



# General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

## First Committee

**16**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Friday, 25 October 2019, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*Chair:* Mr. Llorentty Solíz . . . . . (Bolivia (Plurinational State of))

*In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Horne (Australia),  
Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 p.m.*

### Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

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

**The Acting Chair:** In accordance with its programme of work, the Committee will first hear a statement by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Thereafter the Committee will continue listening to statements under the cluster “Conventional weapons”.

I now invite the Committee to hear a pre-recorded video statement by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, Ms. Mariela Fogante of Argentina.

**Ms. Fogante** (Argentina), Chair, Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to join the First Committee during this phase of its work to present the report (see A/74/211) of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. In addition to thanking the Secretary-General and the Office for Disarmament Affairs for their support, I would like to highlight the dedication and flexibility of the 15 experts who

participated in the Group, which made it possible to adopt a consensus report with several innovative recommendations. I would also like to point out that eight of the 15 experts were women, and it was also the first time that a woman presided over the Group, in a demonstration of how seriously we take the issue of gender in the field of disarmament and arms control. We should appreciate it as encouraging progress.

The current Argentine chairship is part of a long tradition that began with Ambassador Rafael Grossi, in 2000, and continued with the three terms of Ambassador Roberto García Moritán until 2009, proof of the responsibility with which I assumed this task and of Argentina’s systematic commitment to the Register.

The Register is a living and dynamic tool that has already undergone nine review cycles. It must be seen as a continuous and cumulative process that does not begin or end with any given Group of Governmental Experts. With that in mind, the Group paid particular attention to its mandate of reviewing the operation and relevance of the instrument. To do that, we adopted a new approach by dividing the work into three levels of analysis — participation, scope and use of the instrument, an issue that was discussed for the first time within the Group of Governmental Experts. We addressed those areas both individually and as interrelated concepts, and they are now reflected in a new structure of reporting that we recommend for ongoing use in the future.

Another feature of the report that I would like to highlight is a principle that should feature in all mechanisms with limited membership, that of

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transparency. We tried to be as descriptive as possible in detailing the role of experts not only to better inform the General Assembly, but also to facilitate the future preparation of experts. The note by the Secretary General introducing the report clearly summarizes the most important achievements of the Group, but I would also like to elaborate on some specific ideas.

With regard to participation, the report emphasizes that it is a shared responsibility. The Register is currently extremely relevant, as it is the only global instrument that contains information on more than 90 per cent of the world's conventional-weapon transfers. However, that information is mostly provided by large exporters, while if the Register is to be a true confidence-building mechanism, it needs the participation of all Member States, from large and small exporters to importing countries, and even countries that do not do transfers. In order to reverse the declining trend in participation, the report contains a series of practical measures aimed both at Member States and the Secretariat to promote registration, including by importing countries, countries that may support General Assembly resolutions on the issue but do not submit reports, and countries that are very active in similar global and regional instruments but do not contribute the same level of activity within the Register.

In order to encourage participation, the implications of the content and scope of the Register were also taken into account. On the one hand, we clarified the Register's current status, which had become somewhat confused following nine review cycles, while on the other hand, when considering new amendments, we assessed to what extent they would make the instrument more relevant or be detrimental to its future universalization. In that regard, I would like to highlight one of the Group's most important achievements, the consolidation of the seven-plus-one formula for small arms and light weapons within the scope of the Register. Without strictly classifying them as a new category, we removed those weapons from being included as additional information and now treat them on a near-equal footing with the seven main categories. The fact that they are not part of a new category ensures flexible implementation, especially for countries that still face challenges in collecting that type of information, while also ensuring that they are not excluded from the Register. The adoption of the seven-plus-one formula ends discussions that spanned almost 19 years and six groups of experts, ensuring that

we have a Register that now covers the entire spectrum of conventional weapons capable of undermining international peace and security.

Finally, the Group came to the conclusion that it could analyse the Register's relevance better if it illustrated its current and potential uses. The analysis was twofold. We assessed the Register both as a confidence-building measure and as a tool for implementing other confidence-building measures. In order to save time, I will touch only on the second of those aspects, by emphasizing the adoption of an illustrative list that reproduces the practical measures adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 2017. The list reveals the potential of the various forums that operate under the rule of consensus and internal dialogue and work to implementing one another's recommendations. I particularly welcome the possibility of uniting the various efforts of the international community in the different forums to which it belongs.

In conclusion, I want to highlight that it makes good sense to conduct a review every three years, which is enough time to review national positions in the light of new technological advances while keeping the Register sufficiently updated so that it can fulfil its objective. Our report reflects innovative solutions that enable the Register to maintain the same energy that it began with in 1991. It acts as a measure of transparency that promotes dialogue and trust and facilitates the early identification of arms accumulation and thereby helps to prevent conflicts while also fostering regional and global security. Today it is important to safeguard those basic transparency mechanisms and give them the attention they deserve. I believe that the adoption of our report and the contribution it enables us to make form part of that commitment and responsibility.

**The Acting Chair:** On behalf of all delegations, I thank Ms. Fogante for her video statement.

We will now hear from the remaining speakers, 35 Member States and one observer, on the rolling list under the cluster "Conventional weapons." Before proceeding, I would like to remind all delegations that we are scheduled to conclude our consideration of the cluster this morning. For that to be possible, it is important that all speakers adhere to the stipulated time limit of three minutes when speaking in their national capacity. The Committee will continue to use the buzzer to remind delegations when the time limit has been reached.

**Mr. Saraiva Câmara (Brazil):** Conventional weapons are a legitimate and essential means for States to ensure their self-defence and national sovereignty. However, uncontrolled flows of those weapons and their ammunition has profoundly destabilizing effects, and their diversion to illicit markets and non-State actors fuels conflict and violent crime worldwide. It is our collective responsibility to confront those challenges, including by implementing the goals set in that regard by the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Disarmament.

Brazil remains committed to the full implementation and strengthening of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. We therefore welcomed the successful conclusion last year of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action and were particularly pleased that its outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) recognizes the importance of efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit flows of ammunition.

Brazil has been at the forefront of efforts in this field, including through pioneering legislation and industry practices on the marking and tracing of ammunition, and we look forward to continuing to exchange experiences and foster international cooperation in that regard. Brazil is therefore encouraged that the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, established by resolution 72/55, is due to be convened in 2020. We thank Germany for conducting an intensive consultation process to prepare for the Group's work. We hope that it will contribute to developing a comprehensive approach to the entire life cycle of ammunition, and especially to the prevention of its diversion for illicit uses, while fully respecting the right of States to acquire and maintain ammunition stocks for their self-defence needs.

Brazil has always been a staunch supporter of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, which we ratified in 1997. The Brazilian armed forces have been engaged in cooperation in mine action for the past two decades, particularly in Central and South America and Africa.

Brazil attaches particular importance to discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems and the associated challenges that they represent to the implementation of international humanitarian law.

Such systems are intrinsically problematic, posing profound ethical, legal and political challenges. Given the exponential technological advances of robotic weapon systems, miniaturization and artificial intelligence, the historic window for adopting an appropriate legal and operational framework to regulate the issue is narrowing very quickly. Although the final report (CCW/GGE.1/2019/CRP.1/Rev.2) of the recently concluded Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons has fallen short of our expectations for a clear mandate for negotiations, Brazil hopes that future discussions on a possible regulatory framework could bring us closer to a substantive consensus in that regard. That includes the establishment of meaningful human control and the improvement of international law, including international humanitarian law, on the issue.

**Mr. Situmorang (Indonesia):** Indonesia associates itself with the statements made earlier by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.15), and Cambodia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/74/PV.14).

Indonesia is concerned about the increasing illicit arms trade, which has grown along with the overall expansion of the global arms trade since the beginning of the new millennium. Illicit weapons falling into the wrong hands eventually contribute, directly or indirectly, to more casualties, acts of violence and terrorism around the world. We must work together to solve the problem and ensure that our scarce resources are better used for global peace and prosperity. In that context, I would like to highlight the following pertinent points.

First, Indonesia underscores the importance of curbing the illicit trade in and unregulated use of small arms and light weapons, which only exacerbate and prolong conflicts around the world. We have to work to regulate small arms and light weapons. We urge major producing States to ensure that small arms and light weapons are transferred only to duly authorized Governments or entities. Indonesia reiterates its call for the balanced, full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument.

Secondly, Indonesia condemns the use of conventional weapons that are inherently capable of inflicting indiscriminate damage. The use of mines has severe humanitarian consequences not only during conflicts but also in post-conflict situations. Indonesia reiterates its condemnation of the use of anti-personnel mines in conflicts, which contravenes international humanitarian law. Indonesia urges the full implementation and universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. Mines have terrorized and killed United Nations peacekeepers as well as innocent people in many regions. Their continued presence can only jeopardize the peacebuilding process. Indonesia therefore continues to promote the demining capabilities of its peacekeeping forces, including through international cooperation. Similarly, cluster munitions have proved to have devastating humanitarian consequences in many parts of the world. Indonesia expresses its solidarity with countries affected by cluster munitions. We stand ready to work with the international community to address that issue.

Thirdly, Indonesia reasserts the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and ammunition for their self-defence and security needs.

In conclusion, Indonesia reiterates the need for multilateral transparency and confidence-building measures in addressing the global control of conventional weapons.

**Mrs. Liolocha** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor, I would like to begin by joining previous speakers in congratulating the Chair on his election to lead the First Committee and wishing him and the Bureau every success in fulfilling their mission.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/74/PV.15).

In my national capacity, I can state here that the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to be concerned about the illicit trade, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread. That state of affairs, which encourages the resurgence of foreign and national armed groups, remains an obstacle

to peace and is a drag on development. These groups have been destabilizing the eastern areas of my country by illegally exploiting the natural resources that supply them with the means to acquire weapons, resulting in millions of deaths and hundreds of thousands injured, with many internally displaced people and refugees and massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as the widespread incidence of rape.

It is against that backdrop that the Democratic Republic of the Congo attaches great importance 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 Tracing Instrument as crucial multilateral instruments aimed at combating the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons and their vast impact, which are a threat to international peace and security. My country supports all regional and subregional instruments designed to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as well as the African Union's initiative Silencing the Guns by 2020.

To that end, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has established a national framework for combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons that oversees the work of collecting, destroying and marking weapons. We have also developed a new national action plan for 2018 to 2022 on the management and control of small arms and light weapons, the result of a series of inclusive workshops supported by the United Nations system, including the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Mine Action Service (UNMAS), among other bodies. The total budget for our updated national plan's implementation amounts to nearly \$58 million, and it deserves the financial and technical support needed to enable my country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

As part of its implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, our national mine action centre has developed a new national strategy for 2018 to 2019, thanks to financial aid from the Government of Japan and technical assistance from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and UNMAS, which will enable the programme to fulfil its implementation obligations under article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has set a deadline of 1 January 2021 by which time it should be free from all anti-personnel mines.



**The Acting Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.30.

**Ms. De Jongh** (Netherlands): In addition to the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.14), the Netherlands would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

This debate is a testament to our joint responsibility for conventional arms control and disarmament. In the light of that responsibility, the Netherlands supports a responsive policy that takes into account technological advances. We therefore welcomed the 2019 report (CCW/GGE.1/2019/3) of the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems and support the continuation of its mandate. While recognizing the potential benefits of increased autonomy in weapon systems, we cannot turn a blind eye to their possible risks. We therefore insist that humans exercise meaningful control and remain responsible at all times. In the same spirit, the Netherlands has been involved in the update of the International Mine Action Standards related to improvised explosive devices. We are also committed to the development of international standards on the transfer and use of armed unmanned aerial vehicles, in response to the increased availability and deployment of such systems.

A responsive policy addresses humanitarian concerns about indiscriminate uses of arms, such as the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. We support efforts to come up with an effective collective response that is first and foremost in full compliance with existing international law. Being responsive also means that we strongly condemn any use of cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines by any actor. As a major donor, we remain committed to mine action worldwide, with a view to achieving a world free of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. A responsive policy does not stand idly by when parties employ methods that breach international law. A responsible arms-control policy should refrain from providing weapons in such circumstances and should also work to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Responsibility also involves accountability. Being accountable to the arms-control community requires transparency regarding our actions and policies. This year the Netherlands is pleased to be sponsoring

draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.30, on “Transparency in armaments”. Transparency is one of the major challenges in arms control. The low reporting rate to the Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is disappointing. Reporting is an essential condition for a substantive debate and as a confidence-building measure. Accountability benefits from the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, while also incorporating the perspectives of civil society and industry. Full accountability requires universal membership for arms-control and disarmament frameworks.

Lastly, a responsible arms-control policy implies commitment. The Netherlands has shown its commitment by, among other things, taking on positions in the machinery of the various conventions, and we have also expressed our interest in chairing the 2021 Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. A number of arms-control arrangements suffer from insufficient financial support, due to unpaid contributions. We urge all parties to pay on time and in full. The full version of this statement will be uploaded to PaperSmart.

**Mr. Iteboje** (Nigeria): Nigeria aligns itself with the statements under this cluster delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/74/PV.15).

A sizeable percentage of the global population, including Nigeria, has experienced the painful consequences of illicit small arms and light weapons in the hands of criminal gangs, terrorists and armed militias. Those weapons continue to undermine otherwise peaceful societies and cause internal displacement, and they are responsible for hundreds of deaths on a daily basis. It was in that regard that my delegation welcomed the successful conclusion in June 2018 of the third Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The unanimous adoption of the outcome document (A/CONF.192/2018/RC.3, annex) is commendable, in view of its efforts to address numerous issues, including highlighting the nexus between the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, the Sustainable Development Goals and the application of the Programme of Action to ammunition.

My delegation is also pleased to inform members that in keeping with our commitment to the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Nigeria's ATT secretariat was inaugurated on 11 May 2018, and Nigeria has fulfilled its financial obligations to date in that regard. In order to mitigate the proliferation of conventional weapons, Nigeria has redoubled its efforts to strengthen its national borders and alliances across the West African subregion and beyond. Our commitment is further demonstrated by our signing and ratification of relevant international, regional and subregional instruments such as the ATT and the Programme of Action, and by our efforts to establish and sustain robust partnerships with the African Union, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and other entities.

In addition, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up a presidential committee on small arms and light weapons in April 2013. The committee has been involved in activities geared towards halting the mass proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It has organized capacity-building programmes for security agencies, carried out a comprehensive national survey on the extent of the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in Nigeria and reviewed our firearms laws, among other things. The committee is currently engaged in civilian disarmament programmes, including the provision of alternative livelihoods in exchange for voluntary arms surrender, and public arms-destruction exercises for weapons recovered from non-State actors.

Nigeria, alongside 18 other African countries and international and civil-society organizations, as well as victims and survivors, met in Maputo in November 2017 and adopted a landmark communiqué on protecting civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Among other things, the communiqué sets out a plan of action to enhance the protection of civilians from harm caused by explosive weapons. While significant gains have been made in combating the menace of conventional weapons, we acknowledge that much more needs to be done in that regard. We call for the required international support and assistance, particularly through the establishment of capacity-building programmes that enable the transfer of the necessary technologies and equipment.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to actively participating in all processes aimed at making our communities peaceful and secure.

**Mr. Ji Zhaoyu (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): The issue of conventional weapons bears on the security and interests of every Member State, because disarmament saves lives. In the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, conventional arms control features prominently within the United Nations framework. China has firmly supported the conventional arms-control process and participates actively in it. We support strengthening the international legal mechanisms for conventional arms control with a balanced approach that addresses the legitimate security needs and humanitarian concerns of every State with a view to maintaining lasting international peace and security for all.

China is actively advancing its process of acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and has initiated the relevant domestic legal procedures in a positive step towards building a community with a shared future in the field of international security, underpinning China's strong support for multilateralism. We stand ready to enhance cooperation with all States parties and address the humanitarian concerns arising from the illicit trafficking of conventional weapons. China has consistently voted in favour of the annual resolution on the ATT and this year has become a sponsor of the draft resolution (A/C.1/74/L.25) for the first time.

China values the work of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Over the years we have regularly submitted our annual report and participated actively in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and we appreciated the adoption by consensus of their report (see A/74/211) again this year. China is a sponsor of this year's draft resolution on transparency in armaments (A/C.1/74/L.30) for the first time and has also become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.51, on objective information on military matters, including transparency in military expenditure.

As a High Contracting Party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its five Protocols, China has participated constructively in all its Conferences of States Parties and will continue to make constructive contributions. China supports the ongoing in-depth discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems within the framework of the CCW aimed at exploring effective ways to address that problem. China supports the consideration and formulation of reasonable and feasible solutions to address the abuse of improvised explosive devices

(IEDs) by non-State actors within the framework of the CCW. As co-Chairs of the Improvised Explosive Devices Disposal Standards Working Group, China and Belgium have worked out IED disposal standards that we hope can provide experience and expertise to the affected countries.

China has provided demining assistance amounting to ¥100 million to more than 40 countries through donations, equipment assistance, training programmes and field instructions, including training more than 800 professional demining technicians. China stands ready to continue its international demining cooperation within its capabilities to assist the countries affected in clearing mines and rebuilding homes as soon as possible. The full version of my statement will be posted on the PaperSmart portal.

**Ms. Haile** (Eritrea): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on this important issue (A/74/187).

Eritrea fully aligns itself with the statements made under this agenda item by the representatives of Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.15), and we would also like to briefly stress the following.

Eritrea strongly believes that this agenda item remains an important aspect of disarmament aimed at addressing countries' concerns about international peace and security. It is an open secret that conventional weapons continue to claim more lives and do more to destroy socioeconomic progress than any other type of weapon. To make matters worse, the increasing availability of small arms and light weapons outside State institutions is causing death and misery in many developed and developing countries around the globe. The strategic political, commercial and security interests of States and the failure to strictly implement existing international and regional treaty commitments and obligations have rendered the challenge that we are facing complex and transnational in nature. Obviously, the negative effects of the possession by non-State actors of these weapons are not limited to a specific country or region and demand regional and international solutions. Eritrea is cognizant of the need for an effective international instrument to deal with the issue of the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. Eritrea remains committed to full support for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and

Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument as vital tools that contribute to the eradication of the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons as well as promoting security and sustainable development.

Our region, the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea, is not immune to that challenge, as it continues to suffer the consequences of destructive conventional weapons. The unauthorized use of such weapons by non-State actors and the number of weapons diverted through illicit trade are fuelling instability, transnational crime and terrorism at an alarming level. The regional tensions that have ensued in the past two decades has rendered regional cooperation in combating the illicit trade and use of small arms and light weapons difficult. We are confident that the profound positive developments the region has witnessed since last year will be an important impetus for stronger regional coordination in tackling the illicit transfer of arms and light weapons and collectively addressing its ramifications. Eritrea is always ready to continue to work with regional and international communities to control and put an end to the illegal trade and transfer of those weapons.

**Ms. Bonkougou** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/74/PV.15), and I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The proliferation, circulation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons continue to be a threat to peace and security in various parts of the world, including Africa, which is where the African Union adopted the Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020.

My country, Burkina Faso, which has been experiencing an unprecedented security crisis for many years marked by many casualties, is itself a victim of the circulation of those weapons in the Sahel region. That is why we welcomed the holding in Geneva in August of the fifth Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Arms Trade (ATT), and we call for the Treaty's full implementation through mechanisms of transparency, cooperation and universalization. Since the entry into force of the ATT, Burkina Faso has redoubled its efforts to implement it, which has enabled

us to raise awareness and train many stakeholders on the issue of arms transfers and management. In that regard, on 30 April our Parliament enacted a law on the implementation of the Treaty that complements the Economic Community of West African (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. Besides that, from 23 to 25 July we held a national validation workshop on a bill on the firearms regime in Burkina Faso and the decree to implement it. Those efforts included all of Burkina Faso's main actors in the area of arms, and the results were transmitted to the Government for consideration before the bill comes before Parliament for adoption, which is planned to take place before the end of the year.

The delegation of Burkina Faso calls for the customary adoption by consensus of the ECOWAS draft resolution on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them (A/C.1/74/L.27).

Like small arms and light weapons, anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions lead to the loss of many human lives or permanent disabilities. In that regard, we call for the universalization of the Oslo and Ottawa Conventions and their full and complete implementation. As for improvised explosive devices, they have caused extensive damage in various countries, including my own. In the past few years Burkina Faso has had terrible problems with the use of improvised explosive devices, which have become the preferred modus operandi of the armed terrorist groups operating on our territory. The groups target our defence and security forces in particular, which has resulted in many victims, including among the civilian population.

The full version of my statement is available on PaperSmart.

**Mr. Lam Padilla** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Small arms and light weapons and their proliferation and illicit trafficking harm and kill many people all over the world, while fuelling conflict and exacerbating violence. The production of such weapons and ammunition has not diminished, and their diversion to the illicit market remains a problem. In addition, the diversion of arms contributes to the presence of drug trafficking and organized crime, thereby undermining the protection of people and hindering the creation of an environment conducive to sustainable human and economic development.

In that light, Guatemala is of the view that the Arms Trade Treaty is a milestone in the regulation of the international trade in conventional weapons. Our countries celebrated its adoption five years ago, believing that it would have a significant impact on the security of our citizens. Let us not forget that the Treaty's central objective is to save human lives by regulating weapons effectively and preventing their diversion. We reiterate our belief that the Treaty's success depends on ensuring that States, including producing, exporting and importing States, effectively implement each and every one of its provisions in good faith. We stress that trying to impose additional measures on States that are behind on their financial obligations is not helpful. We should not forget that the obligations of States parties to the Treaty go beyond financial contributions.

With regard to the results achieved at the third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, Guatemala again welcomes its inclusion of references to a gender perspective, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and especially to the issue of ammunition, on which we will continue to work actively at the forthcoming meetings of the Programme of Action, including the seventh Biennial Meeting, to be held in June 2020.

We would like to remind the Committee that the fourth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty will be held in November, and we call on all non-signatory States to sign and ratify it. The dangers and humanitarian consequences of those weapons are evidenced today by all the mines that have been forgotten and pose a risk to innocent civilians. Guatemala also firmly condemns the use of cluster munitions, by any actor and under any circumstances, as they represent a violation of the principles enshrined in international law and international humanitarian law. My country is very proud that Central America has been declared the first cluster-munition-free zone, something that should be the case in every region of the world.

In addition, I would like to express our concern about the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas. As recent events have shown, their consequences are devastating and their shameful effects often indiscriminate. In that connection, my delegation associates itself with the statement made by



the representative of Ireland on behalf of a number of countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.15). Guatemala condemns the use of any weapon with indiscriminate effects as a violation of international humanitarian law. The full version of my statement will be available on the PaperSmart portal.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I associate myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.15).

One of the major challenges with respect to conventional weapons is their overproduction, growing international transfer and excessive accumulation in certain regions. The transfer of major conventional arms has grown steadily since 2003, a year marked by the invasion of Iraq, which resulted in a cycle of instability and the growth of extremism in the Middle East. That is a very alarming trend for the Middle East, where the security situation is very complex, and it has increased the potential for conflict in the region. The flow of arms to the Middle East increased by 87 per cent between 2009 and 2018. During that time around 35 per cent of global arms imports went to countries in the Middle East and more than half of United States arms exports also went to the Middle East. United States arms exports to the region increased by 134 per cent between 2009 and 2018, in a demonstration of the irresponsibility of United States arms exporting to the region.

A few Western countries are the main exporters of arms to the Middle East. All of them have taken advantage of the security environment there and have increased their exports to the region. For instance, a certain European country's arms exports to the region rose by 261 per cent between 2009 and 2018. That is a violation of these countries' international commitments under the Arms Trade Treaty and of the European Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. Those exports end up mainly in the hands of countries involved in occupation, aggression and military conflict.

With regard to the major arms importers in the Middle East, it is a fact that three of the world's top 10 importers in the world are Israel and two other Middle Eastern countries. One country in the region is the main recipient of United States arms in the Middle East and has received 33 per cent of arms transfers to the region in the past five years. The same country's defence spending is the third largest in the world today. In the

past five years, we have witnessed how weapons made in the West have been used to kill hundreds of thousands of civilians in Yemen. Those destabilizing transfers of arms must cease. In addition to its possession of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, the Israeli regime's large arsenal of sophisticated conventional offensive weapons continues to threaten peace and security in the region. Those are the weapons that the Israeli regime uses systematically and on a vast scale to kill civilians, commit genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, violate basic norms, rules, regulations and the principles of international humanitarian law and breach the principles of morality and humanity. Invading all its neighbours and even countries beyond the region, waging more than 15 wars and repeatedly committing all the core international crimes are only a small portion of its vandalism in the region. The excessive military and political support that is provided by an extraregional Power encourages its allies in the Middle East to behave recklessly, as Israel is doing by expanding its occupation and illegal settlements and as other aggressors are doing through their military aggression in Yemen.

The Acting Chair: I would remind delegations to do their best to keep their statements within the allotted three minutes. We encourage them to upload their full statements to the PaperSmart portal.

**Ms. Higgie** (New Zealand): New Zealand's fervent support for multilateralism and international institutions, and our respect for international law, is reflected in our commitment to international humanitarian law. Our desire to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and to advance the protections it affords has led us to play our part in recent years in developing a number of important conventional-weapon treaties, including the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. Those three treaties all hold the promise of greater protection for civilians, including in conflict areas, and we continue to work diligently for their universalization and implementation.

The ATT has been a particular focus for New Zealand. Alongside Australia, we have hosted several workshops to support its universalization in the Pacific. We have produced model implementing legislation. Very recently we assumed the responsibilities of Chair of the Treaty's Voluntary Trust Fund, and we held a workshop yesterday, together with the ATT secretariat,

on the process for applying for funding for projects that advance the Treaty's implementation. New Zealand also remains committed to universalizing the Convention on Cluster Munitions. As a member of its Coordination Committee, we were pleased to host a regional workshop in Manila this year, and last week we co-hosted a side event here with Iraq that focused on the future of the Convention as it marks the tenth anniversary of its adoption.

Alongside those existing instruments, we are also focused on ensuring that we respond to new and compelling issues. For instance, we have been actively engaged with our partners in the core group of countries on the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas, and we participated in the Vienna Conference on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare at the start of this month. We welcome the fact that an overwhelming majority of States there were supportive of the negotiation of a political declaration in order to spotlight the need for full compliance with international humanitarian law in situations in which those weapons are used, among other things.

Beyond New Zealand's advocacy for those important instruments on the global stage, we are also focused on ensuring that our national frameworks on conventional weapons are robust and responsive. Our Parliament is currently considering new firearms legislation, which will improve our ability to monitor firearms lawfully entering and exiting New Zealand and enhance our ability to combat transnational organized crime. It will also enable New Zealand to accede to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. The new draft legislation goes further than the urgent changes made to New Zealand's Arms Act in April, which prohibited military-style semiautomatic weapons, including those of the type used in the horrific terrorist attack on the Muslim community in Christchurch on 15 March.

In conclusion, New Zealand looks forward to continuing working together with all its partners on advancing those and other conventional-weapon issues.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia advocates for the further strengthening of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) regime, first and foremost through the universalization of the Convention and its Protocols, as well as the implementation of their provisions in

good faith. We urge for an extremely cautious approach to introducing new topics, while taking into account the need to maintain a balance between humanitarian concerns and the defence interests of States. However, the humanitarian aspects should not be elevated to the level of an absolute imperative in order to justify the introduction of restrictions or bans on specific types of weapons. In that regard, we remain sceptical about the prospects for the speedy formulation, let alone adoption, of decisions on lethal autonomous weapon systems. Our rationale is simple, which is the lack of working models of such systems. That makes it objectively impossible to arrive at an agreed understanding of the basic characteristics of and conceptual apparatus of lethal autonomous weapon systems. Nor should we ignore the significant divergence in the positions of the participants in the discussion. Despite that, we have demonstrated a constructive attitude and support continued discussion of the subject within the framework of the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Another priority is the issue of explosive weapons in densely populated areas. The voices in support of requiring some kind of regulatory measures grow ever louder. Its proponents are trying to create the impression that it is a hugely urgent problem that requires an immediate solution, an approach that involves a number of major flaws. First of all, historically, explosive weapons in populated areas are not a recent phenomenon but have been used for centuries. One need only look at the experience of the Second World War. Secondly, appropriate conclusions have been drawn from the bitter experience of that war. For example, Additional Protocol I of 1977 to the 1949 Geneva Conventions obliges States conducting military operations to be guided by the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautionary measures in order to limit potential civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure. The crux of the issue is therefore not the adoption of a new regulatory framework but the strict implementation of the existing norms and principles under international humanitarian law. Incidentally, that point was made by many of the participants in the informal consultations in Geneva.

In conclusion, I would like to say a few words about the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We believe that genuine improvements could have been made by strengthening arms-export controls at the national

level. Subsequent events have confirmed the accuracy of our initial assessment with regard to the ATT's lack of effectiveness. While the flow of weapons into conflict zones may not have increased since its entry into force, it has certainly not diminished. Of course, we also cannot ignore the de facto withdrawal from the Treaty of the United States, the world's largest arms exporter.

**The Acting Chair:** I thank all delegations for their efforts to keep within the agreed time limits.

**Mr. Izquierdo Ortiz de Zárate (Spain)** (*spoke in Spanish*): I align myself with the statements by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.14) and by the representative of Ireland on behalf of a group of countries (see A/74/C.1/PV.15). The full version of this statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Conventional weapons continue to be the main means of aggression in armed conflicts and in the areas of terrorism and organized crime. Their illicit proliferation and trafficking contribute to instability, adversely affect the economic development of the communities involved and lead to enormous suffering within the civilian population.

The Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament is a perfect example of the major importance that he attaches to disarmament, and we reaffirm our commitment to it. We are aware of the relationship between non-proliferation, disarmament and the Sustainable Development Goals, and we share the belief in a cross-cutting approach to addressing those issues. The section dedicated to disarmament that saves lives is a great opportunity to share and explore concrete measures in depth.

A great deal of progress has been made in the area of disarmament of certain conventional weapons that cause indiscriminate suffering — anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war — although problems and challenges remain that do not permit us to be complacent. The fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban will be held this year. The challenges that remain include the increasing use of improvised anti-personnel mines by non-State actors, the pace of compliance with decontamination and clearance obligations and the slowdown in the number of countries acceding to the Convention. Spain reiterates its commitment to the Convention and its universalization and supports the recently adopted new

Action Plan. With regard to the serious indiscriminate effects of these weapons on civilian populations, Spain supports continuing to hold public debates on how to apply international humanitarian law more robustly with regard to the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas in order to fully safeguard civilian populations.

Small arms and light weapons and their ammunition are one of our priorities, as they result in the greatest number of casualties in wars today, with indiscriminate effects on civilian populations, and they are a major factor in the issues of terrorism and organized crime, with an enormous impact in terms of the destabilization of States. The seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in June 2020, represents a major opportunity that we must take advantage of to advance and deepen the goals of the Programme of Action.

More than 100 countries have now ratified the Arms Trade Treaty, which represents success, considering the fact that the Treaty entered into force only recently. Spain also welcomes the fact that the Treaty is the first in this area to include in its provisions a gender perspective related to armed violence against women and its impact on risk analyses of arms-transfer operations. The most recent Conference of States Parties to the Treaty, which was held in Buenos Aires and prioritized that issue for discussion, is an excellent demonstration of progress in the area. We must work for the universalization of the Treaty so that it can make a decisive contribution to preventing the illicit diversion and trafficking of conventional weapons through commitments to common standards for their international transfer.

**Mr. Yakut (Turkey):** The threat posed by the proliferation of illicit conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, is no less important than that of weapons of mass destruction. Besides causing millions of deaths worldwide, the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons and their ammunition also endangers socioeconomic development in many countries. Moreover, there is a clear and well documented relationship between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and terrorism and organized crime. For that reason, Turkey strongly supports cooperation in all international forums to

combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has been a useful platform for tackling the issue. Turkey strongly supports the full and comprehensive implementation of the Programme of Action at all levels. We welcome the outcome achieved at the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action under the presidency of France (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex), and we look forward to a successful Biennial Meeting of States Parties next year. In that regard we would like to congratulate Ambassador Lazarus Amayo of Kenya, who has been endorsed as Chair-designate of the seventh Biennial Meeting, and to assure him our full support and cooperation.

Turkey is fully committed to further strengthening the International Tracing Instrument. We hope that next year the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus will make progress in addressing the current issues in this field. Turkey is a member of all four export-control regimes and diligently implements a robust export-control mechanism.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is the cornerstone of international efforts to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. As a party to and strong supporter of the Convention, Turkey takes its commitments under the Convention very seriously and is determined to fulfil all of them. At the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Ottawa Treaty, we will be working for a strong outcome for the fourth Review Conference, which will take place in Oslo in November.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is an indispensable part of international law on conventional weapons with indiscriminate effects. Turkey has been fully implementing the Convention and its annexed Protocols, to which it is party, and encourages adherence to this fundamental international regime. Issues such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and lethal autonomous weapons systems are important. Turkey is concerned about the increasing impact of IED attacks worldwide, particularly in the context of the perpetration of terrorist acts. We believe that the United Nations has an important role to play in dealing with IED threats.

**Ms. Gornas** (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/C.1/74/PV.14), Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/74/PV.15).

The Sudan, like many other countries, suffers from the effects of the illegal trade and trafficking in conventional weapons, which have increased armed conflicts around the world and have led to the death of thousands of people. As the Committee is aware, the smuggling and trafficking of these types of weapon have often been linked to economic problems that are exacerbated by natural phenomena such as climate change, drought and desertification, as well as severe competition over water resources, grazing grounds and other issues.

The Sudan has worked very hard to reduce the illicit proliferation of these weapons, first by instituting border-control initiatives with its neighbours in order to prevent smuggling, making a direct contribution to the work of monitoring and reducing trafficking in persons and drugs through the formation, hosting and oversight of a subregional mechanism to control arms smuggling with countries to the west of the Sudan. This initiative has been effective at the national, regional and international levels, and its positive effects are demonstrated by the sheer numbers of seizures of various smuggled weapons. The Sudan has also established a rapid deployment force to control trafficking in weapons and persons across its borders. Secondly, we support the ongoing efforts by African organizations active in this area to control the smuggling of conventional weapons in the States of the Sahel and Sahara. Thirdly, we have launched a national campaign to collect weapons owned by civilians, with more than half a million such weapons collected so far. This contributes to security and stability at the national and regional levels, as well as curbing the activities of criminal gangs in trafficking and smuggling drugs.

It has become clear to us all that concerted regional and international efforts have a major impact on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We would like to take this opportunity to call on the international community to sponsor and support such national and regional initiatives with a view to eradicating this



problem, which has resulted in so many deaths and hindered so much development in countries all over the world.

**Ms. Raharimboahangy** (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): Madagascar aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/C.1/74/PV.15). I would now like to make some brief remarks in my national capacity.

Madagascar wants to see the issue of security front and centre as a guarantee of the achievement of the Madagascar emergence initiative under the leadership of our new President, His Excellency Mr. Andry Rajoelina. I am pleased to be able to describe the positive advances my country has made thanks to cooperation with its partners. Madagascar welcomes the financial and technical assistance it has received this year, which was made possible under the Arms Trade Treaty and has enabled us to make considerable progress in monitoring and managing the circulation of weapons in our country, for example by switching from mechanical to laser marking of weapons. Madagascar also welcomes the transfer of technology and expertise we have received from international military industries. We have recently seen significant developments in the strengthening of local security capacities in areas as diverse as physical security, the management of weapons and ammunition stockpiles and their tagging and database management, as well as legal standards.

We should not omit to thank the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as our bilateral partners and civil society. We encourage the promotion of the principle of joint responsibility in support of our shared struggle to ensure security at various levels, because on their own, without that common impulse, countries like Madagascar cannot face today's threats, which are increasingly cross-border and multifaceted and have multiple causes. Madagascar would also like to take this opportunity to once again urge stakeholders to restrict and eliminate financing for prohibited weapons, thereby enabling the relevant treaties to fully realize their intrinsic value by achieving the vision for which they were established.

**Ms. Dominique** (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Against the backdrop of this debate, my delegation

will focus on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their subsequent proliferation are major factors in the destabilization of States. Considering how many lives they destroy, these weapons deserve to be renamed weapons of mass destruction, particularly in developing countries. The porous nature of borders, illicit financial flows, transnational crime, terrorism, poaching, the growing numbers of rebel movements, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, especially by armed groups, and the globalization of trade have added a new dimension to the traffic in small arms and their munitions that is severely undermining peace.

My delegation welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 2 April 2013 and the Treaty's entry into force on 24 December 2014. The ATT is the first international legally binding text that establishes common standards for regulating the international trade in conventional weapons, munitions and their parts and components. Cameroon attaches particular importance to the issue of small arms and light weapons and consequently enacted a law on 14 December 2016 that provides a general framework for arms and ammunition control in Cameroon. In a proactive approach, our legislature initiated a clear distribution of remits among the various authorities entrusted with the regulation of these issues. In order to ensure the successful implementation of the ATT — which we have ratified, depositing our instrument of ratification on 18 June 2018 — our authorities requested and have benefited from a disbursement from the Voluntary Trust Fund granted by the ATT secretariat, which the Government of Cameroon would like to thank for its invaluable support.

My country is planning to establish a national commission on small arms and light weapons very soon, in accordance with the requirements of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and articles 27 and 28 of the ATT. Cameroon also calls for strengthening international, regional and subregional cooperation in order to improve synergies in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe that the fight against the trafficking and proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a battle that must be won for the sake of our collective security. We urge the

international community to take appropriate measures that will improve the coordination of efforts aimed at strengthening the various means available to States so as to combat this scourge more effectively.

**Ms. Wood** (Australia): Australia is a steadfast contributor to efforts to safeguard international security through the United Nations and beyond. Effective arms-control arrangements are at their very core. That is why Australia is a party to all major arms-control treaties, including those prohibiting inhumane conventional weapons, and is committed to realizing the vision they set out. Australia was a leader in the drive towards the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We maintain that a widely endorsed and implemented ATT has the potential to evolve into one of our most important normative initiatives in support of global efforts to prevent the illicit trade in conventional arms.

Importantly, the effective implementation of the ATT supports our commitment to the women and peace and security agenda. Australia is also a strong supporter of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We make good on that commitment by contributing to initiatives that include the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund and the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation. Australia also prioritizes mine action and supports international agencies working globally across all areas of mine action, including in mine clearance, standards maintenance, risk education and victim assistance.

Australia is actively participating in Geneva in the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We consider the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons the most appropriate forum for taking forward discussions on this issue. The Geneva Conventions remain as relevant today as they were at the time of their adoption 70 years ago. Contemporary conflicts pose new challenges, but this anniversary is a timely reminder of the fact that we must urge all parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. We note in particular the requirements of distinction, precautions in attack and proportionality. Compliance with international humanitarian law will go a long way to addressing the concerns raised by the international community about the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Australia recognizes that the accumulation and misuse of conventional weapons violently intersects with gender and disability issues at many levels. That includes conflict and post-conflict situations, criminal activity, interpersonal violence and homicide and sociopolitical violence. We ensure that initiatives are progressed in an age-sensitive, gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive manner in all aspects of our efforts on arms control. Australia looks forward to continuing this important arms-control work in the interests of global security. We will upload the full version of this statement to PaperSmart.

**Ms. Bavdaž Kuret** (Slovenia): I would first like to align myself with the statement by the observer of the European Union. I will add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Slovenia is fully committed to the Ottawa Convention, and we believe that further results can be achieved and progress made towards a mine-free world at the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, to be held in Oslo later this year. Slovenia has also provided voluntary contributions to the Convention's Implementation Support Unit. Mine action is one of Slovenia's foreign-policy priorities, which is why in 1998 my Government set up the International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security (ITF). Over the past 21 years, together with the support of donors, the Fund has managed to clear 155 million square metres of landmines around the world, mainly in the Western Balkans. The Fund has also reached out to half a million children through mine-risk education. It has assisted more than 1,300 mine victims by providing rehabilitation, 1,500 children through medical support and rehabilitation and more than 1,700 people through the provision of psychological support. Capacity-building is one of our other activities, and we have trained 1,400 deminers.

Slovenia's latest programme provided a financial contribution to a project implemented by the ITF in Syria, with the primary objective of assessing the situation and enabling the subsequent elimination of threats posed by landmines and explosive remnants, including improvised explosive devices.

In conclusion, we firmly believe that the dire humanitarian consequences of these indiscriminate weapons can be addressed by universal adherence to the Ottawa Convention.

**Mrs. Hillebrandt** (Bahamas): As this is my first time addressing the Committee, I would like to express my congratulations and support to the Chair of the Committee and the members of the Bureau as they steer the important work of the First Committee. I would also like to take this opportunity to align the Bahamas with the statements delivered under this cluster by the representatives of Guyana, on behalf of the Caribbean Community (see A/C.1/74/PV.14), and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.15).

Like many other States Members of the United Nations within and outside our region, for the Bahamas the realities of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their diversion and use persist as linked challenges that threaten peace, security, development and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. As a small island developing State, geographically located on a strategic route for the trans-shipment of conventional arms and related organized criminal activity, the Bahamas is still having to divert human, technical and financial resources away from critical social and economic development in order to address such issues. These activities fuel violence and frustrate the Government's efforts to reduce poverty, leaving our most vulnerable citizens, especially women and children in vulnerable situations, more exposed to the dangers created by the illicit use of small arms and light weapons. With the unprecedented and disastrous impact of Hurricane Dorian, the Bahamas now needs to funnel resources towards rebuilding more than ever.

Domestically, the Bahamas continues to safeguard its national arms regulations, including several measures to ensure that the limited scope for ownership of small arms and light weapons is effectively implemented, including through background checks, the strict enforcement of arm-type availability and limits on the permitted quantities of guns and ammunition per licence. As a State party to international, regional and bilateral conventional arms treaties, protocols and other formalized agreements, the Bahamas reaffirms its commitment to combating this issue, in the understanding that threats to private and national security also represent threats to sustainable development.

The Bahamas expresses its strong support for the outcomes of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) and the

Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), held last summer. In that regard, the Bahamas particularly welcomes the recognition of the gendered dimension of illicit small arms and light weapons. We look forward to active engagement at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action next year, noting with appreciation the proposed recommendations on the implementation of the Programme of Action, as contained in the Secretary-General's report on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (A/74/187).

At the regional level, the Bahamas continues to engage with CARICOM and other partners to harness synergies within existing mechanisms to strengthen peace and security in the region. A recent example was the regional workshop held in Antigua and Barbuda, supported by the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund, to assist CARICOM States in the implementation of the Treaty.

While the Bahamas continues to fight against illicit small arms and light weapons, more is still required to effectively combat such challenges to ensure a safe and peaceful world. The Bahamas remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting the international community in pursuit of that goal and calls for the same of its counterparts.

**Ms. Martinavičiūtė** (Lithuania): Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Conventional arms control and disarmament regimes are exceptionally significant in the contemporary security environment. We support efforts that promote an integrated approach to tackle the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including gender mainstreaming, which could significantly improve national and regional security and stability.

We emphasize the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in the context of global arms control and call for all countries, especially major arms producers and exporters, to become States parties to the ATT.

Lithuania supports demining efforts and contributes to the European Union Trust Fund for Colombia in the framework of the Global Demining Initiative. We look forward to the fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their

Destruction and to a successful outcome in reviewing progress, reaffirming commitment and improved implementation of obligations under the Convention.

Lithuania supports efforts to universalize and strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and stresses the importance of compliance with all provisions of the CCW and its annexed Protocols. We are convinced that discussions on new technologies and conventional weapons should remain within the CCW framework.

We strongly support an initiative to modernize the Vienna Document 1999 of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, which is important for trust, predictability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. The international arms control obligations stipulated by the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna Document are remaining building blocks of the European security architecture. They should be respected and preserved, although we are concerned about the instances of selective implementation. We call on States parties to fully implement their obligations in that regard.

Unfortunately, the inflow of weaponry to the parts of Ukraine controlled by Russia continues. The militarization of the Crimean peninsula and transfers of weapon systems, including nuclear-capable aircraft and missiles, weapons and ammunition are one of our greatest concerns. The presence of Russian troops and military equipment in Crimea is contrary to the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and undermines the security and stability of neighbouring countries and the region.

We call upon the Russian Federation to implement its international commitments, to halt its support for the illegal armed groups in eastern Ukraine and to stop the inflow of weaponry and equipment into the sovereign territory of Ukraine. The full implementation of the Minsk agreements remains of the utmost importance for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. The ongoing aggression against Ukraine and the situation in occupied Crimea must remain high on the agenda of the international community.

The full version of our statement will be available on the PaperSmart portal.

**Mr. Akiapo** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation supports the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Zambia, respectively,

on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States.

Given the limited time, my statement will focus on small arms and light weapons, whose proliferation is a major concern for all States committed to addressing the challenges of combating terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking and the illicit trade in precious minerals.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons remains a key driver of instability in our countries and beyond in our respective regions and an obstacle to implementing effective strategies to overcome challenges to peace, security and development.

According to estimates of the specialized agencies, the African continent has a total of approximately 100 million such arms, of which 10 million are in the Sahel-Saharan region on account of the porous borders and the rampant insecurity, due in particular to terrorism, as well as inadequate security systems.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition requires a comprehensive response involving multidimensional approaches, particularly at the military, security, regulatory and community levels. In terms of security, Côte d'Ivoire has, among other things, implemented programmes to strengthen the security of weapon and ammunition storage sites, review procedures for stockpile management, set up databases on the acquisition, collection, seizure and destruction of weapons and mark 80 per cent of its security and defence forces.

*Ms. Bonkougou (Burkina Faso), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

At the institutional and regulatory level, after having established its National Commission to Combat the Proliferation and Illicit Circulation of Small Arms in 2009, my country signed and ratified nearly all international and regional instruments in that regard and is fully committed to implementing them.

The community-based approach to control requires mobilizing community leaders, young people and women through their meaningful participation in awareness-raising activities.

The fight against the proliferation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons can be achieved only through coordinated actions conducted at the national, regional and international levels. My delegation



would therefore like to acknowledge the significant contribution of Côte d'Ivoire's bilateral and multilateral development partners, in particular the European Union, Japan and Germany.

My country would also like to welcome yesterday's launching of the Saving Lives Entity initiative in accordance with the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament. The initiative, which takes place in a context of increased terrorist threats, should be viewed as part of a multidimensional approach to international mobilization towards preventing and curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition.

In that regard, my delegation would like to congratulate the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme for their kind assistance to Côte d'Ivoire, as well as Japan and New Zealand, which have committed to financing the fund and calls on other States to follow suit.

**Ms. Abdul Rahman** (Malaysia): Malaysia associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of the Republic of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the representative of Cambodia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A./C.1/74/PV.14), and the representative of Ireland on explosive weapons in populated areas (see A./C.1/74/PV.15).

While we continue to pursue the elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction, we should not lose sight of the devastating consequences caused by the use of conventional weapons. In that regard, Malaysia commends the Secretary-General for having placed particular emphasis on that topic in his Agenda for Disarmament. Malaysia joins members of the international community in calling for further action to mitigate the serious humanitarian impact posed by the use of conventional weapons, especially on civilian lives.

Although Malaysia has yet to become a party to several international instruments on conventional weapons, we remain supportive of those instruments and recognize the need for controls over such weapons, especially in preventing the diversion to illicit markets. To that effect, Malaysia has put in place the necessary domestic legislation, including the Arms Act 1960, the Customs Act 1967 and the Strategic Trade Act 2010.

Malaysia supports the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which, in our view, plays a significant role in preventing the use of conventional arms for purposes contrary to international humanitarian law. At the same time, the ATT also helps to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms. We believe that the ATT will help to strengthen national policies on conventional weapons, while recognizing the legitimate right of States to use such arms judiciously for security, self-defence, research and trade. We are working closely with other ATT States parties and international bodies as part of our effort to strengthen our existing mechanisms so as to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of the Treaty. We are endeavouring to ratify the ATT as soon as possible.

Malaysia believes that the use of explosive weapons in populated areas is an issue that must be given due consideration. We stand ready to support efforts in that regard and look forward to contributing constructively to the formulation of a political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas, as envisaged by the Secretary-General.

The illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world remain a serious concern. In that regard, Malaysia calls for the full, balanced and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to prevent the illicit spread of such weapons. We stand ready to work with all States to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of the use of conventional weapons.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.25.

**Mr. Foradori** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of more than 70 delegations, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "The Arms Trade Treaty". The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/74/L.25. The text of the draft resolution incorporates new language about transparency and the exchange of information in preventing and combating the diversion of conventional arms to the illicit market, which is a priority for the Argentine presidency. Some paragraphs also include language on gender and international humanitarian law, and welcome States that have ratified or agreed to

the Treaty within the past year. Lastly, all State parties are urged to comply with the obligations under the Treaty. Argentina once again expresses its appreciation for the statements of support and urges delegations that have not yet become sponsors of the draft resolution to do so.

I will now speak in my national capacity. Argentina considers the prevention of the illicit trafficking and diversion of arms a priority, and therefore supports the proposed actions in the section on “disarmament that saves lives” in the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament. It is essential to emphasize the importance of the international mechanisms on the subject and of exploring the synergies among the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the International Tracing instrument, the Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty. Argentina supports the Programme of Action and congratulates Kenya on its forthcoming presidency leading the work of the Programme at the next Biennial Meeting in June 2020. As a co-author of the Arms Trade Treaty, Argentina has always considered it a vital instrument and has maintained an active role and a continued commitment to it. In line with that, we will preside over the sixth Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, to be held in Geneva in 2020. It is a fundamental instrument that articulates the issues of production, responsible trade and human rights, three central aspects of the arms trade.

Turning to the issue of anti-personnel mines, the only part of Argentine territory affected by such weapons is the Malvinas Islands. However, Argentina has been prevented from accessing them so as to comply with its obligations under the Ottawa Convention, since that territory, along with South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, has been illegally occupied by the United Kingdom and is the subject of a sovereignty dispute recognized by the United Nations. In March 2019, Argentina asked for a prolongation of its extension under article 5 of the Convention for the period between 1 March 2020 and 1 March 2023. In that context, under the sovereign formula and for solely humanitarian purposes, it has been proposed that we work together with the United Kingdom in order to clear the Malvinas Islands of anti-personnel mines, including unexploded munitions.

Argentina has been a committed participant in the process of establishing the Register of Conventional

Arms, as demonstrated by our chairship of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms established by resolution 71/44, whose report was adopted by consensus in June (see A/74/211).

**Mr. Moraru** (Republic of Moldova): For the sake of brevity, I will read a shortened version of my statement. My delegation associates itself with the comprehensive statement on conventional weapons delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.14). I will therefore simply highlight a few points that are of particular importance for my country.

The Republic of Moldova attaches great importance to conventional arms control and would like to ensure that the existing conventional arms-control regimes and treaties can be effective in confronting threats to international peace and security. It is imperative to reduce the availability of unregulated conventional arms in areas of conflict or potential conflict by ensuring strict transfer controls and the safe destruction of surplus weapons, as well as by helping the Governments concerned to deal with all the aspects of such problems.

The illicit production, illegal transfers and excessive and destabilizing build-up of conventional arms in so-called grey zones, where Governments are not in control of parts of their territory, are matters of deep concern for many States Members of the United Nations. That problem is also characteristic of the eastern part of my country, which is partially controlled by an unconstitutional militarized entity, and in which there are huge quantities of conventional armaments and ammunitions belonging chiefly to the operational group of Russian forces that is permanently stationed there without the consent of the Republic of Moldova. While these conventional arms and munitions are located on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, they are not under its jurisdiction or control. Those specific circumstances have prevented the Republic of Moldova from implementing the provisions of the various multilateral instruments in the area of conventional arms, including transparency provisions, throughout its territory.

The Republic of Moldova has repeatedly apprised the General Assembly and the high contracting parties to the various relevant conventions, particularly those that ban certain categories of conventional weapons, of its concerns in that regard. The situation should

not be allowed to continue indefinitely, and positive action, without political preconditions, should be taken in accordance with existing international legal commitments. In that context, we are encouraged by the Russian Federation's recent statement of its intention to proceed with the destruction and removal of its ammunition and armaments in the Cobasna depot, which contains more than 20,000 metric tons of such armaments. We welcome the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's declaration of its readiness to ensure the transparency of this process and to coordinate the financial and technical assistance offered to that end. The Republic of Moldova believes that all the necessary prerequisites are in place to start the process of removal and destruction without further delay.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.54.

**Mr. Pildegovičs** (Latvia): Latvia aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union and would like to add some remarks in its national capacity.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, combatants accounted for 90 per cent of conflict-related casualties. Today, 90 per cent of casualties in armed conflicts are civilians. Every year, conventional arms kill around 500,000 people, 70,000 of whom die in conflict zones. Those numbers clearly prove that the international community must focus on conventional arms as well as on weapons of mass destruction. In that respect, Latvia has made its own contribution to international processes in the area of conventional arms by presiding over the 2018 meeting of the High Contracting Parties of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the 2019 Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Latvia is pleased with the outcome of the ATT's fifth Conference of States Parties, which resulted in the adoption of a robust plan of action on gender and gender-based violence in the context of the ATT. It can be considered the first intergovernmental agreement aimed at improving the meaningful participation of women in disarmament forums, as well as outlining the practical steps that States parties can take in order to implement the Treaty's provisions related to risk assessment based on gender-based violence criteria. In developing the plan of action, all States parties

engaged with civil-society organizations and industry representatives, which made an invaluable contribution to the debate. Latvia considers the universalization of the Treaty to be key to a world without the violence caused by the illegal circulation of arms. In that respect, we are pleased that the number of States parties to the ATT rose to 104 during the Latvian presidency. We welcome Suriname, Lebanon, Botswana, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Palau, Canada and soon the Maldives as fully-fledged States parties to the ATT. We call on all States that have yet to ratify it to consider doing so as soon as it is feasible. Adherence to the Treaty should be considered a national contribution towards decreasing human suffering around the world, which is one of its main aims.

In conclusion, I want to express our serious concerns about the level of outstanding nationally assessed contributions to virtually all the arms-control treaties. The effectiveness of any treaty depends on the resources available to it to carry out its mandated activities. The non-payment or delay in payment of assessed contributions seriously hampers the normal functioning not only of the various treaty secretariats' daily work but of the treaties themselves. This situation is not acceptable. Latvia calls on all Member States to fulfil their obligations to all the international treaties on conventional arms and to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full.

As the President of the 2018 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, this year Latvia is introducing draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.54, "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 the First Committee. I hope that the draft resolution will enjoy the traditional consensus of the Committee.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mali to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.27 on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States.

**Mr. Diarra** (Mali) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Mali endorses the statements delivered by the representatives of Zambia, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.15).

In my national capacity, I want to emphasize that small arms and light weapons remain a source of grave concern for my country. They are used by terrorist groups and traffickers of all kinds who routinely attack peaceful civilian populations, State officials and national and international defence and security forces. Apart from the heavy price that Mali, the Sahel region and many other parts of the world pay in human lives, these criminal activities are seriously undermining our development efforts.

That is why Mali has taken a very active stand against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We have strengthened our legislative framework governing the possession and use of firearms and have established a permanent secretariat for the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In addition, my country is party to almost all the international instruments regulating the circulation of small arms and light weapons. At the regional level, my country participates in the implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. In that connection, Mali introduces the draft resolution entitled “Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them” (A/C.1/74/L.27) every year on behalf of ECOWAS member States. We hope that the tradition of its adoption by consensus will continue with an increased number of sponsors.

In conclusion, my delegation calls for the responsible implementation of international instruments dedicated to combating the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons. That includes preventing the transfer of such weapons to unauthorized entities and facilitating their rapid and reliable tracing. In addition, we also need measures for assistance and cooperation. Mali expresses its heartfelt thanks to all its partners for their support in the fight against the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons and we commend the remarkable work done by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament, based in Lomé.

Finally, my delegation hopes that the seventh 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 will build on the achievements of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.43.

**Ms. Quintero Correa** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Preventing and combating the diversion and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is a key priority for Colombia. We consider this criminal phenomenon a threat to peace, security, sustainable development and global stability.

The illicit trafficking of firearms is closely linked to other criminal problems such as drug trafficking, terrorism and organized crime, among other crimes perpetrated by illegal armed groups. As these groups increasingly participate in drug trafficking, they also boost their ability to buy weapons and explosives on the international black market. These criminal activities make use of the same transport infrastructure and the same strategic corridors, making it easier for terrorist and petty and organized criminal groups to access firearms cheaply.

As we pointed out in the general debate (see A/74/PV.5), the dimensions of this problem demonstrate how it combines national realities with regional and global elements and channels, which is why Colombia is seeking to articulate international cooperation efforts aimed at controlling and combating not only the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their diversion but also in their ammunition, parts and components.

We underscore the importance of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, a central instrument in the international disarmament and arms-control regime. The Programme of Action is a fundamental tool for promoting transparency, cooperation and responsible action by States. This year, in the spirit of advancing this work, Colombia, together with its co-penholders Japan and South Africa, is introducing draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.43, on “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects”, on behalf of 60 sponsoring countries. The draft resolution seeks to keep the dialogue on the challenges posed by the manufacturing and design processes of this type of weapon and their illicit trafficking firmly on the Committee’s agenda.

We also hope to highlight collective efforts at the international, regional and national levels aimed at strengthening international cooperation and



establishing mechanisms that will enable smooth and ongoing exchanges of information that complement existing systems. The aim is to continue strengthening collective efforts in this area and, as the representative of South Africa mentioned (see A/C.1/74/PV.15), to operationalize the Programme of Action. Colombia thanks the co-penholders, Japan and South Africa, for their hard work. We also appreciated the broad participation in the consultations and thank all delegations that offered their comments and proposals. We thank all sponsors and invite Member States that have not yet become sponsors of the draft resolution to do so. We ask all delegations to support the adoption of this draft resolution by consensus.

Colombia condemns the use of anti-personnel mines, which has resulted in so many victims and caused so much suffering around the world. In Colombia's case, contamination by anti-personnel mines is mainly due to improvised explosive devices triggered by the victims themselves and laid by armed non-State actors seeking to protect their respective zones of influence, which are generally associated with the development of illegal economic activities such as drug trafficking and mining. We believe that the United Nations represents an essential platform for continuing to make progress in the understanding and awareness of this issue, as well as devising concrete, sustainable and verifiable actions for the benefit of its Member States.

Lastly, Colombia supports and endorses the joint statement on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas delivered by the representative of Ireland on behalf of a group of States (see A/C.1/74/PV.15).

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.15).

Notwithstanding the existence of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as various Security Council resolutions aimed at preventing terrorists from having access to weapons and materiel, today one of the most dangerous threats we are facing is the direct transfer of heavy, small and light weapons, munitions and materiel by certain States to terrorist groups blacklisted by the Security Council. This dangerous issue is not limited to the illicit trade in

small arms and light weapons. It can also be seen in the direct transfer of arms from the stockpiles of certain States — or, regrettably, when those and other States buy arms from other Member States that I will not name right now — to terrorist groups, using planes that have diplomatic authorization to enter neighbouring countries, and then being transported across borders to terrorist groups on Syrian territory.

This reality is actually happening to my country Syria. Various States are still spending billions of dollars in order to purchase all kinds of weapons, with the knowledge of many Member States represented in this room, and to transfer them to terrorist groups, including financing and training terrorists in Syria such as members of the Al-Nusra Front and Da'esh. States in the region and beyond continue to sponsor terrorists and provide them with protection and training as well as all kinds of weapons. They have opened their shared borders to terrorists coming from the four corners of the world. They have penetrated my country, Syria, violating its sovereignty, and occupied significant parts of our land, as the Committee knows.

We are compelled to point to the involvement of a number of European States in exporting European terrorism, also known as jihad, to Syria. Those terrorists have been obtaining all kinds of weapons since 2011 while claiming falsely that they support democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law. What is worse is that many of those States have also called for the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty while they are actually destroying entire nations under these deceptive pretexts. As for the Israeli entity, it continues to transfer small arms and light weapons, along with materiel, to the terrorists of Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist groups under the nose of the United Nations peacekeeping force in the area of separation of the occupied Syrian Golan.

The Committee must be aware of the bloody alliances that exist between terrorist groups and some of the Member States of this international Organization, some of whom even enjoy permanent membership of the Security Council. Experience has clearly shown us that this oil slick will spread to the swamps of terrorism and reach everywhere, including to arms-dealing States and sponsors of terrorism, as has been clearly demonstrated in recent years.

**Mr. Fiallo Karolys** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador aligns itself with the statement delivered by the

representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.15).

My country upholds and wholeheartedly supports the goals of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We are a party to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We reiterate our firm commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and promote its universalization. Today we call for an immediate end to the financing of and investment in companies that manufacture cluster munitions. They are particularly cruel weapons with an especially harsh impact on the most vulnerable groups.

My delegation condemns the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and aligns itself with the joint statement delivered in that regard on behalf of a group of countries by the representative of Ireland (see A/C.1/74/PV.15). I also reaffirm Ecuador's commitment to the permanent application of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Ecuador has experience in that area, which is why we decided to plant development projects on our borders rather than mines. We also condemn the growing use and improvement of armed unmanned aerial vehicles and lethal autonomous weapons. We support the work being done within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and believe that regulating only the international trade in such arms is simply not enough.

Ecuador raised some other points relating to conventional weapons during the general debate of this Committee. As they can be consulted on the Committee's discussion portal, I will conclude with a more general reflection. Ecuador is a peaceful country and as such defends all efforts aimed at complete and universal disarmament. We must achieve effective international security that is anchored in full respect for international law, human rights and the Charter of the United Nations, whose seventy-fourth anniversary we celebrated yesterday. Under the Charter, we have committed to saving future generations from the scourge of war and to that end, to practicing tolerance, living in peace as good neighbours and uniting our efforts for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is multilateralism rather than an arms race that can provide us with the only possible means of achieving a democratic, secure and peaceful world order.

**Mr. Rodrigo** (Sri Lanka): At the outset, Sri Lanka would like to join all other delegations in congratulating you, Madam Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We wish you every success in the work ahead.

My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered under this agenda item by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.15).

As a country that experienced nearly 30 years of terrorist conflict, and more recently the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks that occurred earlier this year, we are aware of the devastation and destruction that is caused by small arms and light weapons and the illicit trade in weapons, whereby non-State actors are able to easily acquire illicit access to weapons. Sri Lanka remains committed to the prevention, curbing and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

We are alarmed that global military expenditure is now reportedly exceeding \$1.8 trillion. We would like to stress the importance of reducing that expenditure and emphasize that those resources could have been directed towards economic and social development. That is particularly important in the context of target 4 of Sustainable Development Goal 16, according to which we are committed to reducing illicit arms flows by 2030.

As a demonstration of its commitment to disarmament, Sri Lanka was honoured to preside over the Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in November 2015. While recognizing the positive benefits that may accrue from the dual-use nature of technology and new developments, including 3-D printing, synthetic biology, artificial intelligence and lethal autonomous weapon systems devoid of any human control, commonly known as killer robots, we note that they have created unprecedented risks and challenges for humankind. If not regulated, such developments have the potential to threaten international peace and security. We encourage the States parties to the CCW to intensify and fast-track discussions within Governmental Group of Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems in order to urgently address the issues of the possible development and deployment of such weapon systems. We urgently need to negotiate

a binding legal instrument that among other things provides for regulatory norms with meaningful human control as its central thrust.

Next year will mark one decade since the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) entered into force in August 2010, and we would like to commend the Gambia, the Philippines and the Maldives for their recent accession to it. In September Sri Lanka was privileged to have presided over the Meeting of States Parties to the CCM, and we wish the Swiss presidency every success in the year ahead. We hope that the General Assembly's 2019 resolution 73/54, on the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, will garner more support. We would like to urge all countries to continue working to universalize that Convention and to achieve a future in which those indiscriminate and inhumane weapons are eliminated completely. My delegation looks forward to meaningful and constructive engagement on those issues and others during this session and will continue to work to reinforce and enhance the global agenda for peace and disarmament.

**Mr. Thein** (Myanmar): Myanmar aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.15), and Cambodia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/74/PV.14).

While weapons of mass destruction haunt humankind, the use of conventional weapons all over the world in conflicts and in urban areas continues to cause many deaths. According to the Small Arms Survey, in 2017 there were 589,000 violent deaths from the use of small arms and light weapons, with less than 20 per cent of them the direct result of armed conflicts. We would like to call on States to exchange good practices on preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition, in compliance with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In principle, Myanmar supports the provisions of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. Myanmar has established an inter-agency working group for mine-risk education that conducts awareness-raising programmes on the risk of landmines and provides assistance to victims in collaboration with United

Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations, other non-governmental organizations and civil-society organizations. We are also in the final stage of the process of drafting a national mine action standard for Myanmar aimed at conducting systematic demining in the areas affected. The Myanmar military, together with ethnic armed organizations that are signatories to our nationwide ceasefire agreement, has engaged in humanitarian demining in Kayin state. More than 36,000 landmines and explosive remnants of war have been cleared since 2011.

Concerns are growing about new types of weapons such as lethal autonomous weapon systems and their destructive power. Myanmar participated as an observer in the 2019 meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, and we appreciate the hard work in that regard of the Group's members. Worldwide military expenditures are increasing at an alarming rate, with total military expenditures reaching \$1.782 trillion in 2018, according to data from the World Bank. Myanmar believes that the Sustainable Development Goals can be better achieved by reducing expenditures on armaments and channelling the necessary support and funds to disarmament and development efforts. Myanmar fully shares the view of the Secretary-General that disarmament saves lives and is a major pillar in the context of conventional weapons. I would like to affirm that Myanmar will continue to work with the United Nations and relevant stakeholders under the existing frameworks and programmes in order to pursue every avenue to eradicate the threat of conventional weapons and their proliferation.

In conclusion, it is disappointing that Bangladesh is exploiting the First Committee to pursue its own narrow political agenda regarding Myanmar, making unfounded allegations and wasting this forum's precious time. We therefore do not intend to exercise our right of reply in responding to its unsubstantiated accusations. The full version of my statement will be available on PaperSmart.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

**Archbishop Auza** (Holy See): The Holy See regards the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its accompanying International Tracing Instrument as vitally important

tools for the effective promotion of fundamental human rights, international law and international humanitarian law, as well as a crucial component in the promotion of peace and development.

A secure world is essential to development and therefore to the fight against extreme poverty. There can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development. In that regard, my delegation believes it is important not to undervalue the role of quality education. We have to respond to the challenge we are seeing when so many young people are falling prey to recruitment into armed groups. Dragged into situations of violent conflict not of their choice or making, they find themselves caught up in self-perpetuating cycles of violence that sadly become a way of life. Education is important at all levels of society and for people of all ages in order to dissuade them from using weapons unjustly. Just as we should make every effort to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, we should also strive to counter the demand itself for them. Shamefully, there are those who earn a living and accumulate great wealth by trafficking in these instruments of death, licit or illicit, thereby providing the means for criminals and terrorists to conduct their deadly activities, and even for Governments that want to engage in armed aggression against sovereign States or subvert their internal peace and tranquillity.

Pope Francis has recently pointed to other aspects connected to the circulation of arms, especially when their availability helps to prolong deadly conflicts in the developing world where, he says, “countries continue to be drained of their best natural and human resources for the benefit of a few privileged markets.” Wars, he notes, may directly affect only a few regions of the world, and yet weapons of war are produced and sold in other regions that are then unwilling to take in the refugees created by those conflicts. Those who pay the price are always the little ones, the poor and the most vulnerable, those prevented from sitting at the table and left with the crumbs of the banquet. All the evidence shows that the proliferation of weapons aggravates situations of conflict and results in unimaginable human suffering and material costs, profoundly undermining development, human rights and the search for lasting peace. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons can be fought and won only through international collaboration and the vigorous implementation of all relevant agreements on

the matter. Without such cooperation, especially among weapon-producing States, in controlling and strictly limiting the production and movement of weapons, a world free of wars and violent conflicts will remain an illusion. It is for all those reasons that the Holy See fully supports all efforts in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The full version of this statement can be found on PaperSmart.

**The Acting Chair** (*spoke in French*): We have heard from the last speaker on the cluster “Conventional weapons”.

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

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have tried to refrain from reacting to the accusations repeatedly made in this room about the Russian Federation by the Ukrainian delegation (see A/C.1/74/PV.15) and others. However, the anti-Russian obsession on the part of some of our colleagues, which exceeds any acceptable limits, leaves us with no choice but to exercise our right of reply.

I would like to note that the Russian armed forces will continue to fulfil their role as a factor in the stability and security of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov basins and on the Crimean peninsula. The Russian divisions deployed in that area have a single task, which consists in protecting the area and the citizens of the Russian Federation who live in it. Our military capabilities in those regions are being maintained at a level that is essential to fulfilling that task, which is a legitimate goal for any country. Any speculation regarding a Russian threat to the Sea of Azov and Black Sea regions or any other regions to the south, southwest or west of the borders of the Russian Federation is unfounded and absurd.

I would like to remind the Committee that the restoration of Crimea to the Russian Federation took place peacefully on the basis of a plebiscite in which 90 per cent of the inhabitants of the peninsula supported it. The political background for that historical event was the violent overthrow of the legitimate authorities in Kyiv and the accession to power of a clique of irresponsible politicians who had nothing better to do than to launch an overt campaign of genocide against their own citizens, their own people, living in the



Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Before the referendum, the illegitimate authorities in Kyiv, whose ideology is one of ultra-right nationalism, imposed a choice on the population of Crimea whereby they could either become victims of that unlawful regime or seek protection from Russia. As the experience of Donetsk and Luhansk have shown in the past five years, the Crimeans' decision for unification with the Russian Federation was not only the right choice, it was justified. The Luhansk and Donetsk regions are still dealing with intensive shelling by Ukrainian military divisions to this day. The number of missiles, bombs and bullets fired into the territory of those two regions of Ukraine is already in the millions. The numbers of civilian victims of those attacks are not limited to single digits, dozens or even hundreds but are in their thousands.

When the Ukrainian delegation talks about our alleged military presence in south-eastern Ukraine or illicit shipments of weapons to the region, it is contradicting itself. If our military were present in the region, why would we need to ship illegal weapons there? And if we were illicitly shipping weapons to the region, that would surely indicate that we had no military presence there. I implore our Ukrainian colleagues to once and for all make up their minds about what they are saying, because they are confusing themselves and the international community. I want to affirm once again that there are no Russian military units on Ukrainian territory. There never have been nor will there be in the future. Russia is not sending arms shipments to the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. The only thing that Russia has been doing in the past few years is providing humanitarian shipments that are saving hundreds of thousands of lives among the afflicted people of those regions.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): As I have said in previous meetings, the representatives of the Israeli entity constantly promote falsehoods and twist the facts while evading accountability for the crimes and acts of aggression committed by it. It is universally recognized that many of the world's major dealers in conventional arms, especially illegal arms, are Israeli officers, some of them retired, who work for Israeli arms manufacturers. The Israeli entity has relied on so-called arms diplomacy for decades. Everyone is familiar with the role of Israeli weapons in fuelling various crises, such as the turmoil in the Caucasus, which is on the brink of exploding, in addition to those in all the areas of tension and conflict

in Africa. Israel's internationally acknowledged involvement in the illicit trade in weapons encourages international terrorism and protects drug-trafficking gangs as well as separatist movements all over the world. We all know that the Israeli entity is responsible for introducing terrorism in all its forms to our region, including by bringing in weapons of mass destruction as well as those used in nuclear, chemical, biological, radioactive and traditional terrorism. If it were not for the support of certain influential members of the Security Council, Israel's nuclear, chemical, biological and traditional weapons and programmes would have ended a long time ago.

The Israeli entity provides all kinds of assistance, support, weapons, ammunition, information and intelligence to terrorist organizations in Syria, particularly Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and their affiliated groups. As usual, it thereby violates all Security Council resolutions on countering terrorism. The allegations that the representatives of the Israeli entity make constantly are designed to avoid having to confront reality and the myriad resolutions that have been adopted against it. The Israeli entity violates every international convention related to disarmament, whether of conventional or other weapons, along with every Security Council anti-terrorism resolution, and it has used every form of prohibited weapon against our peoples in the region in its repeated acts of aggression.

**Mrs. Schayek-Soroka** (Israel): I am compelled to take the floor in exercise of our right of reply following the outrageous accusations directed at my country by the representative of the Iranian regime. I will not go deeply into the absurdity of the accusation, as it does not warrant serious consideration. I would like to remind the Committee that Iran is the world's main terrorism-sponsoring State and the world's biggest proliferator of small arms and light weapons, as well as heavy weapons, rockets, missiles and other related technologies. Its armed forces and proxies do everything they can to train, finance and execute acts of terror all over the world, mainly in the Middle East, with a view to promoting its hegemonic aspirations and radical agenda.

**Mr. Liddle** (United Kingdom): I will resist the temptation to comment on the first two statements made just now but will exercise my right of reply in response to the statement by Argentina. The United Kingdom has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and

the surrounding maritime areas of both territories or about the principle of self-determination and the right of the Falkland Islanders to it, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in article 1 of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, by virtue of which they may freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. The United Kingdom's relationship with the Falkland Islands and all of our overseas territories is a modern one, based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each territory to determine their own future.

**Mr. Bravaco** (United States of America): I would like to invoke my delegation's right of reply to the outrageous statements by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran about my country and our ally, Israel. We categorically condemn those remarks.

The transfer policy on conventional arms of the President of the United States, which was released in April 2018, aligns United States policy on conventional arms transfers with our national and economic security. When the United States evaluates each potential sale or export, it weighs various important factors, including the transfer's suitability in responding to the legitimate security needs of the United States and the recipient country, the effect on the United States' technological advantage and the degree to which it supports the United States' strategic foreign policy and defence interests, as well as non-proliferation and human rights. Every delivery of United States defence articles or services sends a message to our friends and foes. It is an act of support for and trust in our partners and allies. It provides them with the capacity to defend themselves and to support security and stability in their region.

Speaking of stability in the Middle East, the dominant challenge facing that region is Iran's destabilizing and malign behaviour, and we have heard some malign words spoken by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran this morning that match that malign behaviour. It is all part of a pattern. Iran's ballistic-missile programme, as well as its continuing support of terrorist groups and its nuclear threats and provocations, is a threat to regional stability.

Iran is stoking conflicts across the region and bankrolling terrorist groups such as Hizbullah. It is blatantly threatening freedom of navigation in the Straits of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman and Bab Al-Mandab.

We remain committed to countering Iran's support for terrorist activities that destabilize the Middle East, its ballistic-missile programme and human rights abuses. The maximum-pressure campaign is designed to press Iran to change its behaviour, cease its malign regional actions and return to the negotiating table and do the right thing, for the first time in 40 years.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to exercise my right of reply in connection with the absurd statement made by the representative of Israel. These completely false and baseless allegations are made by an illegitimate player in the Middle East against Iran, and we do not dignify them but reject them totally.

Israel is a serial violator of international law, and during its illegitimate existence it has shown no respect for international law. The tragedies and atrocities committed by Israel in Palestine are only one example. According to the reports of the relevant international organizations, more than 70 years after Israel occupied Palestine it controls that area through repression, institutionalized discrimination and systematic abuse of the Palestinian population's rights.

At least five categories of major violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law characterize the occupation: unlawful killings; forced displacement; abusive detention; the closure of the Gaza Strip and other unjustified restrictions on movement; and the development of settlements, along with the accompanying discriminatory policies, which disadvantage Palestinians.

Many of Israel's abusive practices are carried out in the name of security, either in Palestine or against its neighbouring countries and the region as a whole, but the fact remains that it is the main cause of insecurity and instability in the region. The main cause of instability in the region is the aggressive policies of Israel. Its policy of a qualitative military edge has led the regime to make many attempts to equip its ruthless army and security forces with state-of-the-art weaponry.

Besides its access to weapons of mass destruction, it has been trying to develop a tremendous capacity of different types of conventional weapons so as to maintain its superiority and domination over its neighbours. The Israeli army brags about having a cutting-edge military machine, because it is equipped with extremely lethal cyberwar capacity, eyes-on-the-world intelligence, a Star Wars-level missile-defence system, an air force and

a trained cadre of special-forces troops. To realize that policy, Israel relies on either military imports, mainly from the United States of America, which is illegal, or its internal capacity to produce that kind of weapons. Israel is using its military products not only to suppress the defenceless people of Palestine and in an act of war against its neighbours, but is also supplying them to terrorist groups irresponsibly. That is a major severe cause of insecurity in the Middle East.

Regarding the baseless accusations made by the representative of the United States of America, I should like to emphasize that what we said is reality and fact, and denial by the United States of America will not change that reality. The United States support and Israeli actions in the Middle East are the main causes of insecurity there, and the United States of America is equipped not only with weapons of mass destruction but also with weapons of mass deception.

Lying is in the DNA of the United States representatives, and that is why they are making baseless accusations against Iran. We condemn them and know that they have been involved in many terrorist attacks throughout the world. They support terrorist groups throughout the world and their dictator allies in the region. The United States of America is an extraterritorial player in our region and has no right to be present there.

**Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will speak in exercise of the right to reply in response to the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom at the meeting held on 23 October (see A/C.1/74/PV.14) and in his statement in right of reply this morning on the issue of the Malvinas Islands.

The Argentine delegation reiterates fully the content of the statement made by the country's President before the General Assembly (see A/74/PV.4) and that delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Religious Worship of my country before the Special Political and Decolonization Committee this year.

The Government of Argentina recalls that the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas are an integral part of the national territory of Argentina and that they are illegally occupied by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. They are the subject of a sovereignty dispute between both countries, which is recognized by various international organizations.

The illegal occupation by the United Kingdom led the General Assembly to adopt resolution 20/65 (XX) and subsequent resolutions, which recognize the existence of a sovereignty dispute pertaining to the Malvinas Islands, urging the Governments of the Republic of Argentina and of the United Kingdom to resume negotiations in order to find, as swiftly as possible, a peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute.

For its part, the Special Committee has repeatedly made similar statements, most recently in its draft resolution adopted on 25 June. The General Assembly of the Organization of American States likewise adopted on 28 June a new statement on the issues, using similar terminology.

Argentina reiterates that the principle of the self-determination of peoples, on which the United Kingdom bases its refusal to resume sovereignty negotiations, is not applicable to the current dispute between the two countries on sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, in line with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee.

Argentina recalls that the interests of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands and their way of life are duly taken into account in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and in the Constitution of the Argentine Republic. The Argentine Republic reiterates its legitimate sovereignty rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and the Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which are an integral part of Argentine territory.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish to respond to the statement made by our colleague from Moldova.

Once again, we are seeing some sleight of hand in terms of certain facts and silence on other facts that are key to understanding the actual situation. The limited military contingent of the Russian Federation is located in the Transnistria area on the basis of an international mandate, which was obtained by the Russian Federation following the bloody conflict in Moldova in the early 1990s. Putting an end to that conflict was made possible only through the intervention of the Russian military. The limited Russian contingent is a factor of stability and is consistent with the consistent statements, including official statements, made on the need for a military solution to the Transnistria issue.

As regards the Colbasna munitions depot facility, the Moldovan authorities are themselves preventing that issue from being resolved by introducing sanctions against Transnistria. By applying sanctions, they are significantly limiting Transnistria's productive, technological and economic ability to resolve this protracted problem. The Russian Federation has been in constant contact with the Transnistria and Chisinau authorities about the issue, and we are ready to cooperate with them in order to resolve it. The Permanent Representative of Moldova has probably forgotten that owing to a decision of the Kyiv and Chisinau authorities, Transnistria was completely isolated until very recently, so there was no possibility of resolving the issue of the Colbasna facility by removing those munitions from Transnistria, especially given the situation that we have been witnessing in Ukraine for the past five years.

**Mr. Bravaco** (United States): I want to once again respond briefly to the statement by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. If Iran wanted to demonstrate that it can play a constructive role in its region, it could simply start by ending its support for terrorists and militant groups in the Middle East. It would be very simple for Iran to reject support for terrorism as a central instrument of its foreign policy, which it has been for 40 years. In all of that time, the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken when it should be giving. It has destroyed when it should have been creating. It has deceived when it should have been telling the truth. For 40 years it has done nothing but torment its neighbours in one way or another, as they would tell us if we asked them privately. Iran is an Islamic republic, and I must say that my understanding of the world's great religions — and Islam is one of them — is that they are based on love. They are not based on torment, death or terrorism. So I think that the Islamic Republic of Iran should live up to its own credo and stop tormenting its neighbours.

**Mr. Liddle** (United Kingdom): In my first right of reply I spoke about the right of the people of every territory to determine their own future. As it just demonstrated, Argentina continues to deny that this fundamental human right applies to the people of the Falkland Islands. There can be no dialogue on sovereignty unless the Falkland Islanders wish it. The 2013 referendum, in which 99.8 per cent of those who voted wanted to maintain their current status as a territory of the United Kingdom, sent a clear message

that the people of the Islands do not want a dialogue on sovereignty. Argentina should respect those wishes. The Republic of Argentina's claim to the Islands, which it bases on the principle of disruption to its territorial integrity, is without foundation, as the Islands have never legitimately been administered by or formed part of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Argentina.

**Mr. Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran): In response to the absurd statement by the representative of the United States of America, I would once again like to emphasize that our statement simply cited and quoted the United States' own officials, who have repeatedly acknowledged the involvement of the United States in terrorism and in the creation of terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida. If the United States wants to deny that, it must therefore first be consistent in its statements by its officials. The fact is that terrorism has been growing in our region because of United States support. It was the United States that brought instability and insecurity to our region through its frequent interference in the internal affairs of our countries and its aggression and unlawful attacks on Iraq and Afghanistan. United States foreign policy is based on war rather than peace and on interference rather than peaceful relations with other countries, as well as on supporting and engaging in suppression. If the United States wants to be a normal player in our region, it must first respect the aspirations of the nations of the region. It is an extraterritorial player in our region and should not interfere in it. The security of our region should be promoted by the countries of the region rather than by foreign extraterritorial players like the United States, which refuses to respect international law.

**Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am compelled to take the floor again in response to the remarks by the representative of the United Kingdom. Argentina regrets the way that the United Kingdom has erroneously interpreted the events of 1833 in order to justify an illegal occupation that has been the subject of continued and repeated protests by Argentina since its inception. During the era of the colonization of the Americas, the Malvinas Islands were under Spanish domination, and that was recognized at the time by the other colonial Powers, among them the United Kingdom, of course. In 1776, in the framework of the process of the administrative restructuring of its possessions in the Americas, Spain established the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, with its capital in Buenos Aires, placing the Malvinas under the administration of



the Viceroyalty. That relationship was evidenced by the Spanish Government's appointment of several governors for those Islands up until 1811. After that, the Islands became part of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata in the framework of the May revolution led by Buenos Aires. The Malvinas Islands' relationship to Argentina is based on the principle of *uti possidetis juris* and the continuity of the administration of those territories by Buenos Aires.

The Republic of Argentina, in agreement with what has been pointed out by the countries of our region, among others, as represented by various groups, reiterates that the referendum that took place in 2013 in the Malvinas Islands is a simple act of British unilateralism that has no legal standing. In that regard, it has not changed the nature of the status of the Malvinas Islands, ended the sovereignty dispute or affected Argentina's legitimate rights. Indeed, in its recent advisory opinion on the Legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965 (A/73/773), the International Court of Justice indicated that it is incumbent on the General Assembly to pronounce on the modalities of the free and genuine expression of an autonomous territory, which includes formulating questions submitted for consultation. Consequently, a referendum held without the approval of the Assembly, such as that of 2013, has no legal value. Proof of that is that the referendum did not alter the conduct of the meetings of the Special Committee on Decolonization that have taken place since it was held. In that Committee, resolutions on the question of the Malvinas Islands continue to be adopted by consensus with the usual language. The solution to the sovereignty dispute does not depend on the outcome of a vote in which British citizens express their desire to remain British. Allowing British citizens on the Malvinas Islands to arbitrate a dispute to which their own country is a party perverts the right of peoples to self-determination. This is because in the case of the Malvinas Islands, those British citizens do not constitute a people under international law.

**The Acting Chair:** The Committee has heard the last speaker on the "Conventional weapons" cluster. The Committee will now take up the cluster on "Other disarmament measures and international security". We have a long list of speakers, so I appeal for all delegations' full cooperation in respecting the time limits in order to ensure that the Committee does not fall behind schedule.

I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/74/L.29, A/C.1/74/L.32 and A/C.1/74/L.35 on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

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

While NAM notes the positive benefits of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their contribution to development, we are concerned about the cases in which new ICTs are used illegally and maliciously to the detriment of our member States, and we firmly condemn and reject such violations.

NAM affirms the conclusions of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, in its 2013 and 2015 reports (see A/68/98 and A/70/174), that international law, and the Charter of the United Nations in particular, is applicable and essential to the maintenance of peace and stability and the promotion of an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment. NAM reiterates the importance of ensuring that such technologies are used in full compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law, and especially with the principles of sovereignty, sovereign equality, non-interference in internal affairs, refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations, the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for human rights and adherence to the well-established principle of peaceful coexistence among States.

NAM welcomes the convening of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security as the first inclusive mechanism established within the United Nations with the participation of all Member States, acting on a basis of consensus. NAM stresses that the development of any international legal framework to address issues related to the use of ICTs with implications for international peace and security should take into account the concerns and interests of all States and be based on consensus and pursued within the United Nations with the active and equal participation of all States. NAM further underscores that such a legal framework, together with a multilateral inclusive institutional platform dedicated to international cooperation on safeguarding the peaceful uses of ICTs, will represent

a major contribution towards increasing stability and security in cyberspace through the prevention of conflicts, thereby promoting the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means, as well as the peaceful uses of ICTs. At the same time, as a principled position, NAM stresses that nothing in that legal framework should affect the inalienable right of States to the development and use of ICTs for peaceful purposes, or in any manner whatsoever restrict or deny developing countries' use for peaceful purposes of ICT-related science, know-how, technology or services in all their aspects. NAM rejects any unilateral measures that are not in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law and that impede the full achievement of economic and social development and the well-being of the peoples of the countries affected.

NAM also emphasizes the importance of observing environmental norms in the preparation and implementation of disarmament and arms-limitation agreements. We affirm that international disarmament forums should take full account of the relevant environmental norms in negotiating treaties and agreements on disarmament and arms limitation, and that through their actions all States should contribute fully to ensuring compliance with those norms in the implementation of treaties and conventions to which they are party.

NAM is presenting three draft resolutions under this cluster for which we welcome support from all Member States. Draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.29 is entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control"; draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.32 is entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation"; and draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.35 is entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development". My full statement will be available on PaperSmart.

**Mr. Webson** (Antigua and Barbuda): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM aligns itself with the statement just made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

CARICOM continues to implement new measures to address current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on security and disarmament measures. Within that context, CARICOM's strategic

plan lists cybercrime as an obstacle and a threat to social and sustained economic development. This strategy was born out of the realization that terrorism and associated violent extremism pose direct threats to CARICOM's vision of integrated, inclusive, secure, and prosperous economic development that is sustained and reflected in our growth. Today's terrorist and violent extremist organizations utilize modern information and communication technologies (ICTs), as well as globalized travel and trade that reach far beyond their borders or origin.

As developments in science and technology continue to transform our daily interactions, we must remain vigilant in our understanding of new and emerging weapon technologies. We also encourage Member States to implement the norms, rules and principles for responsible behaviour in this area, which will contribute to increasing stability and security in cyberspace. In that regard, CARICOM welcomes the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security as a means to develop a legally binding framework that can take into account the concerns and perspectives of all States, at all levels of all considerations of this important issue. We must ensure that we can narrow the digital divide and that the Working Group makes effective and accessible international cooperation a priority of its work.

CARICOM has articulated its support of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as one of the primary international instruments for the control of small arms and light weapons. We welcomed the outcome document of the 2018 Review Conference (A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3, annex) and especially its inclusion of the issues of ammunition and further consideration of armed violence. We also look forward to the upcoming seventh Biennial Meeting of States in 2020 and its intersessional processes.

While the CARICOM region is not affected by armed conflict, we face tremendous challenges related to armed violence in our countries. As a result, significant resources are diverted to security and away from development and by extension our social and development goals. Security costs delay our social and educational development, but new procedures to prevent the spread of small arms and light weapons will greatly contribute to our economic and social

development. The impact of armed conflict on health is far from limited. It results in injury, death and damage to our social fabric.

Finally, CARICOM welcomes draft resolutions A/C.1/74/L.29, A/C.1/74/L.32 and A/C.1/74/L.35, put forward by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of NAM, and calls on all Member States to support them. My full statement will be available on PaperSmart.

**Mr. Laouani** (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to assert that the Group of Arab States aligns itself with the statement just made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

With regard to the subject of other disarmament measures, the Arab Group stresses that solutions agreed on within a multilateral framework in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations are the only sustained way to deal with issues of disarmament and international security. We call on all Member States to renew and implement their individual and collective commitments to multilateral cooperation, and we emphasize our belief in the pivotal role of the United Nations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Arab Group is concerned about the continued increase in global military spending, much of which could instead be used to promote sustainable development and eradicate poverty around the world, especially in developing countries, including Arab nations. We affirm the importance of following up on the implementation of the programme of work of the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, as well as on assessing the impact of increasing military expenditures on the rate of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The continuing possession and modernization of nuclear arsenals are among the most serious threats to international peace and security and to sustainable development in the world today. The Arab Group therefore emphasizes the need for international disarmament forums to take into account the relevant environmental norms when negotiating disarmament and arms-control treaties and conventions, as well as the need for all States to contribute to ensuring compliance with environmental norms in their implementation.

We are concerned about the increasing use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in subversive activities that threaten international peace and security, including those of terrorist and criminal organizations. The Arab Group stresses the need for the United Nations to continue working on the development of binding rules governing the responsible behaviour of States in this vital field, as well as on the continued reassessment of such rules as developments in the area evolve and accelerate. We also emphasize the importance of maintaining international cooperation and preserving a central role for the United Nations in these efforts. In that context, the Arab Group welcomed the start of the meetings of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, established by General Assembly resolution 73/27, and hopes that it will provide clear recommendations on the responsible behaviour of States in the use of ICTs and establish rules regulating States' behaviour in this vital area by building on the recommendations of the Groups of Governmental Experts previously established for discussing this issue, recommendations that were adopted by the General Assembly and should be developed into binding rules to be implemented through a specialized international framework under the auspices of the United Nations.

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

**Ms. Kemppainen** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States underline the importance of an open, free, stable and secure cyberspace, where human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law and international law are fully respected and upheld. We reiterate our strong concerns about the malicious use of information and communications technologies by States and non-State actors. Unfortunately, the scope and severity of such incidents appear only to be increasing, as are the costs and consequences associated with them. That could have destabilizing effects, effectively threatening international peace and security.

The European Union and its member States are committed to engaging constructively in the ongoing United Nations discussions on cybersecurity. Our objective is to work in a complementary and coordinated fashion within both the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security and the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, in order to advance and build on the achievements of the previous Groups of Governmental Experts, as endorsed by consensus in the General Assembly. We are committed to supporting the Chairs of both the Group of Governmental Experts and the Open-ended Working Group in arriving at consensus outcomes.

We welcomed the excellent interactive discussions in the first substantial session of the Open-ended Working Group and look forward to seeing this constructive work continue. We welcome the growing interest of the international community and the acknowledgement that deliberations do not start from scratch, especially regarding the applicability of international law and the Charter of the United Nations in particular. We would like to point out that the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group was created with a view to making the United Nations negotiation process more democratic, inclusive and transparent. In that context, we foresee a role for all relevant stakeholders.

The EU and its member States are committed to engaging in and constructively supporting the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security in a way that reaffirms the consensus views articulated in previous discussions. We welcome the consultations taking place with States Members of the United Nations as well as with other stakeholders, notably regional organizations. The European Union is currently investing more than €100 million in cyber capacity-building activities worldwide, through projects such as the EU's Cyber-resilience for Development, Global Action on Cybercrime Extended and EU Cyber Direct initiatives. We look forward to deepening our cooperation with Member States in that regard. These efforts also help to bridge the digital divide and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

We reaffirm our full support for the strategic framework for conflict prevention, cooperation and

stability in cyberspace endorsed by the General Assembly. It is based on the application of existing international law and specifically the Charter of the United Nations in its entirety, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and fundamental freedoms, complemented by the implementation of norms of responsible State behaviour and regional confidence-building measures between States, and supported by capacity-building efforts. At this point, the European Union and its member States neither call nor see the necessity for the creation of new international legal instruments for cyber issues. We strongly encourage focusing our collective efforts on building on the work repeatedly endorsed by consensus by the General Assembly, notably in resolution 70/237. Those agreed norms create expectations for responsible State behaviour and enable us to assess States' activities and intentions with a view to preventing conflict and increasing stability and security. In 2017 the Council of the EU established a framework for a joint EU diplomatic response to malicious cyber activities, the so-called Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox, which among other things enables the EU to impose targeted restrictive measures to discourage and respond to cyberattacks.

The EU and its member States underline the importance of confidence-building measures in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum, the Organization of American States and other regional frameworks and support further exchanges on such measures, which have been developed in particular by the OSCE. We look forward to further cooperation with all stakeholders, including Governments, the private sector, the technical community, users and academia. The full version of this statement will be published online.

**The Acting Chair:** We have exhausted the time available for this meeting.

I now give the floor to the representative of the secretariat of the Committee for announcements.

**Mr. Soomro** (Intergovernmental Affairs Officer, secretariat of the Committee): I have two very quick announcements. First, the Permanent Mission of Norway is organizing a side event this afternoon entitled "Improving Nuclear Strategic Stability: A Responsibility-based Approach to Arms Control" from 1.15 p.m. to 2.45 p.m. in conference room 11. A light lunch will be served. Secondly, the delegation



of the Russian Federation is holding open informal consultations on outer-space resolutions at 3 p.m. today in conference room A.

**The Acting Chair:** The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Tuesday, 29 October, at 10 a.m. sharp in this conference room. The Committee will first hear a briefing by Ambassadors Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota of Brazil, Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State

behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security, and Jürg Lauber of Switzerland, Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security. Thereafter the Committee will resume its consideration of the cluster on “Other disarmament measures and international security”.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*