitarian considerations in the application of international humanitarian law. Israel is looking forward to the fifth Review Conference and believes that issues such as improvised explosive devices, mines other than anti-personnel mines, and lethal autonomous weapons systems need to be further explored from both technical and legal angles. The Review Conference would be an opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions, and Israel is committed to doing so.

Mr. Samounty (Lao People's Democratic Republic): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The Lao People's Democratic Republic stresses the significance of the humanitarian concerns caused by the use of conventional weapons. We therefore strongly support the efforts of the international community to address the issue by actively participating in the work of the international commissions on conventional weapons. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has become a State party to major international instruments in this field, such as the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and four of its Protocols and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic also supports the objective of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and has stated its intention to join the Convention. The Lao People's Democratic Republic takes note of the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Currently we are studying the Treaty with the aim of becoming a State party in the future.

Even though conventional weapons do not have the same effect as weapons of mass destruction, they can have a significant impact with long-term consequences. Explosive remnants of war create humanitarian problems and inflict unacceptable harm on livelihoods and imposes serious obstacles for the social and economic development of many countries. Accordingly, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has

concerns over a wide range of security and humanitarian impacts arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. To this end, my delegation supports the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in tackling this issue.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is one of the world's most heavily contaminated countries in terms of unexploded ordnance. During the war in Indochina, from 1964 to 1973, about 270 million cluster munitions were dropped on Lao land, of which about 30 per cent failed to explode and now remain scattered in most provinces in the country. The legacy of the use of cluster munitions has created long-lasting obstacles that continue to complicate the livelihoods of our people and our national development. As experience has shown, clearing unexploded ordnance will take a long time and require huge resources. In this regard, we would like to express our sincere thanks to those countries, international organizations and other entities that have provided funding, technical support and assistance to my country, including the recent pledge of \$90 million by the United States of America for the next three years.

For our part, and to address these challenges, the Lao Government launched Sustainable Development Goal 18 as a national goal on 7 September. Through our efforts to get rid of the danger from explosive remnants of war, we hope that support and assistance from the international community to realize this specific Sustainable Development Goal will be forthcoming in the years ahead.

As one of the most heavily affected countries, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has been actively promoting the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in order to prevent further victimization of humankind caused by unexploded ordnance. The Lao People's Democratic Republic therefore welcomes the outcome of the sixth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held in September in Geneva, and looks forward to the seventh, to be held in September 2017. The Lao People's Democratic Republic would like once again to take this opportunity to call upon those countries that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so in order to achieve a world free from cluster munitions.

The Acting Chair: We have just heard the last speaker for today.

I shall now call on those representatives who have requested the right of reply. Before proceeding, once again I should like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Mazzeo (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in response to the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom.

Argentina wishes to reiterate the particular situation affecting the Argentine territory of the Malvinas Islands in accordance with the interpretative declaration that Argentina made at the time it ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention), on 14 September 1979, which has not been modified and constitutes the main basis of our extension. The only part of the territory of Argentina that has been affected by anti-personnel mines is the Malvinas Islands. But Argentina has been prevented from accessing these mines to fully comply with the obligations it assumed under the Convention, because that territory, together with the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and surrounding maritime areas, have been illegally occupied by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and are the subject of a sovereignty dispute.

Indeed, the General Assembly recognized the existence of a sovereignty dispute between the Republic of Argentina and the United Kingdom on the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and surrounding maritime areas, and has urged both Governments to resume negotiations so as to find a peaceful solution to the dispute as soon as possible. The General Assembly imposed a good-offices mission on the Secretary-General to help both parties to fulfil this mandate, and the Secretary-General must inform the Assembly of any progress made.

Similarly, this topic has been discussed by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, which annually adopts a resolution stating that this special and particular colonial situation — this sovereignty dispute — should be brought to an end in a peaceful and negotiated manner, and calls on both Governments to resume negotiations for that purpose. The most recent version of this resolution was adopted on 23 June this

year. However, despite the repeated statements by the United Nations and other regional and international forums, the United Kingdom continues to reject the call for a resumption of negotiations.

With regard to its call for a moratorium under the Ottawa Convention, made on 1 October 2009, Argentina presented a plan to implement article 5 of the Convention in the disputed areas during the 10 years of the extension so that, in the event that the negotiations on sovereignty between the Republic of Argentina and the United Kingdom are resumed, the two countries can reach an agreement on the clearing of mines and unexploded ordnance.

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

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): As always, the representative of the Israeli

entity has tried to escape reality and ignore the array of resolutions taken against it by launching accusations against other States. The representative of the Israeli entity has stated, with respect to the illicit trade of weapons throughout the world, that those who attempt to trade in weapons to destabilize situations in different parts of the world are Israeli officers, who are also involved in trafficking human organs.

The Israeli entity overtly supplies the terrorist armed groups in Syria with all types of weaponry, equipment and ammunition, including chemical materials. We recently sent a message to the Security Council on that matter. The Israeli entity breaches all international conventions on conventional and non-conventional weapons as well as Security Council resolutions relating to combating terrorism. The Israeli entity has used all types of prohibited weapons in its recurrent attacks and aggression.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.