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Provisional

President: Mr. Kimani (Kenya)

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Agenda

Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839)

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; Mr. Badreldin Elamin Abdelgadir, Executive Secretary of the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States; and Mr. David Lochhead, Senior Researcher at Small Arms Survey.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2021/839, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Nakamitsu.

Mrs. Nakamitsu: At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to Kenya for convening this very important meeting, and for giving me the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the occasion of the release of the Secretary-General's biennial report to the Council on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839).

I applaud the Security Council's commitment to address the issue of small arms and light weapons on a regular basis. This is the third time that I personally brief the Council on this agenda item, but the biennial consideration of small arms began 12 years ago with a 2007 presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/24). Since then, the Security Council has continued to recognize that the illicit flow and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons compromise the effectiveness of its ability to discharge its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

It was in that context that the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report on small arms on a biennial basis beginning in 2008. Since that request, there have been seven reports of the Secretary-General on this topic. It is important to acknowledge that there are common themes that run throughout all

the reports of the Secretary-General on this critical issue, including the most recent one. Let me highlight a few points from the report. I will start with the focus of today's discussion, namely, the need to address the threats posed by illicit flows of small arms and light weapons in contexts of peace operations.

The misuse, illicit transfer and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition remains a defining factor in undermining peace and security at the national, regional and global levels and has deeply aggravated situations for vulnerable populations already suffering from conflict. In contexts where United Nations peace operations have been mandated, illicit flows and the easy availability of arms can exacerbate and sustain conflict dynamics, render arms embargoes ineffective, endanger peacekeepers, humanitarian workers and local populations and complicate the implementation of peace agreements.

Hence, I commend the Council's increasing consideration of the issue of small arms in its work, including the inclusion of arms-related provisions in recent peace operations mandates in Abyei, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Libya, Mali, Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan and Yemen.

The growing number of resolutions that take into account weapons and ammunition management and control measures for small arms and light weapons control is indicative of the role of the United Nations in supporting the control of those weapons in order to build and sustain peace.

I encourage the Security Council to also integrate weapons and ammunition management considerations in its work on conflict prevention. Inadequately maintained stockpiles of weapons and ammunition constitute serious humanitarian hazards and are a known source of weapons diversion that negatively impacts peace and security beyond conflict and post-conflict settings.

Internationally recognized tools such as the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines are increasingly being used by States for effective weapons and ammunition management. That was underscored in the publication *Aide-Mémoire: Options for Reflecting Weapons and Ammunition Management in Decisions of the Security Council*.

The Aide-Mémoire was specifically developed by the Office for Disarmament Affairs to assist the Security Council in accurately and comprehensively reflecting state-of-the-art practices related to weapons and ammunition management in relevant Council decisions. The Aide-Mémoire has just been updated, and the second edition is now publicly available.

Also of importance to the Security Council are the illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons in the context of arms embargo violations, which remain concerning.

I also note the Council's efforts to support States in the strengthening of national security services through adjustments to relevant arms embargoes. Such efforts have provided an opportunity to introduce weapons and ammunition management-related commitments and measures that can address potential risks of arms diversion by security services, as well as illicit arms proliferation and misuse.

Another welcome development is the Security Council's employment of weapons and ammunition management as part of the benchmark assessments of arms embargoes. It is important to note that available standards and guidelines must be applied in such contexts to further improve national and regional implementation and enforcement of embargoes.

I would like to encourage the Security Council to fully integrate considerations of weapons and ammunition into its work on both country-specific and thematic discussions. That includes addressing the arms-crime-terrorism nexus as one interrelated and multifaceted security threat that requires complementary approaches and responses.

Small arms control measures — in particular the development and implementation of border security and management strategies, efforts to detect and seize parts and components of weapons and ammunition, enhanced stockpile management and the fight against the illicit manufacture of weapons — are effective tools to disrupt the supply of illicit small arms and light weapons to terrorists.

Another dimension to consider is the nexus between sustainable development and small arms, which is firmly anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Global leadership, including that of the Security Council, will be vital to the Decade of Action and can support capacity-building efforts among States

to gather information and report on the number of seized and collected small arms and light weapons. That would allow better tracking of the progress on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.4.2 with a view to achieving a significant reduction in illicit arms flows by 2030.

Thematic discussions on issues such as children in armed conflict and the women and peace and security agenda are also important opportunities to reflect on convergence with small arms-related issues as part of the Security Council's programme of work. Children continue to bear the brunt of armed conflict, often enabled and prolonged by the widespread availability of weapons. All small arms and light weapons control initiatives should therefore be carried out with due attention to their potential impacts on children's rights, and vice versa.

Conventional arms control, including small arms and light weapons control measures, is relevant to all four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda — participation, protection, prevention and relief and recovery — including in contexts of conflict-related sexual violence. The Security Council can further strengthen that convergence by integrating the collection and analysis of sex- and age-disaggregated data on small arms and light weapons in related mandates, support civil society organizations, especially women's organization, and encourage States to streamline national action plans in order to ensure a more active exchange of information among focal points for those respective portfolios.

In addition, there are new and emerging themes related to small arms and light weapons and their ammunition that warrant the attention of the Security Council and Member States. New and emerging technologies on illicit trafficking and the production of small arms, light weapons, their parts and components and ammunition may pose novel challenges and opportunities to the effectiveness of small arms control measures and should therefore be seriously considered in both global policy discussions and operational programming.

Moreover, States have continued to express concern over the illicit reactivation of poorly deactivated small arms. In response to that growing threat, the United Nations has issued specific guidance in a dedicated MOSAIC module.

In addition, we are seeing a shift in weapons purchases, in particular their parts and components, through the darknet and through online platforms, resulting in a significant increase in the use of postal and courier services to traffic those items, making detection and criminal investigations of these illicit transfers more difficult. The early adoption of measures to address those emerging challenges would ensure that small arms control remains effective and responds to these new realities.

States, civil society and relevant expert organizations are also encouraged to consider how climate change affects the use of conventional weapons and how conventional arms availability and use affect climate-related security risks. A growing number of States have advocated for concrete, more consistent action to address the potential impact on peace and security posed by climate change, including how it might facilitate illicit weapons flows.

In his Agenda for Disarmament, the Secretary-General laid out his priorities for the impacts of the destabilizing accumulation, illicit transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons. That includes advancing country-level approaches to small arms problems, integrating arms into conflict prevention and management, managing poorly maintained stockpiles and rethinking unconstrained military spending. All that requires a deeper institutional understanding of small arms problems and challenges, as well as creative and comprehensive solutions to address them.

In line with the Secretary-General's priorities and with a view to providing effective, efficient and coherent United Nations assistance, two concrete initiatives have been launched. First, partners of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms are developing system-wide guidance on country-level approaches to integrate small arms control into the common country analysis and sustainable development frameworks, in line with the guiding principle of national ownership. In addition, the Saving Lives Entity is now operational as an immediate response facility within the Peacebuilding Fund and has begun the allocation of grants to catalyse more comprehensive approaches to small arms control and armed violence reduction efforts in several countries.

Considerable efforts have been undertaken at the global, regional, subregional and national levels in support of small arms and light weapons control,

including in the framework of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and its International Tracing Instrument. Let me highlight in particular the outcome of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, which was chaired by Kenya, and the Firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as the Arms Trade Treaty.

The United Nations will continue to advocate for the universalization of the Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty and the full and effective implementation of politically binding instruments, such as the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the International Tracing Instrument.

In the regional context, the United Nations will support the implementation of the decision by the African Union Commission to extend until 2030 the Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa, including the voluntary surrender of illicitly owned weapons by civilians under the September Africa Amnesty Month programme.

In that regard, I also welcome the efforts made in the establishment and the implementation of regional policy frameworks and strategies on small arms, among them the Western Balkans road map, the Caribbean road map and the five-year plan of implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Those mechanisms reflect regional realities, priorities and ownership and direct the work of the Regional Centres in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific.

I would like to conclude my briefing today by reiterating the need for mainstreaming small arms and light weapons considerations across the work of the Security Council and highlight a recommendation from the Secretary-General's report that is particularly pertinent to today's discussion.

Wherever a mission is mandated to provide support to the host State and competent national authorities in the processing of recovered weapons and the treatment of ammunition recovered from the illicit sphere, the Security Council is encouraged to consider the establishment or designation of a dedicated component, unit or cell within the mission. That would enable United Nations peace operations to be substantially more involved in supporting the systematic collection, centralization and analysis of small arms-related

data and ensure evidence-based policymaking and programming on the ground. I hope the Security Council will consider such measures to further maintain international peace and security.

The President: I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Abdelgadir.

Mr. Abdelgadir: First and foremost, I thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to this meeting.

Allow me to begin by giving Security Council members a brief history on the Regional Centre on Small Arms. Concerned with the persistent problem of the proliferation of illicit arms and light weapons, the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of Illicit Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa was signed by 10 countries on 15 March 2000. That political declaration set in motion the signing of a legally binding instrument — the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States.

Convinced that a regional institution with the sole mandate of fighting against small arms proliferation was required to coordinate the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol, the Regional Centre on Small Arms was established in 2005. The success and expertise of the Centre's regional approach are demonstrated through results achieved on small arms management and control interventions, including but not limited to the following.

National institutions for small arms management and control have been established at member State level. The Centre has accordingly developed guidelines for the establishment and functioning of national institutions responsible for small arms management and control.

Small arms national action plans have been developed to guide the implementation of small arms interventions and as tools for resource mobilization.

The marking of firearms and electronic record keeping have been planned and coordinated to facilitate identification and reliable tracing. The Centre has distributed 71 marking machines to member States, and firearms marking is ongoing in 11 of its member States.

The collection, recording and eventual destruction of excess and obsolete firearms have been planned and coordinated. The Centre has to date supported member States in destroying over 400,000 firearms and over 3,000 tons of unexploded ordnance.

Training sessions on weapons and ammunitions management have been planned and executed. The Centre has graduated 22 regional instructors and 35 national instructors and trained over 800 personnel in weapons and ammunitions management best practices.

Safe storage initiatives for Government stockpiles have been planned and executed. The Centre has constructed six permanent armouries and distributed six containerized armouries, 1,600 safe storage steel boxes and 230 gun racks.

“Heart and mind” disarmament awareness campaigns have been planned and undertaken, as we are well aware that almost 70 per cent of small arms are in the hands of civilians. A weapons and ammunition management practitioner's handbook has also been developed in three languages — English, French and Swahili.

Furthermore, the Regional Centre on Small Arms has developed model legislation to guide member States in harmonizing small arms legislation in line with regional and international instruments on small arms. Efforts have been made to coordinate cross-border joint simultaneous initiatives to curb cross-border trafficking in weapons and related products. Member States are being encouraged to plan and execute public education and awareness campaigns for “hearts and minds” disarmament.

At this juncture, allow me to thank our development partners — especially the Governments of the United States, Germany, the Netherlands and Japan, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Arms Trade Treaty secretariat, the African Development Bank and the European Union — which have supported the Regional Centre on Small Arms financially in the fight against small arms proliferation.

There are many drivers of the proliferation of illicit weapons in our region. Those include, first of all, weak legislative and policy frameworks in many countries where legislation on arms management and control is outdated and not harmonized with the current realities and existing small arms instruments. Secondly, weak physical security and poor management of State-held

weapons can result in their diversion. Thirdly, internal political dynamics that involve a struggle for political power without following legal means and bad governance may facilitate a politically motivated supply of arms. Fourthly, ungoverned spaces drive demand for illicit small arms and light weapons by individuals to guard their lives and properties. A fifth driver is economic marginalization, which may facilitate youth radicalization and violent extremism and thereby fuel demand for illegal weapons.

As a result of those reasons, over the past two decades the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa have experienced some of the most dangerous armed conflicts in Africa. For example, armed conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Burundi, South Sudan, Somalia and the Sudan further illustrate how illicit weapons serve as a catalyst in conflicts and fragile situations.

Seven of the 13 current global peacekeeping operations are being conducted in Africa, five of which are in our subregion, in South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Somalia, the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In fact, when we discuss peace operations, we already know that we are talking about a situation involving illicit armaments. Therefore, a strengthened fight against the proliferation of illicit weapons in its totality would go a long way in reducing the need for peace operations.

Allow me to briefly address four guiding questions.

The first question concerns the trends in the illicit circulation, proliferation and misuse of small arms in the context of peace operations and the impact of those trends in shaping the mandates of the Security Council. There is no doubt that there is an increasing trend of the illicit circulation and misuse of small arms in the context of peace operations. Before peacekeepers are deployed, illicit small arms and light weapons are already circulating in conflict-affected areas. We should be seeking out the sources of those illicit weapons before deployment, so that the mandates of United Nations missions include undertaking interventions aimed at cutting off the sources of illicit firearms. While weapons obtained from peacekeepers may represent a relatively small part of those held by armed groups, further diversions could be reduced by improved weapons management and control in peacekeeping operation missions.

The second question concerns the specific measures that the Security Council can take to prevent weapons in the possession of peacekeepers from falling into the hands of illicit armed groups, including in relation to its work on arms embargos, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform and countering terrorism. The measures to be taken by the Security Council revolve around the concept of arms management and control in peacekeeping operations. Arms management and control, whether in conflict-affected or fragile situations or not, has three major objectives, namely, to improve physical security to curb diversion, to improve safety to reduce the risk of unintended explosions, and accountability to know exact numbers for the easy detection of leakage and to take appropriate action.

Therefore, before and during the deployment of peacekeepers, we suggest the following measures: training in weapons and ammunitions management before the deployment of peacekeepers; the marking and electronic record-keeping of all weapons to be used in the mission before deployment; continued accountability measures for all mission stockpiles; the effective management or destruction of all small arms and light weapons collected during disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes; and continued awareness-raising among the general public in conflict areas on the negative effects of small arms proliferation.

The third question concerns how United Nations peace operations can support enhanced weapons and ammunition management, the existing tools and mechanisms that are available to that end and whether there are gaps that need addressing. As I have already said, enhanced weapons and ammunitions management is all about interventions that are aimed at curbing diversion. While technical support from United Nations peace operations to local law enforcement agencies is paramount to enhance weapons management, the inclusion of weapons management components during predeployment training for troops is highly recommended.

The tools and mechanisms are already in place. At the international level, we have the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Arms

Trade Treaty. At the continental level, we have the Bamako declaration and the African Union Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative, while at the subregional level we have the Nairobi Protocol.

The major gaps to be addressed include the need to domesticate the existing small arms control instruments within national legislation and making available adequate human and financial resources to implement them. Above all, there is a need to coordinate all the efforts by the different stakeholders spearheaded by the national institutions responsible for small arms management and control. In that regard, expertise and experience can be exploited to spearhead the fight against small arms proliferation on the African continent.

The fourth question concerns which regional or global mechanisms can be developed and/or strengthened to shore up the control of small arms and light weapons in conflict-affected situations. The management of small arms and light weapons calls for the actual implementation of the existing mechanisms globally at the United Nations level, continentally at the African Union level and regionally at the level of the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States. The mechanisms exist, but they face challenges.

It is important to recognize that small arms proliferation is a development issue. There is a need for enhanced coordination among stakeholders to avoid duplication and for adequate funding for small arms management and control intervention. Arms control programming is not a stand-alone issue; it is closely linked to poverty reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, it is vital to package arms control interventions within wider development programming, as there is a nexus between sustainable development and security.

Despite the threats posed by climate change and the coronavirus disease pandemic, let us not forget that arms proliferation is a worse catalyst that can bring communities and economies to a standstill. Peace operations involve full-blown conflict with formal warring parties, but small arms proliferation goes beyond that context to lower-level transnational organized armed crime, which affects human security. That is why it is important to support the Regional Centre in carrying out its mandate. The opportunity of having a fully-fledged intergovernmental organization

whose sole mandate concerns the fight against small arms proliferation, as a specialized agency, should be exploited by the Security Council.

In conclusion, arms proliferation therefore covers their production, transfer, possession and use without authorization of a competent authority. Let it suffice to note that it remains the catalyst of armed conflicts in Africa. The fight against weapons trafficking and misuse cannot be won in boardrooms but requires concrete and practical interventions that address the drivers of the proliferation of weapons.

The President: I thank Mr. Abdelgadir for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lochhead and request that he speak for less than five minutes, or seven minutes at the very most.

Mr. Lochhead: It is a great honour to brief the Security Council today on behalf of the Small Arms Survey. My thanks go specifically to Kenya for inviting us to contribute to this important discussion. Having personally spent 15 years in United Nations peacekeeping operations, I can say that the unchecked proliferation of arms, ammunition and explosives poses one of the greatest challenges to peacekeeping today.

I would like to dedicate this statement to the memory of a former colleague and friend, Captain Christophe Tangaou Massamaesso of the Togolese armed forces, who was killed in action by small arms fire in August 2017 while deployed in central Mali with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Christophe was killed while responding to a complex terrorist attack against a United Nations base, as part of a quick-reaction force. He died valiantly leading troops from the front, leaving behind a wife and three children.

In 2018, I chaired the Board of Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Christoph's death. Weapons and ammunition analysis showed us that the attack that killed him was linked materially to three other attacks, including against the MINUSMA base in Timbuktu and at a café in neighbouring Burkina Faso, which in total killed 28 people in a 24-hour period. Arms, ammunition and explosives constitute important evidence that can contribute to justice for such crimes in line with resolution 2589 (2021), thereby promoting accountability for the killing of, and acts of violence against, United Nations peacekeepers.

I will skip ahead quickly, as I do not have much time left. The Council seeks to understand trends in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. I will try to summarize the main lessons based on research very briefly.

First, the availability of arms to non-State armed groups, criminals and terrorists in peacekeeping contexts is often a product of historical regional conflict. Legacy weapons continue to circulate and fuel new types of violence. Where large-scale transfers of lethal material in violation of arms embargoes occur, weapons rarely remain within the confines of recipient States. In some peacekeeping operations, the inflow of arms, ammunition and explosives takes place largely through the ant trade from former and current conflict zones.

Where the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) is deployed in asymmetrical conflict contexts, like Mali, the diversion of commercial explosives and legacy ordnance items has had a devastating effect, with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) accounting for almost 60 per cent of United Nations fatalities from malicious acts within MINUSMA — the balance of the killings having been carried out with small arms and light weapons. Battlefield capture by non-State armed groups and terrorist groups also provisions the illicit market and enables attacks against United Nations peacekeepers and creates protection-of-civilians crises

Force-multiplying technologies, including drones, armoured vehicles, night vision, encrypted communications and thermal optics, procured by States often make their way rapidly from the time of importation into the hands of terrorists and pose direct threats to United Nations forces, personnel and assets. The capture or looting of massive stockpiles in contexts, such as Libya or Afghanistan, can contribute to the destabilization of adjacent areas for decades to come. Craft-produced firearms, sporting firearms and their ammunition also allow for the easy emergence of vigilante and self-defence groups.

Small Arms Survey's ongoing work on the diversion of IED components across the Sahel has highlighted how the diversion of commercial explosives fuels the artisanal mining sector, as well as provisions bomb-building networks across the subregion, requiring a coordinated regional approach.

The Council seeks to understand how those trends and dynamics shape peacekeeping mandates.

While mandates have frequently prioritized physical security, stockpile management and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and have supported national small arms commissions, they are necessary but not sufficient to address arms flows within active conflict contexts. In addition, not all peacekeeping operations are under United Nations arms embargoes. It is therefore important to identify solutions for both embargo and non-embargo contexts.

Missions require strong mandates to monitor, identify and disrupt flows of illicit arms and ammunition into the areas in which they operate, and they require political support in their efforts to do that, which would allow missions to prevent armed violence from escalating and new armed actors from emerging, while creating space for the stabilization of fragile and conflict-affected States.

Secondly, in States and regions where the illegal use of small arms and light weapons has reached chronic and destabilizing proportions, direct interventions and operations to reduce flows are important. That is particularly important in situations in which the peacekeeping operation itself is targeted with weapons, ammunition and IEDs.

Lastly, missions could be clear about whose responsibility it is within a peacekeeping operation to identify and disrupt flows. That work requires a whole-of-mission effort, with clear benchmarks and reporting requirements. The Council has asked about preventing losses and connections with security sector reform (SSR), DDR and countering terrorism. The DPO weapons and ammunition management policy and the *Effective Weapons and Ammunition Management in a Changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context* handbook, as well as mission-specific standard operating procedures, have gone a long way towards addressing the policy gaps identified by the Survey's project on losses from peacekeeping operations resulting from the surrender, or capture, of weapons of troop-contributing countries (TCCs), negligence, poor storage and/or corrupt practices. I believe that the handling of recovered weapons requires special attention, and, if applied systematically down to the battalion level, the DPO weapons and ammunition management policy will help to address that.

Preventing illicit arms trafficking in conflict zones, including to terrorists, as called for in resolution

2370 (2017), requires specific mandates, support from mission leadership, a whole-of-mission approach, dedicated capabilities, sensors, analytical tools and human resources, in particular in areas where the State has no presence. Border security-related programming is also critical.

The hardening of defences, improved predeployment training and more robust postures by peacekeepers operating in non-permissive environments mean that TCCs will now respond quite robustly to terrorists, bandits and non-State armed groups in ways for which peacekeepers in more permissive environments might not have historically been prepared, trained or equipped. Peacekeepers in the harshest and most dangerous duty stations are losing weapons only through combat losses, complex attacks and IED strikes, and that is only after responding in self-defence and sometimes losing personnel. It is critical that missions facing emerging IED threats — for example, such as in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo — take advantage of the hard-won mission adaptation experiences of a mission like MINUSMA.

Additional programmatic safeguards are also required for security sector reform (SSR) and DDR programming, which can unintentionally stimulate illicit arms procurement and the proliferation of armed groups seeking to meet eligibility criteria in order to access payrolls and benefits through integration or DDR processes. That is particularly acute where peace processes are stalled or implementation is delayed, highlighting the linkage among arms control, SSR, DDR and mediation.

The Security Council has asked about weapons and ammunition management and existing tools and mechanisms. Gaps remain where the intention is not only to manage arms in the context of programmatic activities and caseloads but also to prevent trafficking and proliferation where civilians are being targeted or conflict is escalating. The lack of a regional remit is a significant blind spot within some peacekeeping operations that do not have a specific arms embargo or border monitoring mandates. Peacekeeping operations should consider developing mechanisms to reach out and collaborate with neighbouring States to prevent proliferation.

The creation of illicit arms monitoring mandates and cells within missions is also important, and the development of weapons intelligence capabilities

within all contingents would help to provide a whole-of-mission report approach and develop a common operating picture, in line with the 2019 policy on peacekeeping-intelligence.

DPO should also consider taking advantage of significant innovations in the available technology to conduct that work efficiently and effectively. Networked geoanalytics tools can now be applied to understand arms trafficking networks and inform operational planning by the force, United Nations Police (UNPOL) and national partners. That is in line with the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative by developing innovative, data-driven and technology-enabled peacekeeping.

By mainstreaming arms and ammunition analysis, peacekeeping human-rights-division missions can also collect important evidence supporting attributions for violence and violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Improved information-sharing on arms and ammunition among human rights investigations, commissions of inquiry and international criminal mechanisms can also enhance capabilities.

Similarly, accountability for attacks against, and the killing of, peacekeepers requires robust evidence collection to the highest evidentiary standards. Since such incidents often occur in areas where the State has no presence, the State often cannot be relied upon to investigate such crimes, and it is often incumbent on the United Nations to do so.

The Security Council has asked about regional or global mechanisms to strengthen arms control in conflict-related situations. Research shows us that we need to strengthen regional and global counter-trafficking approaches, informed by baseline research and data collection. Peacekeeping operations have struggled to respond to the multifaceted regional phenomenon of arms, ammunition and explosives proliferation, while implementing what is typically a national mandate. The lack of a regional mandate has put peace operations and local communities at risk of attack, failed to put up sufficient barriers to hostile actors' access to illicit weapons and made stability elusive.

Peacekeeping operations should consider developing protocols to feed into global law enforcement and customs operations supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Customs Organization and INTERPOL, as well

as the work of arms-embargo-monitoring expert panels, through the adoption of new data-sharing platforms.

Precedents exist for cross-border arms monitoring mandates, and current good practice exists for peace operations to share arms-trafficking information on a regional basis, as called for in resolution 2020 (2011). Such initiatives all point to the way forward and are in line with the strategy on the digital transformation of peacekeeping.

New technology could amplify and simplify the collection, analysis and sharing of illicit arms- and ammunition-related data, empowering law enforcement and customs officials and providing a global picture of such flows. The United Nations could consider contributing to the development of that technology in partnership with the private sector and in support of Member States. Such tools and platforms could also be used in conjunction with new reporting mechanisms to inform the Security Council about global trends in illicit trafficking.

Without such tools, platforms and reporting mechanisms, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which calls for a reduction in arms flows and measures the tracing of illicit weapons, will be unreachable because there will be no baseline against which to measure trends in illicit proliferation. The digital transformation of peacekeeping can directly support progress on Goal 16 and the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, as well as the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative, by developing new, field-focused initiatives that identify and prevent dangerous inflows.

Technology will paint a picture of trafficking dynamics over time only by acting as a sensor to detect diversion and related illicit flows. Analysis must inform actions, programming and operations if such flows are to be disrupted, both by peacekeepers and by national actors. What can therefore complement improved detection and understanding?

As missions draw down, others are conceived in order to respond to emerging threats to international peace and security. The Security Council could have an important role in conceptualizing both improved counter-proliferation mandates and future light-footprint regional counter-proliferation support operations that would be cost effective and support

States with advanced technology in disrupting destabilizing illicit crime and conflict-related flows.

In summary, our research suggests that the following key elements could help peacekeeping operations to mitigate the dangers associated with arms, ammunition and explosives proliferation. Missions could, first, conceptualize improved peacekeeping-operation counter-proliferation mandates and concepts of operations to actively prevent destabilizing inflows of lethal material; second, ensure that mission leadership is aware and supportive of arms control initiatives and that it integrates counter-proliferation-related analysis into mediation, SSR, DDR and peace processes; third, improve the weapons-intelligence capabilities of troop-contributors, UNPOL and other relevant sections and the collection of data and evidence across the mission; fourth, develop a workstream within DPO strategy on digital transformation, focusing on how emerging technology and big data can be harnessed for the good by peacekeeping operations to reduce arms flows; fifth, develop, field-test and adopt advanced collection tools for peacekeepers to identify and trace illicit materials and manage evidence; sixth, negotiate new data-sharing platforms and protocols among peacekeeping operations, panels of experts and Member States, as called for in resolution 2020 (2011), and interface with the operations of key international partners, such as UNODC, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization; seventh, mainstream arms and ammunition analysis in human rights investigations and ensure information-sharing with international investigation and justice mechanisms, including those focused on the targeting and killing of peacekeepers; eighth, support baseline research within and outside the mission area in order to inform regional approaches and engagement with regional bodies and industry actors in order to create barriers to trafficking; and, ninth, conceptualize regional approaches and light-footprint support mandates that work with States on a regional basis to improve trafficking intelligence-sharing and inform national and regional responses to arms, ammunition and explosives proliferation.

With that combination of innovations and improvements, peacekeeping operations would be well placed and have significant front-line assets to contribute to reaching SDG target 16.4, the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda and Silencing the Guns. I believe that placing counter-proliferation back into a central role within peacekeeping operations would

improve mandate implementation and protection outcomes and protect United Nations staff. Let the sacrifices of our fallen peacekeepers encourage our collective action on this issue.

The President: I thank Mr. Lochhead for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu, Mr. Abdelgadir and Mr. Lochhead for their informative briefings.

It is worrisome that armed conflicts in 2020 resulted in 27 per cent of civilian deaths by small arms and light weapons, as compared to 24 per cent by heavy weapons and other explosive munitions.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in many regions in the world continues to fuel, prolong and exacerbate armed conflicts. It hampers peace efforts, conflict recovery and socioeconomic development. The illicit trade in and the misuse of small arms and light weapons, mines and explosive devices remain major threats to essential infrastructure, civilians, humanitarian workers and the safety and security of peacekeepers. They could undermine the effectiveness of the mandates of Council-authorized missions to maintain international peace and security.

In the context of today's discussion, I would like to stress the following points. First, combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons requires the joint efforts of all concerned parties. States bear the primary responsibility for strengthening national efforts, including cooperating with one another to curb this scourge.

Regional, subregional and international organizations play an important role in supporting Member States in implementing relevant international frameworks related to General Assembly and the Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015).

It is commendable that progress and positive momentum have been achieved in this field by some regional and subregional initiatives, such as the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative and the road map for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024.

Secondly, in the Security Council, the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons should be addressed in a contextual manner in the light of the scale and scope of the threat it poses. We commend the efforts of 9 out of 12 current peacekeeping missions, which are mandated to address the issue of the control and management of small arms and light weapons. We call for further support for these missions to better assist their host countries in their peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction in relation to controlling and managing small arms and light weapons.

Thirdly, in post-conflict situations, it is necessary to continue efforts aimed at combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and to strictly control and manage such weapons, including through appropriate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration measures and security sector reform processes. National efforts in this regard need international support to prevent armed violence and the recurrence of conflicts.

Last but not least, we reiterate our call for addressing the root causes of conflict, including neglect of international law and inequality, and we call for promoting cultural, peace, tolerance and friendship among all peoples and nations. At the same time, we reaffirm the right of the State to acquire, manufacture, transfer and retain small arms and light weapons for their self-defence and security needs.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu, Mr. Badreldin Elamin Abdelgadir and Mr. Lochhead for their briefings.

I also express our appreciation to Kenya for today's timely meeting on small arms and light weapons, which is an issue of particular importance for Mexico. Last month we organized an Arria Formula meeting on the issue, on which we plan to follow up during the Mexican presidency in November.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Kimani on his successful conduct and results of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which undoubtedly represented a step forward at the global level in the fight against this scourge.

Today Mexico reiterates its firm conviction that the Security Council can improve practices and transparency in the illicit arms trade, strengthen

schemes to prevent diversion, improve export-risk analysis, ensure mechanisms for the verification of authorized use and end users, in addition to promoting the gender perspective and attending to victims of firearms violence.

The timely publication of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/839) is very welcome. It provides us with an updated diagnosis of the problem and multiple recommendations for Member States, many of which are in line with my country's own proposals. The information contained in the report is alarming because of the multiplicity of evidence in all regions of the world of the increase in illicit flows of and trafficking in small arms, as well as its consequences for international peace and security. The increase that occurred during the coronavirus disease pandemic is not surprising but is of concern.

The Security Council should make an objective analysis of the tangible impact of small arms and light weapons on the day-to-day life of all areas on the Council's agenda. It should also call more firmly for compliance with the commitments made so that international cooperation can generate conditions that will enable new, more effective agreements to prevent and counter the diversion and trafficking of weapons in the context of peace operations.

The Secretary-General's recommendations are varied, and all of them relevant. I will focus only on those related to the configuration of Council mandates. Much of the Council's attention on this issue has been directed at promoting and strengthening arms and ammunition management schemes, but that is only one component of a much broader universe. It is necessary to analyse the entire life cycle of weapons — from their production and transfer, through brokering, to those who turn out to be the end users. Weapons management is incomplete if continuous and unrestricted flows flood conflict zones and if actions remain reactive, as they have so far, that is, once weapons are already in the hands of those who should never have them.

For this reason, we strongly support the recommendation on effective border controls. Such controls should be comprehensive and foster coordination between authorities in the different countries through which the weapons transit. This applies equally to the analysis of constantly changing trafficking routes and networks. The mandates of

peacekeeping missions and the renewal of sanctions regimes must reflect these realities.

The report also warns of the disproportionate impact on women and children — again, the most vulnerable groups. We therefore support the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the need to strengthen capacities in peace operations. The inclusion of dedicated small-arms units in missions will be very useful. Only with hard data and empirical evidence will we be able to design timely and appropriate responses in each context.

In conclusion, Mexico maintains that we must generate better coordination, greater synergies and opportunities for collaboration among all available arms control instruments and regimes, including those of the Security Council. We all have a responsibility to assume. We therefore make today an attentive but firm call to all States to commit themselves more energetically to the task and take actions to counteract the negative impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on international security and development.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia): I thank the Kenyan presidency for programming this meeting on the threat posed to peace operations by small arms and light weapons. I would also like to thank High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu, Mr. Badreldin Elamin Abdelgadir and Mr. David Lochhead for their informative and insightful briefings.

The illicit transfer and use of small arms and light weapons, including ammunition, continues to represent a major threat to international peace and security by fuelling armed conflicts in many countries and regions, aggravating humanitarian crises, enabling terrorist and transnational criminal organizations and undermining respect for human rights, in addition to hindering peacebuilding and socioeconomic development efforts.

As noted by the briefers, United Nations peace operations confront — in various ways — the negative impacts of the widespread circulation of small arms and light weapons, which are often the direct cause of fatalities among peacekeepers. Those negative impacts should indeed be thoroughly assessed and taken into consideration in order to enable peace operations to effectively fulfil their mandates.

United Nations peace operations should be well equipped and trained to ensure the safe, secure and effective management of all stockpiles of small arms and

light weapon in order to be able to properly control their own weapons and ammunition and to be in a position, if requested, to contribute to reinforcing the capacities of host Governments in that regard and to assist in the treatment of recovered illicit weapons and ammunition, including through the utilization of voluntary guidelines such as the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, developed under the United Nations SaferGuard Programme, and the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium.

We share the view that the Security Council should continue to address the issues related to the illicit transfer and use of small arms and light weapons in a more effective and holistic manner. In that regard, we welcome the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his successive reports to the Security Council on small arms and light weapons.

In addition to further enabling peace operations, we would like to stress several important points for the Council's consideration.

First, the Security Council must ensure the implementation of the arms embargoes it decides upon.

Secondly, the Council must continue to support regional efforts for conflict prevention and arms control, as it did in 2019 when it adopted resolution 2457 (2019), upholding the African Union's Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative.

Thirdly, the Council should further consider and incorporate a gender dimension when addressing the issues related to small arms and light weapons by, inter alia, stressing the importance of women's full and effective participation in all efforts to counter the illicit transfer and use of small arms and light weapons, taking into account its disproportionate impact on women and recognizing that eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is key to combating gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict.

Fourthly, the Council should continue to support the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as all relevant disarmament and arms control instruments.

For its part, Tunisia, which does not produce or export weapons of any kind, supports all efforts and

initiatives aimed at finding effective solutions to the issues related to the proliferation of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. We remain committed to the Programme of Action and welcome the successful outcome of its seventh Biennial Meeting of States, held in July 2021 in New York.

Tunisia is also party to the Firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols.

Lastly, Tunisia endorsed the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in the General Assembly because we believe it can significantly contribute to finding adequate solutions to the illicit trade in conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, without prejudice to the sovereign and legitimate right of States to legally acquire conventional weapons and ammunition for their self-defence and security needs.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for calling this important meeting. I also thank High Representative Nakamitsu and Mr. Lochhead for their briefings.

I am also grateful to Mr. Abdelgadir, from the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, for his remarks. The United States has enjoyed a long-standing and excellent partnership with the Centre to combat the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons in the Horn of Africa and the African Great Lakes region.

Peacekeeping operations present unique small arms and light weapons management challenges. We welcome the Security Council's attention to this issue. Many peacekeeping operations — especially those with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) components — manage large caches of weapons seized from former combatants.

For example, in a series of attacks in early 2000 on the weapon storage sites of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) captured more than 5,000 arms previously surrendered to the United Nations by demobilized RUF fighters. The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali also suffered losses of weapons seized from former combatants.

Peacekeeping operations with mandates that include the protection of civilians face a particular challenge, as the peacekeepers may be more heavily armed. Losses of small arms and light weapons from operations in those environments provide more advanced weaponry to armed groups, which enable them to further escalate hostilities.

While the United Nations has made important strides concerning small arms and light weapons management within peacekeeping operations, generally, and in DDR programmes specifically, in-mission protocols remain unevenly applied. As history shows, that can result in active combatants reclaiming and redeploying armaments against both United Nations personnel who seized and held that weaponry previously and against the civilian populations that the United Nations personnel are mandated to protect.

Looking ahead, the United Nations should expand the use of best practices for small arms and light weapons management and implement them across peacekeeping operations. That should include operationalizing and continually updating the protocols outlined in the *Effective Weapons and Ammunition Management in a Changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context* manual, the second edition of which was published just this year.

With regard to the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons in general, the United States reiterates our call for the States Members of the United Nations to comprehensively implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its complementary International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The United States remains committed to their implementation, as well as to assisting others in doing so.

In the Great Lakes region, the United States has partnered with the Regional Centre on Small Arms to support national weapons marking and tracing campaigns that improve accountability of Government-held stockpiles. The United States has further improved stockpile management capacity by training 500 storekeepers, using instructors from within the Great Lakes region.

We have also complemented training efforts by building new armouries, providing 1,500 weapons

lockers and supporting the destruction of 36,000 excess small arms and light weapons and 560 tons of ammunition. That assistance helps ensure that storage facilities are physically secure, have proper oversight and contain only serviceable munitions, creating a buffer around insecure areas to prevent stockpile leakage and improve combat readiness.

We pledge ourselves and continue urging all Member States to combat the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons as a primary way to mitigate the continuation and escalation of hostilities in conflict-prone areas around the world.

Mrs. Gasri (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Kenya for organizing this meeting and thank the briefers for their statements.

The uncontrolled spread and the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is a threat to international peace and security. It fuels conflicts, crime and terrorism. We have all paid the price for it and will continue to do so.

That is why France has worked hard to support the adoption of specific measures and commitments, in particular within the framework of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, whose conference we presided over in 2018. In that regard, I would like to commend Kenya's efforts and its excellent chairmanship of the Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action.

The Security Council has played its role over the years by addressing the issue of the regulation of arms manufacturing and transfers, stockpile management, marking and tracing, and post-conflict disarmament and reintegration measures. The Security Council could certainly do more.

First, it could call on States to join the Arms Trade Treaty and the Firearms Protocol.

Secondly, the Security Council should encourage States to mark weapons and support the International Tracing Instrument. We should also focus on the challenges raised by developments in the design and manufacture of small arms and light weapons.

Thirdly, the Security Council should respect arms embargoes and regularly update United Nations sanctions regimes.

Fourthly, and finally, the Security Council could mandate peacekeeping operations, when relevant, to ensure the tracing of weapons and ammunition and collect relevant data.

I would also mention the essential issue of ammunition, which poses specific risks, such as theft, the manufacture of improvised explosive devices and the explosion of poorly managed stockpiles. We welcome the conclusions of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts. It is essential that the General Assembly adopt those recommendations in the First Committee. France is working to that end with all its partners.

Lastly, as others have already done, I would like to underscore the importance of the Security Council's support for the many regional initiatives. The European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Caribbean Community are all taking useful measures that are tailored to realities on the ground. More needs to be done as well in terms of assistance and capacity-building, and cooperation in that area must be encouraged. That is the objective pursued by the Franco-German road map to curb illicit trafficking in the Western Balkans. We must all do more in this area.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, for the successful chairmanship of the 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. India stands ready to contribute to a progressive approach that would help consolidate the gains made during that meeting.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu, Mr. Abdelgadir, Executive Secretary of the Regional Centre on Small Arms, and Mr. Lochhead, from Small Arms Survey, for their briefings.

The threat posed by the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons is a matter of concern to the entire international community. As a complex and multidimensional problem, it has a cross-cutting impact on development, security, humanitarian and socioeconomic aspects.

India attaches high importance to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small

arms and light weapons. We consider that the primary responsibility for addressing that problem lies with Member States. In that regard, India supports the redoubling of efforts at the national and global levels to strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including through national legislative measures and enforcement, export controls, information sharing and capacity-building.

We take note of the observations and recommendations in the recent report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839). As mentioned in the report, the safety of United Nations peacekeepers is directly affected by the steady and illicit supply of small arms and light weapons to warring parties in armed conflict situations. The Council is aware of numerous incidents in the past where killings and attacks on peacekeepers were perpetrated through the use of those weapons. Hence, it is important for the Council to address the danger posed by such illicit transfers to the safety and security of peacekeepers by giving due attention to that issue in the consideration of peacekeeping mandates.

It is a well-known fact that the flow of illicit arms and weapons to non-State actors and terrorists drives and sustains conflicts. In that regard, arms embargoes are an important tool that the Council holds at its disposal to curb the flow of such weapons to situations of armed conflict. It is a matter of concern that embargoes continue to be blatantly violated, as repeatedly reported by the various Panels of Experts supporting the subsidiary bodies of the Council. It is important that all Member States respect and strictly enforce existing arms embargoes and strengthen measures against the illicit transfer of arms.

United Nations peacekeeping missions could support host countries in addressing the issue of the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons by strengthening the capacities of law enforcement and security agencies in safe handling, upkeep and stockpile management of arms and weapons, including those recovered from non-State actors. In that regard, we welcome Secretary-General's recommendation to establish a dedicated component or a unit within peacekeeping missions to handle such assistance.

The illicit possession and misuse of small arms and light weapons by non-State groups and terrorists is a violation of State sovereignty. In post-conflict

situations, we often witness that non-State actors continue to possess those weapons illegally, which hinders disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts. The Council must ensure effective and timely action against such actors to ensure that post-conflict peacebuilding efforts are not jeopardized while advancing security sector reforms, the capacity-building of law enforcement agencies, the promotion of rule of law and good governance.

Let me also strongly underline the need for the Council's focus on the transfer and trafficking of arms and weapons to terrorists and terrorist groups. Those weapons become more sinister and lethal in the hands of terrorists, who deliberately and indiscriminately use them to target innocent civilians, including women and children. For several decades, my country has suffered immensely owing to cross-border terrorism and violence carried out by terrorist groups using those illicit weapons smuggled across our borders, including now through the use of drones. The increase in volume and the quality of the arsenal acquired by those terrorist organizations remind us time and again that they cannot exist without the sponsorship or support of States. That aspect needs to be universally condemned.

India's External Affairs Minister, in his address to the Security Council earlier this year (see S/2021/48), presented an eight-point action plan to counter terrorism. Two of those points are directly relevant to today's discussion, namely, the need to address the linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime and combating terrorist financing. Those linkages have also been brought out clearly in the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/839). I urge the Council to have zero tolerance for terror actors, their possession and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their sponsors.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We wish to thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/839). We also listened carefully to Mr. Badreldin Elamin Abdelgadir and Mr. David Lochhead.

We support the fact that the Kenyan presidency is conducting today's meeting on small arms and light weapons in the Security Council not as a disarmament issue but in the context of peacekeeping operations. We are well aware of the concerns of a number of States, primarily those in Africa, where the problems posed

by the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons are particularly acute.

We believe that the Secretary-General's biennial reports on small arms and light weapons should devote much more attention to peacekeeping. Furthermore, we have every reason to expect that existing mechanisms in that area, such as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, will be better reflected in those reports.

Mandated United Nations peacekeeping missions play an important role in assisting States with the implementation of security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, strengthening law enforcement agencies and restoring the rule of law. By engaging in the disarmament of warring parties, the dismantling of their units and the reintegration of ex-combatants to prevent the recurrence of conflict, peacekeepers are working towards the important goals of sustaining the peace process, creating conditions for a political settlement and ensuring the safety of both the local population and the Blue Helmets themselves.

In doing so, the successful implementation of DDR programmes is impossible without lasting reconciliation between the parties, including mutual trust underpinned by sufficient security conditions and genuine opportunities for the integration of disarmed combatants into the newly created armed forces or civilian life.

The presence of large numbers of uncontrolled small arms and light weapons not only impedes the safety of civilians and peacekeeping missions, but in general undermines the possibility of ending the armed conflict and creating the conditions conducive to the sustained reconciliation of the parties.

We are convinced that the responsibility for controlling the circulation of small arms and light weapons should lie with the Governments of the countries on whose territory those weapons are found. In that connection, we consider security sector reform to be particularly important. Success in those processes contributes not only to national reconciliation but also to ensuring the creation of State security institutions that are capable of effectively protecting civilians, controlling the entire territory of the country and countering terrorist groups. To that end, it is important

that the Government in question have the ability to form professionally trained and equipped armed forces.

In that vein, we would like to remind our colleagues in the Council of our position on the need to review the sanctions regimes imposed on certain countries so that the Government forces of States such as the Central African Republic, the Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia can be adequately armed and trained, thereby allowing them to properly maintain law and order.

We see no backdrop for the discussion of small arms and light weapons within the Security Council other than peacekeeping. It can hardly be considered in the context of various abstract topics such as sustainable development, gender or climate change, which we occasionally hear about from our colleagues. We doubt that discussions within that framework would bring any added value, especially not in the Security Council, since the priority forum for the discussion of issues relating to small arms and light weapons is the General Assembly.

On an open and universal basis, regular work is carried out in the General Assembly on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which is the only specialized global document in that area. In that context, we appreciated Kenya's efforts to hold the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action and its implementation earlier this year. In practical terms, we consider it important to promote the implementation of its outcome document, first and foremost at the national level. We must not forget that combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, ensuring their secure stockpiling and destroying surpluses are the prerogative of States themselves and an integral part of their sovereignty.

The Russian Federation has highly developed national legislation to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We are willing to actively share our experience, including our most successful tried and tested practices, with interested countries.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I thank the briefers for their informative and insightful contributions.

The illicit flow of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition exacerbates ongoing conflicts, intensifies intercommunal violence and abets and sustains violent extremists, terrorists and organized criminal groups. Controlling and curbing small arms and light weapons transfers should therefore be an

integral part of post-conflict and armed violence reduction efforts, including in the mandates of United Nations peace operations.

Positive examples already exist, and various United Nations peace operations, including in Haiti, the Sudan and Mali, are mandated to support weapons management in the contexts of community violence reduction, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform programmes. We welcome the fact that the United Nations Mine Action Service, which Estonia is proud to support, is also often an integral component of such missions and can provide them with direct support and technical assistance in activities related to the control of small arms and light weapons.

While United Nations peace operations have continued to deepen their support to national authorities, there is still room for reinforcing the role of United Nations peace operations in dealing with illicit flows of small arms and light weapons.

First, the Security Council could include, in a more systematic way, the tasks of record-keeping and tracing of weapons in peace operation mandates, in line with international instruments and standards. Also, the secure and safe management of peacekeepers' own weapons and ammunition deserves to be addressed in the mandates.

Secondly, in order to improve compliance with arms embargoes, cooperation and information-sharing between peace operations and panels of experts could be strengthened. The systematic collection and analysis of data on seized, found and surrendered weapons can provide important information about the sources and supply chains of armed actors. Consistent information-sharing could therefore help both peace operations and panels of experts in their endeavours to better implement their Security Council mandates.

Thirdly, in order to maximize a mission's ability to respond to small arms management and to carry out tasks related to arms embargoes, we support the Secretary-General's recommendation to consider the establishment or designation of a unit or cell within a peace mission with specific expertise and skills.

Finally, for Estonia, adherence to, and the ratification of, key international instruments in that area is of crucial importance. We call on all States to implement 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 the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Estonia also continues to champion the universalization and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. We believe that, when the Treaty is effectively and widely implemented, it will have great potential to contribute to more responsible and transparent international arms transfers.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): I thank you, Sir, for convening us today to discuss this important issue. Our thanks also go to our briefers, not only for their valuable contributions but also all the work they do in this area in their respective fields. It was good to hear such practical and common-sense advice from them. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for his latest report of on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839). It is very important that we consider peacekeeping in this context but, as we heard repeatedly today, peacekeeping does not happen in a vacuum. We therefore need to consider the issue carefully in the round.

Although small arms and light weapons have important and legitimate uses, they are also subject to diversion and misuse, which costs hundreds of thousands of lives. Illicit small arms undermine security and, in doing so, sustainable development, fuelling further conflict, crime and terrorism. Many United Nations processes contribute to countering the illicit trade in small arms. In that context, we warmly thank your Mission and you, Sir, for your able leadership of the recent 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, as others also acknowledged today.

As our speakers have brought out, effective control of small arms and light weapons should be seen as an important part of our wider approach to conflict in the Security Council. The United Kingdom is therefore pleased to support the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in a project to integrate conventional arms control into conflict-prevention work. Together we have developed a risk-analysis toolkit for conflict practitioners that will strengthen their understanding of the risks and impact of arms

and how conventional arms control can contribute to United Nations conflict prevention, management and resolution.

We also welcome the focus within the latest report of the Secretary General on children affected by armed conflict and the gendered dimensions of the harm caused by the illicit trade in small arms (S/2021/437). As we heard repeatedly today, it is clear that children and women bear the brunt of the impact of small arms. We therefore support its recommendations, particularly on coherence in programming related to children and the role States should play to counter sexual violence in conflict by tackling illicit arms flows, in line with the Arms Trade Treaty or other national obligations. As others said earlier, the Arms Trade Treaty is a key multilateral tool to ensure well-regulated legal trade in conventional arms and address illicit transfers. We continue to encourage all States to ratify and accede to the Treaty.

Illicitly traded small arms affect different countries and regions in different ways, which has been made clear today. Accordingly, we commend regional approaches in that area, including the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative and The Western Balkans road map. The United Kingdom itself is leading a review of the *Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons* of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe with regard to stockpile management. We also continue to support work to address the risks of stockpiles of ammunition, including through the recently concluded Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.

The United Kingdom will continue to prioritize work on small arms to strengthen domestic frameworks, and we are helping countries to strengthen arms control frameworks through national legislation to implement better stockpile management procedures and tackle the grave challenges recognized in the Secretary-General's report.

You put this issue on the agenda today, Sir, because it is clearly at the very heart of the Council's work. We heard again and again that unchecked proliferation — plain and simple — causes conflict, conflict causes insecurity and unchecked proliferation is therefore exacerbated even further by it. That proliferation causes human misery where it occurs,

and, as we said, that cost is felt mainly by women and children, as well as peacekeepers, whom we deploy, as we heard earlier. It is therefore clear that the Council needs to focus on the objectives set out by our briefers. It is also clear that we need to think very carefully when members in the Council call on us to modify or reconsider arms embargoes that we have implemented. We implement them for a reason, and we need to consider very carefully the implications of changing them.

Let us redouble our efforts. Let us consider whether we can sign the Arms Trade Treaty if we have not already. Let us properly implement all Council resolutions in this area and think through the issue very carefully as we mandate our peacekeeping missions.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): Like others, I want to start by thanking Kenya for convening today's very important meeting, which we see as critical to addressing the very real threat posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons across the agenda of the Security Council and beyond. I also want to congratulate Kenya on the outcome of 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, held in July. I thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Nakamitsu, Mr. Abdelgadir and Mr. Lochhead for their insightful briefings. Their tireless advocacy and comprehensive research are what the Security Council needs — and needs to hear.

The facts revealed in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/839) are stark. Small arms and light weapons cause the majority of violent deaths in conflict and non-conflict settings. They facilitate more human rights abuses than any other weapon. They perpetuate, inflame and prolong conflict. Put simply, addressing the threat is fundamental to the Council's work. The Secretary-General's report provides tangible and, importantly, actionable recommendations on how we, individually and collectively, can achieve that. I want to make four points that Ireland believes are crucial to achieving our goal of silencing those guns once and for all.

First, understanding the problem is essential to treating it. The Council has a responsibility to consistently and systematically scrutinize the impact of illicit small arms and light weapons as a driver

of conflict. In doing so and preventing such illicit transfers, we can hope to better protect civilians. United Nations peace operations mandated by the Council have a crucial role to play. However, the mandates require clear objectives and, importantly, specialized resources to implement them. That is particularly relevant in the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

Effective management, processing and treatment of weapons and ammunition stockpiles are needed. Equally important is the identification and elimination of illicit trafficking routes and points of diversion. Building the capacity of host States in both of those areas is our shared responsibility. We in Ireland are playing our part and will continue to offer training and support through our defence forces.

My second point relates to the importance of synergies across the United Nations system. From resolution 2220 (2015) and the United Nations Programme of Action and the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, this threat cuts right across the spectrum of the United Nations; so too must our response.

We have seen direct evidence of the instrumental role that regional organizations and programmes can play in addressing small arms and light weapons. The African Union's Silencing the Guns project is an example of strong regional leadership and engagement. Regional road maps, such as those implemented by the Economic Community of West African States and in the Western Balkans, are also making important strides.

We all share a collective responsibility to stem the flow of illicit small arms and light weapons. Enforcing United Nations arms embargoes is an important aspect of that, as other speakers said. Furthermore, national reporting, international cooperation and information-sharing are critical, including to ensure effective weapons tracing.

My third point is in relation to gender. While men and boys account for the vast majority of violent deaths, women often bear the brunt of the socioeconomic fallout from small arms and light weapons-driven conflict. As co-Chair of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, we have also heard how the proliferation of those weapons negatively affects the security of women and girls in countries such as Somalia and South Sudan. As others noted,

such conflict entrenches gender-imbalanced power dynamics and facilitates violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence and human trafficking. That is unconscionable. It simply cannot stand. We know that gender-sensitive responses are sustainable and effective responses. Integrating the women and peace and security agenda into initiatives and actions to combat small arms and light weapons is therefore key. Equally, the needs of children must be taken into account when developing gender-sensitive and age-sensitive programmes.

Allow me to conclude by highlighting the explicit connection that the Secretary-General draws between climate change and its potential effects on peace and security — an area where we believe the Security Council needs to take specific action. We strongly support the Secretary-General's recommendation to further examine the specific impact of climate change on the use, effects and availability of conventional weapons.

It is crystal clear that small arms and light weapons constitute a threat to international peace and security. It is our responsibility, around this table, to address that threat. The Secretary-General's *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament* provides the framework. His report provides the concrete recommendations. Now is the time for bold action. Ireland will continue to champion this issue and to work with all its partners here at the Security Council and across the General Assembly to accomplish that.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): We commend Kenya for convening this very important and well-timed briefing. We also thank our briefers for their presentations.

The illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons have contributed to instability and insecurity in many regions and constitute threats to international peace and security. For that reason, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty, recognizes the importance of sustained international cooperation and national action to mitigate the global impact of illicit weapons flows. We firmly support the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons at all levels.

Strengthened partnerships between the United Nations and regional, subregional and interregional organizations are required to combat the incessant illicit trade, in line with resolution 2457 (2019). At the regional level, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) recognizes the need for mechanisms to protect our people. Even though we do not manufacture small arms and light weapons or import them on a large scale, our region continues to be severely impacted by irresponsible and illicit weapons flows, aided by permissive gun laws in many manufacturing countries. CARICOM has therefore accelerated the Roadmap for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030. We are also firmly supportive of analogous arrangements, such as the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative and the regional road map for the Western Balkans. However, such efforts will be all for naught if States that manufacture arms and engage in their trade do not assume greater responsibility for the consequences of that trade. Undoubtedly, domestic policies can have harmful implications beyond borders.

The misuse of small arms and light weapons continues to hinder our pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. The high number of grave violations against children, as well as the serious threat posed to women and girls, linked to the use of small arms and light weapons is alarming. Furthermore, the availability and the ease of movement of small arms and light weapons in the Sahel and Central African regions enable terrorism and violent extremism and escalate intercommunal tensions, which are being exacerbated by the devastating impacts of climate change. To effectively protect civilians from the scourge of small arms and light weapons a whole-of-system approach is required, including Security Council engagement on the matter.

We underscore the necessity of building national capacity and institutional policy frameworks to support effective disarmament, demobilization, security sector reform and reintegration programmes that provide for the inclusion and full and effective participation of women, young people and civil society. In that regard, we commend the work of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

Illicit arms flows create cross-cutting and multidimensional global challenges to which all States are susceptible. There must be concerted action to adequately address such challenges and safeguard peace and security.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing. I also listened carefully to the statements by Mr. Abdelgadir and Mr. Lochhead.

The illegal flow, excessive accumulation and wanton misuse of small arms and light weapons exacerbate armed conflicts, hinder sustainable development, bolster terrorism and transnational organized crime and threaten international peace and development. At the same time, the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons also makes it more difficult for peace operations to perform their duties, exacerbates the security risks in the mission areas of peace operations and threatens the personal safety of United Nations personnel. To address such issues, China wishes to state the following.

First, the countries concerned should bear the primary responsibility. In accordance with their own national conditions, countries should establish and improve laws and regulations, enhance the supervision and control of weapons and ammunition, strengthen border control, make every effort to prevent the flow of small arms and light weapons into illegal channels and effectively shoulder the responsibility of controlling the flow of small arms and light weapons within their borders. All countries should strictly implement the Security Council's arms embargo resolutions, refrain from transferring or selling weapons to countries subject to Security Council arms embargoes and earnestly fulfil their international obligations.

Secondly, the United Nations should play an active role. Preventing conflicts and maintaining peace are important responsibilities of the United Nations. Peace operations should perform their duties in strict accordance with their mandates and on the basis of respecting the sovereignty of the countries concerned and carefully listening to their wishes. They should provide capacity-building support to the countries concerned and help them to strengthen the control of small arms and light weapons. China attaches great importance to the Secretary-General's report on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839), supports the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations

agencies in continuing to work to that end and hopes that the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons will be fully and effectively implemented.

Thirdly, new technologies ought to be fully utilized. New materials and technologies make it easier to manufacture, design and move small arms and light weapons while adding to difficulties in tracing, supervising and regulating such weapons. Peace operations should capitalize on new technologies to pay close attention to the flow of small arms and light weapons in mission areas, effectively strengthening the early-warning and emergency-response capabilities of peacekeeping missions, striving to ensure the safety of peacekeepers and minimizing the risks resulting from the illegal flows of small arms and light weapons.

Fourthly, promoting development should be put on the agenda of work. Development is the master key to solving all problems. The international community should help the countries concerned to tackle poverty and backwardness, promote economic development, maintain social stability, achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and eliminate the triggers for trade in or use of small arms and light weapons.

At the general debate of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, China's president, His Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping, put forward the Global Development Initiative, which provides an impetus to help countries recover from the pandemic, promotes stronger, greener and healthier global development and open a propitious space for international development cooperation (see A/76/PV.3, A/76/332, annex VI). All countries in the world are welcome to join this initiative.

China has always attached great importance to addressing the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons and has adopted a prudent and reasonable attitude towards the exports of such weapons. China formally joined the Arms Trade Treaty in July 2020 and submitted its initial national report, which reflects its responsible attitude of actively participating in the governance of the global arms trade and towards maintaining international peace and security.

China actively engages in international cooperation with developing countries to combat the illegal flow of

small arms and light weapons and provides assistance to the best of its ability, including by establishing the China-Africa Peace and Security Cooperation Fund within the China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund in an effort to support the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative.

Combating the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons and building a world of lasting peace, universal security and freedom from gun violence are the shared dreams of people of all countries. China stands ready to work with the international community to take overarching and comprehensive measures that accommodate the interests of all parties, jointly crack down on the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons, make unstinting efforts to ensure the smooth conduct of peace operations, and safeguard international peace and security.

Mr. Abarry (Niger) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Kenya for organizing today's meeting on the issue of small arms and light weapons, on the occasion of the consideration of the seventh biennial report of the Secretary-General on small arms (S/2021/839), as mandated by Security Council resolution 2220 (2015). I would also like to thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Badreldin Elamin Abdelgadir and Mr. David Lochhead for their briefings.

This meeting is timely in that it will allow us to deepen the discussions that began at the recent Arria Formula meeting hosted by Mexico, as well as those that took place at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, which was held in New York from 26 to 30 July 2021.

The uncontrolled flow of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition continues to be a serious threat to international peace and security. The consequences of the circulation of these weapons are widely felt in all regions of the world. The spread of small arms sustains hotbeds of tension, paralyzes stabilization efforts and undermines humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilians. In short, it hinders the execution of the mandates of peacekeeping operations, especially in a context already marked by the expansion of international terrorism.

The Niger welcomes the fact that the Security Council has taken this problem into account in the mandates of peacekeeping operations, even though, despite all the efforts made, the control of illicit arms

remains a major challenge to the achievement of the objectives of peacemaking and peacebuilding.

If the responsibility for securing weapons on its territory lies with each country, the production and distribution of these weapons are the responsibility of those who manufacture them and not the victims of their use. This is the case even when the Security Council has decided to impose an embargo, which is the case in Libya.

My country also stresses the need to provide specialized training in the management of arms and ammunition prior to the deployment of peacekeepers, in order to facilitate the execution of mandates. We remain convinced that all solutions to the issue of small arms and light weapons necessarily require a stronger political commitment by States, given the transnational nature of the circulation of illicit weapons and all the geopolitical and economic implications thereof. Furthermore, we believe that, in addition to incorporating arms management into mandates, the Council must continually ensure that the host country's capacity to ensure the proper management of stocks of arms and ammunition is strengthened, in order to avoid any negative influence on the peacebuilding process.

In addition, the prevention of illicit arms trafficking can be ensured through the strengthening of border surveillance in cooperation with neighbouring countries, particularly in the implementation of preventive measures, information-sharing and the application of international conventions and programmes on the control of small arms. In Africa, these include the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative, the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons of the Economic Community of West African States, and the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, to name a few.

The Niger, a vast country at the crossroads of Africa that has already experienced problems of insecurity, has taken the measure of the threat posed by the uncontrolled circulation of light weapons by creating, on 28 November 1994, the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons. This entity has made a significant contribution to the control of illicit weapons, even though the porous nature of our borders makes its mission difficult. Efforts are continuing with the support of bilateral and multilateral partners, including the United Nations,

particularly in the area of humanitarian demining and capacity-building in tracing, marking and storage of small arms and light weapons.

I would like to commend the cooperation between the National Commission and agencies of the United Nations, which has made it possible, particularly on the border between Nigeria and the Niger where the circulation of these weapons remains a source of insecurity, to implement a project aimed at strengthening the capacities of the community police services and raising awareness among the populations of the communities concerned in the Maradi and Tahoua regions of the Niger. The project has also supported the Government's efforts aimed at ensuring the physical security of stockpiles and the marking and registration of weapons seized and/or collected from the population.

In the Sahel region, where the impact of the Libyan crisis illustrates what happens when small arms and light weapons circulate, as in other regions hosting peace operations, the prevention of arms trafficking is fundamentally based on the strengthening of peacemaking and peacebuilding initiatives, the reinforcement of State authority throughout the national territory and security sector reform. For this reason, it is important to strengthen the capacity of States to fight terrorism and support national strategies to contain the spread of small arms and light weapons. As has been established previously and elsewhere, women and children — who make up the majority of the population and who, moreover, are usually the first victims of the violence caused by the proliferation of small arms — must necessarily be involved in the fight against this serious phenomenon.

In conclusion, my delegation calls on all States Members of the United Nations to strengthen cooperation in controlling the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons in order to achieve the objective of silencing weapons. To that end, it is also important to promote the sharing of good practices in order to enrich one another and complete our action to appropriately manage this phenomenon at the regional and international level.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): I also thank the briefers for their concrete, comprehensive and very useful remarks today.

Protecting civilians against violence and threats of violence is a core objective for the Security Council

and for the mandates of peace operations. Illicit flows of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition undermine the effectiveness of peace operations, and the availability of such weapons serves to sustain and exacerbate armed conflict and pervasive crime.

These dangers threaten both the civilians living in conflict affected areas and the peacekeepers who risk their lives to protect them and may impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Children are disproportionately affected by small arms and light weapons and left vulnerable to injury, displacement and death, as well as to recruitment and use in armed conflict.

Illicit flows of small arms and light weapons have a particularly destabilizing effect, as they are uncontrolled weapons in the hands of terrorist or other groups with agendas to further unsettle often fragile situations. In that regard, Norway has several recommendations.

First, Norway encourages all Member States to support the Secretary-General's desire to mainstream small-arms measures in other thematic areas, including the protection of civilians, human rights, counter-terrorism, organized crime, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. All control initiatives for small arms and light weapons should be carried out with due attention to their potential impact on children — and I am glad that several colleagues highlighted this point today. We must take steps to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in small-arms control and recognize the gendered impacts of the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons. Gender-responsive small-arms control can help us better address this threat to international peace and security.

Secondly, the Security Council must promote an effective approach to weapons and ammunition management and continue to integrate it as a key pillar to support peace processes, good governance and the reduction of violence. Special emphasis should be placed on ensuring robust physical security and stockpile management. Furthermore, support for national efforts to manage weapons and ammunition in the context of peace operations should be strengthened, as that will reduce the harmful effects of illicit flows of small arms and light weapons.

Thirdly, we must continue to prioritize support for peace and reconciliation efforts, since parties to

conflict will be less prone to resort to armed violence if they are involved in a constructive political process or mediation.

Fourthly, we must continue to build on existing efforts to tackle the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition at the international, regional, subregional and national levels. We saw positive developments at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action and at the Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, and we can look to models such as the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States and the African Union's Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative.

Finally, we would like to thank Kenya and Mexico for working together to ensure that this issue stays on the Council's agenda.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Kenya.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu, Mr. Abdelgadir and Mr. Lochhead for their insightful briefings and for joining us today

The continued proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons is exacerbating conflicts, sparking refugee flows and internal displacement, intensifying the threat of terrorism, undermining the rule of law, complicating conflict-resolution efforts, threatening and frustrating peacekeeping operations and generally fuelling a culture of violence and impunity. They may be small and light, but that is exactly what makes them more dangerous, especially when placed in the wrong hands. By their very nature, small arms are easy to acquire, use, transport and conceal.

The destructive global impact of illicit small arms and light weapons and their ammunition makes it an issue of concern for international peace and security. Indeed, their impact goes beyond the context of peace operations, which is our focus today, to reach other areas of concern to the Security Council, including the protection of civilians, counter-terrorism and children in armed conflict, among others.

Against that backdrop, Kenya welcomes the biennial report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839), pursuant to resolution 2220 (2015). From the report, it is eminently evident that the Council must remain actively seized of this matter. We note that a lot of work has been done since

the previous report (S/2019/1011), but we have had to contend with pandemic-related complications and their effects on peace efforts globally.

Of critical importance is that the Secretary-General's report details several conflict situations under the Council's purview where peace efforts have been undermined by the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. We therefore wish to underscore the following imperatives in our collective efforts to address this challenge, including within the context of peace operations.

First, there is need for a comprehensive architecture built by collaboration and coordination among the relevant United Nations organs and agencies, regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society. That emerged clearly during the seventh Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, which Kenya had the privilege to chair.

Secondly, the strength of regional initiatives, as exemplified by the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, is undeniable. The initiatives of regional organizations, including the African Union's initiatives to silence the guns by 2020 and Agenda 2063, as well as those of several regional, subregional and national institutions on relevant aspects, such as securing storage for weapons and ammunition, as well as raising awareness and collecting and destroying illicit small arms and light weapons, should be supported.

Thirdly, Council mandates must be strengthened. In addition to the reporting by the Secretary-General on this issue, the Security Council should emphasize supporting Governments in affected areas to enhance their capacity to monitor proliferation trends, undertake security sector reforms and implement disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in a coordinated manner.

Fourthly, we call for strengthening the capacity of United Nations missions and Governments in weapons and ammunition management, which is critical to the prevention of the diversion and illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

As a final point, there is a need for the Security Council to consider the issue of small arms and light weapons in the Council's preventive efforts so as to pre-empt the outbreak and entrenchment of conflict.

In conclusion, I again emphasize Kenya's support for continued discussion on this subject with a view to seeking effective ways of supporting peace operations. We ask the members of the Council to identify areas of convergence in today's briefing and to use them to build consensus as we look to continue the consideration of this matter in the days ahead. The impact of illicit

small arms and light weapons across the files in the Council is undeniable. It is critical that we take it up.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.