



# Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

**8909**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Monday, 22 November 2021, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Casaubón/Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco . . . . . (Mexico)

*Members:*

China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Jun
Estonia . . . . .	Mr. Jürgenson
France . . . . .	Mrs. Gasri
India . . . . .	Mr. Bhattacharyya
Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Byrne Nason
Kenya . . . . .	Mr. Kimani
Niger . . . . .	Mr. Abarry
Norway . . . . .	Ms. Juul
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines . . . . .	Ms. DeShong
Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Laouani
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Roscoe
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. DeLaurentis
Viet Nam . . . . .	Mr. Dang

## Agenda

### Small arms

The impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security

Letter dated 22 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2021/892)

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In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of Security Council members dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this official record of the Security Council will be supplemented by a compilation of annexes (S/2021/966) containing the statements submitted by interested non-members of the Council.



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

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Small arms**

#### **The impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security**

#### **Letter dated 22 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2021/892)**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Morocco, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Robin Geiss, Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research; and Ms. María Pía Devoto, member of the Control Arms Governance Board.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Silvio Gonzato, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; and Ms. Laetitia Courtois, Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations.

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/2021/892, which contains a letter dated 22 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Mr. Geiss.

**Mr. Geiss** (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to address the Council, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mexico for having invited the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) to speak.

*(spoke in English)*

The diversion of and trafficking in arms, including small arms and light weapons and ammunition, is a defining factor in undermining peace and security.

Throughout the life cycle of arms and ammunition — from production through to final use or destruction — there are contexts, conditions and moments that facilitate their diversion and trafficking to non-State armed groups, criminals and terrorist actors. The use of these weapons by those entities and individuals destabilizes communities and exacerbates situations of insecurity, including through the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, as well as violence against women and children in various contexts.

The negative, gendered and age-related impacts of the misuse of illicit arms and ammunition range from direct effects — including deaths, injuries, displacement and psychological harm — to long-term socioeconomic effects on, inter alia, access to health care and education, the delivery of humanitarian services, the protection of civilians and sustainable development.

The illicit arms trade is dynamic, multifaceted and often context specific. When loopholes and gaps are closed in one domain, vulnerabilities are exploited in another. States affected by patterns of recurring armed violence therefore face many challenges in preventing the diversion and misuse of arms.

Research into what facilitates diversion, how and where it occurs and who is involved reveals the importance of putting in place systemic and practical national measures at key stages in the life cycle to prevent, detect and address diversion and trafficking in arms. A UNIDIR review of 200 documented diversion cases highlighted the importance of taking action to prevent and detect diversion not only from national stockpiles, but also from the country of manufacture and export. UNIDIR's diversion analysis framework shows the importance for all United Nations Member States to remain vigilant in addressing the diversion or

trafficking of arms and ammunition at key stages in their life cycle.

In that regard, it is encouraging that Member States are already taking important steps and have started discussing and addressing diversion in a comprehensive manner, as we have seen, for example, in the recent report produced by the Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to resolution 61/72 and the annual General Assembly resolution on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.

National ownership is fundamental to effectively tackling diversion and arms trafficking; however, we will not achieve success without international cooperation and assistance. Many States need and seek support in identifying priority areas and in sequencing steps to establish and maintain national systems to address the drivers of demand and supply-side dynamics of illicit arms and ammunition proliferation.

UNIDIR develops and provides tools to strengthen national ownership of weapons and ammunition management throughout their entire life cycle. Between 2015 and 2020, the Institute supported 11 States in conducting weapons and ammunition management baseline assessments. Such assessments enable States to comprehensively and systematically evaluate their relevant institutions, policies and operational processes in order to determine where and how to address gaps and build capacity.

Today, weapons and ammunition management is increasingly recognized as a fundamental component of conflict prevention and actions to tackle armed violence. The Secretary-General's small arms reports to the Security Council now regularly feature a section on weapons and ammunition management. The concept of weapons and ammunition management is also increasingly reflected in resolutions adopted by the Council on arms embargoes and peace operations.

In a recent study, we highlighted several ways in which weapons and ammunition management plays a role in United Nations arms embargo regimes, including, first, for the development and tailoring of benchmarks for modifying arms embargoes and for the conduct of national assessments of arms and ammunition control capabilities; secondly, for the promotion of cooperative approaches and dialogue to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of arms embargoes;

and thirdly, regarding the use of appropriate safeguards for incremental lifting of arms embargoes.

Our research in support of action 21 of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament found that peace operations often gather and have access to critical information for supporting arms embargo implementation and enforcement, as well as conventional arms control efforts more broadly. They do not, however, systematically integrate conventional arms control measures into their conflict prevention and management toolbox. UNIDIR is developing arms-related risk analysis tools that can help peace operations to better integrate conventional arms control measures into their conflict prevention, management and peacebuilding efforts.

An increasing number of stakeholders — both within and outside the United Nations system — are starting to utilize more comprehensive, integrated approaches to weapons and ammunition management. This provides an opportune moment for an inclusive, participatory and gender-sensitive international dialogue towards a more coherent and strategic approach to strengthening multilateral, regional and national policies and practices on weapons and ammunition management. Advancing a United Nations strategic approach to weapons and ammunition management could further enhance multilateral efforts to deliver peace, security, stability and development around the world.

Please allow me, in conclusion, to underline that UNIDIR stands ready to continue to provide applied and forward-looking research, innovative ideas, advisory services and fora for inclusive dialogue to tackle the diversion and trafficking of arms and ammunition.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Geiss for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Devoto.

**Ms. Devoto** (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Control Arms Governance Board, I want to express my deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, and to your colleagues for leading this debate on a fundamental issue for international peace and security. I would also like to highlight Mexico's strong support for and alliance with civil society.

Control Arms, which today has 150 civil society member organizations, was created to influence the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The

ATT is the first global treaty to regulate the international arms trade and to incorporate international human rights law and international humanitarian law as standards to restrict its use. The Treaty plays a leading role in preventing the illicit trade in and diversion of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons.

The devastating impact of the illicit trafficking and misuse of small arms by State and non-State actors is felt most acutely among communities in conflict-affected regions, where those weapons perpetuate a vicious cycle of violence and insecurity and fuel violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, intracommunity tensions, gender-based violence and forced displacement.

In other contexts, the illicit trafficking and diversion of small arms and the retransfer of those weapons to unauthorized end users generate high levels of armed violence and fuel crime and terrorism. For these reasons, it is in the interest of all States that seek to promote human security, as well as national, regional and international security and stability, to do everything possible to address the problem of illicit trafficking and the diversion of small arms.

States have various instruments, agreements and mechanisms at their disposal to detect, combat and prevent illicit trafficking and diversion of small arms and light weapons. Among them are the Arms Trade Treaty, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; the International Tracing Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; the Firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime; the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium; and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. Regional instruments and initiatives that support small arms regulation, such as the African Union Silencing Guns by 2020 initiative, are also vital to that effort. According to Security Council resolution 2220 (2015), recognizing the synergies among those instruments and taking measures for their implementation would have a positive impact on reducing illicit traffic and the diversion of small arms and light weapons.

The Arms Trade Treaty, for example, requires States parties to develop national control systems

to address diversion, among other measures. Recent work under the Treaty includes a specific focus on the diversion of conventional arms, including stockpile management, with mechanisms that are explicitly tasked with addressing diversion — for example, the Diversion Information Exchange Forum — to share information and consult on real cases of diversion. The ATT also specifically enforces Security Council arms embargoes.

It is encouraging that, with the recent accession of China, three of the five permanent members of the Security Council and six of the current elected members are States parties to the ATT. Control Arms calls on all United Nations Member States to join the Treaty as a matter of urgency.

Mandatory Security Council arms embargoes are undermined by violations by Members of the United Nations and non-State actors. The United Nations panels or groups of experts in charge of monitoring compliance with arms embargoes have systematically highlighted problems associated with their application and made recommendations to address them. The most egregious recent example is the Libyan embargo, which in March this year was described by the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) as “totally ineffective”. Control Arms calls on the Security Council to do more to support the work of panels of experts and to take action against those known to be actively undermining Security Council embargoes, including through the more regular application of secondary sanctions.

To continue tackling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Control Arms urges the Security Council to prioritize the effective implementation of the established global framework and mechanisms regulating the international trade in conventional arms and to encourage others to do likewise; to promote and seek synergies between international and regional efforts to detect, combat and prevent the illicit trafficking and diversion of arms; and to review, revitalize and develop its commitment to resolution 2220 (2015).

The Council has at its disposal the tools, knowledge and experience to combat illicit trafficking and diversion of small arms and light weapons — it is a matter of finding the political will to do so. Control Arms is hopeful that Mexico’s efforts to lead in this area of the Security Council’s work will be rewarded by meaningful action.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Devoto for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

It is, of course, my honour to lead this Security Council debate. I am grateful for the presence of the many delegations that have come together to discuss the important issue of the impact of the diversion and illicit trafficking of arms on peace and security.

The illicit trafficking and diversion of small arms and light weapons, as well as their accumulation and proliferation in various parts of the world, constitute a threat to international peace and security. Arms trafficking is a global phenomenon that severely affects the civilian population in multiple dimensions, destroying the social fabric and fuelling violence, especially against vulnerable groups. It generates displacement and irregular flows of people wishing to escape from contexts of insecurity.

Many efforts have been undertaken by the United Nations to strengthen cooperation and joint action to prevent and counteract illegal practices in the small arms and light weapons market, as well as the terrible consequences of such weapons. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that our efforts have been insufficient.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects; the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; the Arms Trade Treaty; efforts on behalf of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms; and the specific work of the Security Council through the establishment and monitoring of arms embargoes are clear examples whereby the international community has shown its willingness to comprehensively address that challenge through specific mandates, recommendations and common lines of action.

We must, however, do more. We must do more to reduce the diversion and trafficking of arms and their negative consequences, particularly in countries struggling with high levels of criminal violence.

In Mexico, we believe that Governments and the private sector must work together to curb arms trafficking and its harmful effects on populations. Private actors must contribute, through decisive actions in favour of self-regulation and monitoring of their supply chains, to preventing the diversion and illicit trafficking of the weapons they produce and market, as well as ensuring that the weapons they manufacture legally do not fall into the hands of criminals.

The figures on civilian deaths in armed conflict caused by small arms and light weapons, as well as the number of fatalities due to armed violence in non-conflict situations, are alarming. Various sources estimate that, every day, around 500 people lose their lives and another 2,000 are wounded by firearms across the world. In our region, Latin America, the annual figures for gun violence and deaths are even higher than those observed in many of the areas recognized as being in a state of armed conflict. Approximately 75 per cent of homicides and femicides involve a weapon of that nature.

I cannot neglect to mention the disproportionate impact of the trafficking and diversion of small arms and light weapons on women and children. According to figures provided by the United Nations, more than 8,000 children have been killed or maimed in 21 situations of armed conflict. While the availability of weapons affects both women and men, it is imperative to acknowledge the gendered impact of the trafficking and diversion of such weapons as facilitators of all forms of violence, including sexual violence in conflict, and many other dynamics that affect the integrity and lives of women and children.

The diagnosis of the issue of the uncontrolled global flow of arms is clear and compelling. The Arria Formula meeting convened by my country in September, the flagship event chaired by Kenya last month (see S/PV.8874) and the briefings we have just heard all confirm the magnitude of the problem.

The common thread during Mexico's presidency of the Security Council has been prevention, in particular the need to address the various catalysts of violence. What better way to prevent the escalation of armed conflict than through actions that truly address the trafficking and diversion of arms and ammunition? It is a phenomenon that is present in all armed conflicts, severely affecting the civilian population in multiple dimensions, destroying the social fabric and fuelling

violence, particularly against the most vulnerable groups. In contrast, the companies that produce and distribute those weapons, through irresponsible practices, maintain abundant and growing revenues.

To put it plainly and simply, if there were no almost unlimited availability of arms, most armed conflict situations on the Council's agenda would have a better chance of reaching a peaceful solution. As long as actors in conflict situations, especially non-State actors and mercenary and criminal groups, maintain their military and material might, they will choose force over dialogue, politics and diplomacy. The situations in Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia or Yemen, to name but a few, would be very different if there were better control over cross-border arms trafficking.

Our actions, as an international community, must recognize that combating trafficking and diversion at both the source and destination is our shared responsibility and that those actions must be complementary at all levels.

At the bilateral level, for example, in early August the Mexican Government filed a lawsuit against private companies in the United States for intentional and negligent practices in the production and marketing of weapons that encourage illegal trafficking and, consequently, affect our population and increase levels of violence. The lawsuit is not about questioning the right of countries and individuals to trade arms legally, but rather denouncing negligent practices that have serious consequences for other populations. Mexico's claim asserts that certain negligent practices in that trade generate serious harm to our societies. We consider that litigation to be a matter of principle and a moral obligation so as to avoid further pain and suffering. Thousands of families have already been affected by the use of illegally trafficked weapons, even if they are classified as small and light.

At the regional level, we have a rich array of treaties and initiatives in various geographical areas. The African Union's Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative, the Western Balkans road map and the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials clearly demonstrate the development of visions and strategies that respond to the particularities and needs of each region.

In the multilateral context, the primacy of the United Nations and such instruments as the Arms Trade Treaty, the Programme of Action on Small Arms, the International Tracing Instrument, and the Firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, are clear examples of the resolve that the international community has shown to comprehensively address this challenge, by generating specific mandates, recommendations and common lines of action.

It is precisely in the context of the Security Council that my country believes that serious discussions must be held on the tangible impacts of diversion and trafficking, as well as on the decisions that this organ could promote to strengthen cooperation and better implement international commitments. The aim is not to replace, but to strengthen the efforts already undertaken in other forums of the United Nations system.

Mexico firmly believes that it is not enough for the Council to promote and strengthen weapons and ammunition systems; rather, it is imperative to address the entire life cycle of arms, including brokering, transfer and end users. We must adopt a preventive approach to our work, as discussed here just last week (see S/PV.8906), in order to improve the identification of risks and prevent weapons from falling into the wrong hands.

The mandates of peacekeeping missions and the renewal of sanctions regimes are strengthened by components aimed at preventing and countering the trafficking and diversion of arms and their weapons. As an example, we believe that progress has been made in the resolutions on the renewal of the mandates of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, as they contain elements that reinforce this perspective.

It is equally important to strengthen effective and comprehensive border controls and to promote coordination among the authorities of the different countries through which these weapons transit. That is one recommendation in the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/839), which seems to us to be very relevant for future Council action.

These and other considerations should be based on timely information generated in the field to ensure that all decisions are taken in accordance with reality

and in response to the continually changing dynamics. We therefore encourage the generation of rigorous statistical databases and accurate diagnostics on the dynamics, routes and trends in arms trafficking and diversion in situations of armed conflict and on their humanitarian consequences.

Mexico is convinced that, by fully complying with the Council's mandates and avoiding any duplication of effort with other multilateral bodies, forums or processes, we can contribute to establishing an international regime that allows for better control of arms and ammunition transfers and a more responsible trade that prevents diversion and cross-border trafficking.

Ensuring security in our countries and societies will be possible only with the commitment and action of all relevant actors: Governments, organizations and businesses. We have an opportunity to demonstrate to our societies that we are capable of redoubling our efforts towards sustainable peace and development as the only priorities for States, by effectively preventing the diversion and trafficking of arms and contributing to the achievement of Target 16.4 of the Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mexico calls emphatically for the establishment and improvement of mechanisms to monitor and prevent international illicit arms transfers, the diversion of the arms trade and cross-border trafficking. At the same time, it draws the attention of Governments to encourage our respective private sectors to come together to establish self-regulatory measures, in accordance with national legislation, to prevent their business practices from actively encouraging the illicit trafficking of their products.

Before concluding, I would like to thank and acknowledge the large number of delegations present at this open debate. That in itself attests to the priority of this issue at a global level.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to those Council members wishing to make statements.

**Mr. Bhattacharyya** (India): I thank you, Mr. President, Your Excellency Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico. I also thank the Director of United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Mr. Robin Geiss, and the member of the Control Arms Governance Board, Ms. María Pía Devoto, for their briefings.

The threat posed by the illicit transfer and illegal diversion of small arms to international peace and security is a matter of concern to the entire international community. It has a cross-cutting negative impact on development, security, humanitarian and socioeconomic aspects. The fact that the Security Council members have discussed this complex and multidimensional problem for three consecutive months, formally and informally, reflects the critical nature of the issue and the need for a sense of urgency in addressing it.

India's views on the issue of illicit transfer of small arms are well known. We consider that the primary responsibility for addressing the problem lies with the Member States. In that regard, India supports the redoubling of efforts at the national and global levels to strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, including through effective national legislative measures and enforcement, export controls, information-sharing and capacity-building.

I will highlight three key aspects today.

The first aspect concerns the impact of the continued flow of small arms and light weapons to terrorists and terrorist groups. These 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. The increase in the volume and the quality of the small arms acquired by terrorist organizations reminds us time and again that they cannot exist without the sponsorship or support of States. It is also well known that some States are using advanced technologies, such as drones, for cross-border supply of illicit weapons to terrorist groups, in violation of the sovereignty of other Member States. This aspect needs to be unequivocally condemned.

We also call for greater focus on the terror-crime nexus, in particular the thriving illicit network for the procurement and transfer of small arms and the financing for such procurement and logistical activities. The Security Council and the international community should do more to prevent and disrupt such networks.

Secondly, there is a need for effective implementation of Council-mandated arms embargoes. It is an established fact that the flow of illicit arms

and weapons to non-State actors and terrorist groups drives and sustains conflicts. In that regard, the arms embargo remains an important tool that the Council has 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.

Thirdly, with regard to the impact of illicit flows on the safety of United Nations peacekeepers, the steady and illicit supply of small arms to warring parties in situations of armed conflict seriously impairs the safety of United Nations peacekeepers deployed in these areas. The Council is aware of numerous incidents in the past, which are recorded in the reports of the Secretary-General, where attacks on peacekeepers, many of them fatal, have been perpetrated using such illegal arms. It is therefore 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 this issue during the consideration of peacekeeping mandates.

The role of United Nations peacekeeping missions in addressing this issue must also be clearly laid out in their respective mandates. While peacekeeping missions could support host countries through strengthening the capacities of law enforcement and security agencies in the safe handling, upkeep and stockpile management of arms and weapons recovered from non-State actors, they must be equipped with adequate resources and expertise to fulfil this responsibility. In this regard, we welcome the proposal in the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/839) to establish a dedicated component or a unit within peacekeeping missions to handle such assistance, wherever required.

India has actively contributed to the multilateral framework to address the problem of the illicit transfer of small arms. In 2002-2003, we were privileged to chair the Group of Governmental Experts, whose recommendations led to the Open-ended Working Group to negotiate the International Tracing Instrument (ITI). India believes that the full implementation of the ITI is necessary for tackling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

At the national level, India has a robust legislative and administrative mechanism to combat and eradicate the menace of illicit small arms, the details of which can be found in our national reports regularly submitted to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. Further, India has been regularly submitting its national reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. India also maintains strict export controls over all munitions and related items, including small arms. India is also a member of the Wassenaar Arrangement. India believes that international cooperation and assistance, including capacity-building, should be pursued in parallel for the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all Its Aspects and the ITI.

Let me conclude by reaffirming that India remains fully committed to implementing its international obligations pertaining to the prevention, combating and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms.

**Mr. Abarry (Niger)** (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would like to thank your country, Mexico, for having chosen to organize today's debate on such an important and timely topic as the problem of the diversion of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons in connection with insecurity. As indicated in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the subject (S/2021/839), the problem of small arms and light weapons (SALW) remains a matter of great concern in the world, given its impact on the maintenance of peace and the stability of several States. I would like to thank the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and Ms. Devoto for their excellent briefings.

Most of the atrocities committed in conflict and post-conflict zones are due to the use of small arms and light weapons by non-State armed actors, who obtain them with great ease, with a view to creating a climate of insecurity and widespread terror. The illicit diversion and transfer of small arms and light weapons contributes to sending regions in crisis into situations of vulnerability and keeping them there, undermining their development efforts and, consequently, their ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In countries hosting United Nations peace operations, the uncontrolled flow of small arms and light weapons fuels intercommunal conflicts, especially



in the context of international terrorism, where even peacekeepers are directly targeted by frequent lethal attacks. These illicit weapons fuel conflicts between communities that once lived in symbiosis through the years. The battle for access to natural resources that have become scarce owing to the impact of climate change, such as water and grazing land, is being waged through the use of firearms in regions like the Sahel. The Secretary-General's 2021 report on small arms rightly reminds us that small arms are still the primary cause of human suffering, especially among women and children, who are usually the prime targets of non-State armed actors and organized crime.

We welcome and support the efforts of the United Nations in the framework of the Secretary-General's "Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament", an agenda initiated in May 2018 that has greatly contributed to saving human lives by supporting national, subregional, and regional efforts to control illicit arms. In Africa, the continent most affected by insecurity, Member States have taken initiatives to alleviate the scourge of arms trafficking that fuels the suffering of populations affected by growing insecurity. These include the African Union's "Silencing the Guns by 2030" 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, all of which deserve to be supported and encouraged.

For its part, Niger, having taken the measure of the threat posed by the uncontrolled circulation of light weapons in the context of the fight against terrorism, created the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons in 1994. Despite the porous nature of borders, this structure has made a significant contribution to the control of illicit weapons, thanks to the support of bilateral and multilateral partners, including the United Nations, especially in the area of humanitarian demining and capacity-building in the tracing, marking and storage of these weapons. We remain convinced that all solutions to the issue of illicit transfers and accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons require a stronger political commitment from States, given the transnational nature of the circulation of illicit arms and all its geopolitical and economic implications.

That is why the Niger calls on the Council to further strengthen measures to curb the illicit trade of SALW, which are conflict multiplier; to place greater emphasis

on conflict prevention in order to minimize the risk of diversion and illicit sale of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized persons, so as to limit the risk of conflict in the world; to ensure full compliance with all binding legal instruments on the arms trade in order to avoid the diversion and illicit transfer of small arms; to strengthen the capacities of States to fight terrorism and give more support to national initiatives to control the illicit flow of small arms; to ensure the involvement of women and young people, who are the main victims of the diversion and illicit trafficking of small arms, in the search for solutions to this scourge; and finally, to encourage and support States to improve stockpile management and the taking into account of international SALW tracing instruments, in particular in cases where sanctions regimes impose this obligation.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the search for and consolidation of peace remain dependent on controlling access of armed non-State actors to weapons. The United Nations must be more vigilant on this issue, in particular by re-examining its arms embargo regime, which, while it regulates the flow of arms to States, struggles to be effective for armed groups that easily acquire equipment on a market made easily accessible by crises and porous borders. It is also high time that vigorous measures be taken to break the vicious circle of conflict fuelled by arms acquired through illicit trafficking in minerals. The situations in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo are eloquent examples in this regard.

**Mr. Roscoe** (United Kingdom): We welcome you, Mr. President, as well as Minister Bhattacharya, to the Security Council today. It is good to see you. As you said in your statement, the diversion and misuse of small arms and light weapons costs hundreds of thousands of lives each year. And as the latest Secretary-General's report (S/2021/839) once again makes clear, illicit small arms undermine security and sustainable development, drive conflict and fuel crime and terrorism — all of which falls squarely within the Council's remit.

I want to turn first to the important role the Security Council can play in supporting efforts to address illicit flows of small arms and light weapons. Mexico has rightly brought particular attention to our arms embargoes. In order to be effective, it is vital that embargoes are properly implemented and enforced. Ms. Devoto spelled out very clearly the advantages of properly implementing them and the costs of not doing so.

We thank the various panels of experts for the important oversight and implementation support that they provide. Additionally, weapons and ammunition management support is being provided in a range of settings also on the Council's agenda. That assistance should draw on recognized sources of best practices, such as the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines.

By restricting illicit weapon flows, arms embargoes can also present space and opportunity to strengthen State security institutions more widely, which is why the Council should think very carefully before lifting them. Where appropriate, the Council should support this opportunity through mandating missions to provide security reform assistance and should lift embargoes only when States are fully ready to take responsibility for preventing small arms diversion and misuse.

As in all areas, sustainable peace requires the full and active participation of women. That applies equally to responses to small arms trafficking. The Secretary-General's report makes clear the horrific impact of the misuse of such weapons, particularly on women and girls, and we fully support the report's recommendations to the Council in that regard.

The Council should mandate the United Nations to do more in these areas, as well as to identify and transfer best practices and to better gather, pool and share disaggregated data on small and illicit arms and their effects in conflicts on the Council's agenda. However, activity mandated by the Council should recognize the specificities of each situation and the fine political balances within peace operations rather than being too directive.

Effective control of small arms and light weapons must play an important part in our wider approach to conflict prevention. The United Kingdom is pleased to support the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in a project to integrate conventional arms control into the Organization's conflict-prevention work, as we heard today. We completed a new risk-analysis tool kit that will strengthen understanding of the risks and impact of arms and how conventional arms control can contribute to United Nations conflict prevention, management and resolution.

But States must also recognize their responsibilities in this area, as other speakers have said. Small arms trafficking networks operate internationally, and

all States can support conflict-affected regions by implementing their own robust export control and customs systems. The Arms Trade Treaty is a key multilateral tool to ensure a well-regulated, legal trade in conventional arms and to address illicit transfers. We continue to encourage all States to ratify and accede to the Treaty.

For our part, the United Kingdom will continue to support other policy initiatives in this area such as the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, as they seek to establish better standards for the safe storing of ammunition. We will also continue to partner with other States to strengthen arms control frameworks through national legislation in order to implement better stockpile management procedures and to tackle the grave challenges recognized by our briefers today.

The United Kingdom peacekeepers on patrol in Mali have seen how a limited number of small arms can be used to terrorize and abuse communities. Where they can, they have confiscated and destroyed such weapons, but it would be much more effective to work together in order to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands in the first place. The Council should do everything in its power to work to ensure that. As Ms. Devoto said — the tools, knowledge and experience are all there; what we require is political will.

**Mr. Jürgenson** (Estonia): I too thank Mexico for convening this meeting and today's briefers for their informative and insightful contributions.

The illicit flow, widespread availability and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition remain a highly worrisome problem and a major challenge for the international community. The fact that since 2007, with the adoption of its first presidential statement on this matter (S/PRST/2007/24), the Security Council has repeatedly expressed concern over the impact of the illicit transfer and misuse of small arms to peace and security, demonstrates well the complexity and size of this challenge. It is a challenge that requires concerted efforts and strong political will at the national, regional and global levels.

Governments that control or transfer weapons have a key role to play in ensuring that the trade, use and storage of the arms take place in a responsible and accountable manner. In order to detect and disrupt illicit flows of small arms, national legislations

need to include adequate arms control frameworks, including relevant stockpile management procedures, law enforcement and criminal justice responses. We support the Security Council-mandated role in peace operations to assist Government efforts to manage small arms management and enhance their capacities to track and trace the origins of illicit small arms and ammunition in conflict situations.

Regional efforts remain critical. In 2018, the European Union adopted its strategy against illicit SALW and their Ammunition, entitled “Securing arms, protecting citizens”. We support and commend other regional initiatives in this area. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Caribbean Community have all adopted road maps and frameworks tailored to specific regional needs and circumstances.

While national and regional controls are important, the increasing globalization of arms transfers calls for international measures. We emphasize the value of arms embargoes imposed by the Council and their full implementation.

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

We also call on all States to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held this year under the leadership of Kenya, brought positive developments. We strongly support the International Tracing Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Marking, tracing and systematic and appropriate record-keeping is essential in order to effectively combat diversion and illicit trafficking of small arms.

Small arms — within and beyond conflict — impact children, women and men differently. As the Secretary-General notes in his latest report (S/2021/839), conflicts fuelled by the availability of small arms have grave implications for children and often deny them their basic

rights. Armed violence, including sexual- and gender-based violence, is often abetted by armed intimidation. Therefore, it remains essential to fully integrate gender considerations into all efforts to prevent and combat the risk of the misuse, diversion and illicit circulation of small arms so that the gendered aspects of armed violence are adequately addressed. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in decision-making processes in that area is essential.

Estonia is committed to preventing and curbing the diversion and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. We urge all countries to join in strengthening the implementation of the existing commitments and obligations in the field.

**Mr. Laouani** (Tunisia): We thank Mexico for scheduling this open debate focusing on the impact of the diversion and trafficking of small arms on peace and security. We would also like to welcome your participation, Mr. Minister, at today’s meeting. I would also like to thank Mr. Robin Geiss, Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, and Ms. María Pía Devoto, member of the Control Arms Governance Board, for their briefings.

As underlined on many occasions, the illicit transfer, diversion and use of small arms and light weapons continue 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.

We reiterate the view that issues related to the illicit transfer, diversion and use of small arms and light weapons should be addressed by the Security Council 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 Council, and we would like to stress the following points.

First, the Security Council should ensure the implementation of the arms embargoes upon which it decides. It is indeed deeply concerning that arms embargoes, which can play an important role in countering the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons, continue in many cases to be violated, sometimes openly. The timely exchange of information among Member States, panels of experts, peace missions and other United Nations entities on such violations

should be encouraged to facilitate the identification and the dismantling of the illicit sources of transfer.

Secondly, United Nations peace operations should be well resourced and trained not only to be able to properly control their own weapons and ammunition, but also to be in a position to contribute to the reinforcement of the capacities of host Governments in fields such as the treatment of recovered illicit weapons and ammunition, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform. The mandates of United Nations missions could also be strengthened to include, where relevant, the identification of the sources of illicit arms flows, measures to disrupt those flows and the monitoring of arms embargoes.

Thirdly, the Security Council should 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 2020 initiative. In that regard, we welcome the continued contributions of the United Nations and international partners to the implementation of that initiative.

Fourthly, the Security Council should further consider and incorporate a gender dimension when addressing the issues related to small arms and light weapons,

Last but not least, the Security Council should continue to support the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as relevant disarmament and arms control instruments.

In conclusion, for its part, Tunisia, which does not produce or export weapons of any kind, remains committed to supporting 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.

**Ms. Juul** (Norway): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Robin Geiss, Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, and Ms. María Pía Devoto for their important insights. I also thank Mexico for convening this very important open debate and appreciate your presence, Mr. President, here among us today.

For Norway, it is paramount to contribute to reducing the human suffering linked to the trafficking and diversion of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. Every year, more than 200,000 lives are lost to small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition. Those weapons have serious humanitarian impacts and contribute to exacerbating conflict and pervasive crime globally.

Norway is particularly concerned over the disproportionate impact that such arms have on women and children. We must take steps to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in processes aimed at preventing the diversion and trafficking of SALW and recognize the gendered impacts of the illicit flows of those weapons. In addition, we must ensure that children are better protected from the harmful effects of such weapons.

That is also relevant to the Security Council's work on children and armed conflict, as children are particularly vulnerable to violence from small arms in situations of armed conflict, since they can be more exposed to recruitment and use by armed forces and groups.

Norway contributes to the better regulation of the global arms trade, leading to fewer weapons at large and less abuse from SALW and their ammunition. We are a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty and work with partners to involve more States in that vital global effort. Norway is also a major supporter of efforts to build capacity in States with weak national export-control systems and has contributed financially to the Treaty's voluntary trust fund.

An emphasis on weapons and ammunition management and physical security and stockpile management can help to prevent the flow of arms from the licit to the illicit realm. Furthermore, it is important to take an evidence-based approach to developing strategies through an analysis of ongoing diversion trends, which must be tailored to regional and national contexts. Norway applauds initiatives such as the African Union's Silencing the Guns by 2020, the Regional Centre on Small Arms and various regional road maps in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Western Balkans for doing just that. We also support the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's seventh biennial report on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839).

The Security Council has the ability to specifically impact diversion and trafficking during active force and deployment operations. But we must not forget that the diversion of international transfers of arms and related items can happen at all stages in the transfer chain and life cycle of the arms. For that reason, it is also necessary to be vigilant outside conflict settings in order to prevent diversion. We must all work together to ensure that we mitigate the negative impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security.

**Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland): I want to begin by thanking Mexico for convening today's important meeting and to thank you, Mr. Minister, for personally being here with us today. I also welcome Minister Bhattacharyya from India, my neighbour here at the table. I would also like to thank Director Geiss and Ms. María Pía Devoto for their insightful briefings to us this morning. Their tireless advocacy and valuable research on these important issues is really critical and deeply appreciated by us.

We all know that the illicit transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons poses a significant threat to international peace and security right across the Council's agenda and so is rightly the focus of our discussions here today. Those arms fuel and prolong conflict; they cause the majority of violent deaths in conflict and non-conflict settings; they facilitate more human rights abuses than any other weapon; and they perpetuate insecurity while impeding humanitarian and economic development. It is crystal clear that it is the responsibility of those of us around this table to address that complex threat.

It is for that reason that we support the ongoing work here in the Council, led by the Mexican presidency, to prevent and reduce illicit flows of those weapons, including through more efficient implementation of United Nations embargoes. The truth is, we need to do more. That will be a valuable contribution to the Council's work in addressing the problem. I would like to commend you, Sir, and the Mexican team for the important initiative that you have taken here.

I would like to make three important points on the issue of small arms and light weapons.

First, understanding the problem is essential to treating it. That holds true for illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. As the Secretary-General sets out in his Agenda for Disarmament, addressing the availability, accumulation and

management of arms should be at the core of conflict prevention and management, crisis response and peacebuilding services.

The Council must deal consistently with the impact of illicit small arms and light weapons as a driver of conflict. It is important to identify and eliminate illicit trafficking routes and points of diversion. By doing so, we can hope to prevent illicit transfers and better protect our civilians. Equally, we should apply lessons learned from the various United Nations arms embargoes, as appropriate, to ensure they effectively reduce illicit flows and diversion of small arms. Implementing the recommendations from the Secretary-General's report, as well as those of the expert panels supporting sanctions committees, is an important step to deliver on that.

My second point may seem obvious, but it is critical: we simply have to work together. We share a collective responsibility to stem illicit conventional arms and to enforce United Nations arms embargoes. International cooperation, capacity-building and information-sharing are critical, including to ensure effective weapons tracing. Coordination of efforts at the United Nations level and in working with relevant international and regional partners is essential. We need to look at how to ensure that our work on those issues at the United Nations, in the Council, in the General Assembly and under the Arms Trade Treaty is mutually supportive in pursuit of common goals while, of course, respecting the different mandates.

United Nations peace operations mandated by the Council can play a crucial role. However, those mandates require clear objectives and, importantly, specialized resources to implement them. Regional approaches also play an instrumental role, including the African Union's Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative and regional road maps such as those implemented in the Caribbean, East Africa and the Western Balkans.

My third and final point is in relation to gender. We simply must ensure that women are fully involved in the design and implementation of efforts to stop the illicit transfer and misuse of small arms. As you said yourself, Sir, all evidence points to the fact that gender- and youth-sensitive responses are the most sustainable and effective responses for all. They allow a better understanding of the factors driving the demand for and misuse of small arms and light weapons, as well

as their impact on the human rights, development and security interests of all.

We believe that involving women upstream encourages responses that address the welfare, security, education and economic opportunity of the communities impacted by the misuse of small arms and light weapons. Importantly, it will strengthen the political legitimacy of peacebuilding processes to involve women at every stage. In other words, it is the smart thing to do.

Now is the time for action. The Council must step up its efforts to address that threat and to prevent its terrible impact on civilians, including women and children, refugees and other vulnerable groups. Ireland will work with you, Sir, and continue to champion the issue with all of our partners here at the Council and across the General Assembly to accomplish that.

**Mrs. Gasri** (France) (*spoke in French*): We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome your presence among us today, Sir, and commend Mexico for making a priority the prevention of trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which indeed fuels armed conflicts and undermines peacebuilding efforts.

The Security Council has played its part in combating that scourge, notably through resolution 2220 (2015). However, the Council could certainly do more. There are four avenues to explore that are in line with many of the proposals highlighted prior to my intervention.

First, where necessary, the Security Council must put arms embargoes in place and enforce them. Violations of embargoes, such as in the Central African Republic, are a threat to civilian populations. It is therefore essential that the Security Council has the means to detect and sanction such violations. That would involve the appointment of a competent panel of experts that is able to carry out its task without interruption.

Secondly, the Security Council must ensure that peacekeeping and special political operations, when mandated, can count on the means to effectively combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to implement useful disarmament and reintegration measures. Here I refer in particular to Mali, where the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali plays a decisive role. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is seizing,

registering and destroying illicit weapons destined for armed groups in that country. In Haiti, too, the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti is continuing its community violence reduction programmes.

Thirdly, the Security Council must call on States to accede to the relevant multilateral instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. The commitments made in the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects should also be fully implemented.

Fourthly, the Council could encourage States to do more to mark and trace weapons and ammunition. The tracing of weapons is essential to combat trafficking, detect violations of embargoes and ensure the security of stockpiles. That is why France has been promoting the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons for two decades now. Today, we call for the new challenges posed by developments in weapons design to be taken into account.

The role of international organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as regional organizations, is essential. 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 adapted to the realities on the ground, whether in terms of customs cooperation, strengthening export control systems or border security. That is also the objective of the Franco-German road map to combat illicit trafficking in small arms in the Western Balkans. We hope that partnership can be replicated in other regions.

**Mr. Mills** (United States of America): I would like to start by thanking our briefers.

We appreciate Mexico's efforts to call attention to the detrimental effects that the diversion of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons can have on international peace and security. The United States remains deeply committed to the issue and believes that improving the management of small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition stockpiles is a key tool in preventing diversion.

The United States is the single largest provider of assistance to such efforts. For example, we have been working closely with the Niger since 2015. This partnership has constructed or rehabilitated 30 storage facilities, trained personnel in physical, security and stockpile management, and destroyed 15 metric tons of excess ordinance. In Ecuador in 2020 alone, United States assistance provided ammunition management training to Ecuador's armed forces and supported the destruction of over 220,000 obsolete small weapons ammunition.

Beyond our own efforts, the current framework of instruments at the global and regional levels offers a range of measures that, if fully and effectively implemented, would make significant contributions to international efforts to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The challenge remains, however, improving this implementation. To help reduce the armed violence facilitated by illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, all States should comprehensively implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as others today have mentioned. The United States remains committed to implementing these instruments and assisting others in doing so.

At 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, numerous Member States and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs underscored the uneven implementation of these measures. That is discouraging, given the amount of time that has transpired since the Programme of Action was adopted in 2001 and the resources that the international community has devoted to this issue. Accordingly, the Security Council should continue to encourage Member States to implement these important tools to combat the diversion of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Resolution 2220 (2015) specifically addresses the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, including with respect to Council-mandated arms embargoes. The cross-cutting nature of this work is illustrated in resolution

2370 (2017), which addresses the need to prevent terrorist access to weapons. As is the case with the existing international instruments, the Council's body of work is sufficient, in our view. The shortfall is in States' national efforts to implement the terms of the relevant resolutions.

Like many of these international instruments, arms embargoes are effective only when implemented by Member States. We encourage all Member States to ensure that they are fully implementing their obligations, pursuant to Security Council arms embargoes.

United Nations reporting on the implementation of Council arms embargoes is another important tool to help identify areas in which the diversion of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons fuel conflict. For that reason, the United States strongly supports the work of the expert panels of the Security Council's panels of experts. Regular reporting by these panels is a critical component of the Security Council's efforts to promote the implementation of United Nations arms embargoes. We encourage all Members to cooperate with these panels as they conduct their work.

**Ms. DeShong** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I wish to join in extending a special welcome to you, Mr. President, and Minister Bhattacharya to the Security Council. I also wish to thank the briefers for their timely interventions and commend you, Sir, for Mexico's efforts to further the discussion on this important issue.

Twenty years after the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and six years following resolution 2220 (2015), the most vulnerable among us continue to suffer the grave consequences of inaction to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The illicit trade and misuse of small arms and light weapons continue to contribute to instability and fuel conflicts across the globe. On the African continent, in the Sahel, the Lake Chad basin, the Central African region, the Horn of Africa, the Sudan, South Sudan and Libya, illicit weapons flows have enabled terrorism and violent extremism and intensified intercommunal tensions. Unfortunately, we see a further example in Haiti, in our own Caribbean and Latin American Zone of Peace.

Undoubtedly, illicit weapons flows have also contributed to humanitarian and refugee crises and

internal displacement and have undermined the rule of law and fragile democratic institutions. We therefore underscore the necessity of strengthening the mandates of the Security Council, recognizing the destabilizing role of the illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons as drivers of conflict and instability.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty, appreciates the fact that Member States have the sovereign right to determine their internal affairs, including in the area of arms control. However, that right is not absolute when the negative implications of domestic policies, such as permissive gun laws, transcend national borders. In the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), we continue to be severely impacted by irresponsible and illicit weapons flows, despite the fact that we do not manufacture small arms and light weapons and we do not import them on a large scale.

As such, to effectively combat the destructive impact of small arms and light weapons globally, there ought to be greater national responsibility assumed by manufacturing States, as well as coordinated and strengthened partnerships between organs and agencies of the United Nations, and regional, subregional and interregional organizations, in line with resolution 2457 (2019).

There exist numerous treaties, legislative frameworks and instruments aimed at managing and mitigating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. However, these mechanisms must be mobilized by States and organizations to concretize efforts to protect societies and promote sustainable development, especially in countries that continue to experience fluctuating periods of insecurity and instability. We therefore remain fully supportive of important arrangements such as the African Union's Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative, the regional road map for the Western Balkans and CARICOM's Roadmap for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030, which we have accelerated.

It is imperative that the international community fully support collaborative mechanisms and institutions for the tracing, management and secure storage of weapons and ammunition, as well as efforts aimed at sensitization and the collection and destruction of illicit

small arms and light weapons. Post-conflict settings in particular require State institutions to bolster confidence and stability through ownership of security, development and security sector reform.

Further, we emphasize the importance of the full and effective participation of civil society, women and youth in all efforts to build national capacity and institutional and policy frameworks to effectively support disarmament, demobilization, security sector reform and reintegration programmes.

Illicit arms flows create cross-cutting multidimensional challenges that hinder our achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, the disproportionate threat posed to women and children is alarming. No State is exempt and collective action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and at all levels is urgently required to ensure international peace and security.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to see you, Mr. Secretary, presiding over the Security Council. We thank Mr. Robin Geiss and Ms. María Pía Devoto for their briefings.

The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons (SALW) generates many threats and challenges. That is particularly acute in developing States, which often find themselves inundated with such weapons. The uncontrolled proliferation of such weapons results in their falling into the hands of organized criminal networks, illegal armed groups, extremists and terrorists. Those who suffer the most as a result of this situation are ordinary civilians.

The fight against the illicit transfer of SALW must remain the focus of the attention of all States. Accordingly, such work should take place first and foremost at the General Assembly, where every country has the right to a vote and the opportunity to participate in the adoption of relevant decisions. We welcome the recent successful conclusion of the seventh Biennial Meeting of Member States on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We applaud the efforts of the Kenyan chairmanship at that meeting.

The outcome of the comprehensive discussion at the General Assembly was an extensive list of recommendations, the implementation of which will



result in meaningful progress in the practical fight against illicit flows of SALW. We call on all Member States to and implement the Meeting's outcome document at the national, regional and global levels.

The Security Council is also seized of the issue of illicit transfers of SALW. In 2015, the Council adopted thematic resolution 2220 (2015), which comprehensively outlines the Council's views on combating this scourge. Further, we note the presidential statements adopted on specific aspects of combating the illicit trafficking in SALW. At the same time, the Security Council should clearly not duplicate the functions of the General Assembly, especially on such a universal issue as countering the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons. The main role of the Security Council is to facilitate conflict resolution in specific countries and regions by tapping into an array of measures applicable to a given situation, each of which is designed to help meet a specific objective.

In this regard, it is important to remember that illicit trafficking in SALW is a global problem that has a negative impact, including on the implementation of relevant measures through the Security Council. This problem cannot be solved by imposing restrictions against a specific State or strengthening any given peacekeeping mission. The Security Council duly shoulders its responsibility in these matters. However, at the same time, any efforts to take up issues that are within the purview the General Assembly would be misguided.

The main reasons for the uncontrolled spread of SALW around the world are well known. Illicit trafficking in this type of weaponry is a direct consequence of excessively permissive national legislation or persistent loopholes in national export-control regimes, which affects the neighbouring countries in particular. Nor do we see sufficiently responsible conduct by the multitude of arms broker organizations active on the arms market. Further, States with excessive stockpiles of SALW do not always act responsibly; instead of trying to dispose of these weapons, they often try to sell their surpluses, paying too little attention to the problem of illicit cross-border transfers.

There is a major threat emanating from the production of SALW under expired licenses or without licenses of the countries that own the relevant technologies. Clearly, shipments of weapons manufactured in this way are concealed in every possible manner, which

means that the end users are in most cases part of criminal networks. The main problem is that in the pursuit of profit or to advance short-sighted political agendas, the suppliers fail to consider whose hands the exported SALW fall into, where they are used and for what purposes.

The Russian Federation has highly advanced national legislation to combat the illicit transfer of SALW. We stand ready to share our experience and the array of tried and tested best practices with interested States. We call upon all Member States, through the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, and taking into account the recommendations of the seventh Meeting of Member States on this process at the General Assembly, to prioritize the implementation at the national level of the following measures: introducing a blanket prohibition on transfers of all types of SALW to entities not authorized by the Governments of recipient States; ensuring stringent regulation and direct control by States of arms-export brokering activities within their jurisdiction and limiting the number of these brokers to the extent possible; prohibiting the re-export or subsequent transfers of imported SALW without the written consent of the initial exporter State; and preventing the production of SALW under expired licences or without licences from the State possessing the technology for their production, including curbing the practice whereby weapons previously produced under licence are slightly modernized without the consent of the original manufacturer and then exported as a new product.

In conclusion, I should like once again to emphasize that the fight against the illicit diversion of SALW, ensuring the safe storage of stockpiles and the destruction of surpluses constitute the prerogative of States themselves and are an integral part of their sovereignty. That is why the joint work of all States at the General Assembly and the subsequent implementation of measures developed under the United Nations Programme of Action, first and foremost at the national level, are of paramount importance in this regard. Only in this way will we be able to achieve a shared goal and practical success in combating the illicit trafficking of SALW throughout the world.

**Mr. Kimani** (Kenya): I welcome the President to New York. I commend his country's presidency of the Security Council this month for convening today's open debate on curbing the diversion of and illicit

trafficking in arms — a challenge that Kenya considers requiring enhanced action by the Security Council. I thank Mr. Robin Geiss of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and Ms. María Pía Devoto for their briefings.

During our presidency in October, the Security Council had the opportunity to deliberate on ways of addressing the threat posed by illicit flows of small arms and light weapons, particularly in the context of peace operations (S/PV.8874). There was wide support from members for a continuation of these deliberations; we therefore hope that today's pertinent debate continues to benefit the Council's actions in this important arena.

The continued proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons is key to generating and worsening the conflicts to which the Security Council is responding. It offers non-State actors with militant political and ideological aims the means to turn their opposition into criminal violence against the State and civilians. It frustrates conflict resolution efforts by enabling the protraction of war. Humanitarian crises are worsened, and their period extended. It leads to growing attacks on peacekeeping forces dispatched under the Security Council's mandate.

The fuelling role of illicit arms in almost all conflict situations before the Council is undeniable, as has been mentioned by several delegations. The latest biennial report by the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839) touches on several of the matters before the Council.

Given the importance of illicit small arms and light weapons in escalating and prolonging destructive conflicts, it continues to be puzzling to us why the Council remains reluctant to undertake every effort to address this problem. We welcome fresh efforts to do the utmost, while recognizing and responding to the relevant perspectives of members that have historically sought for the subject to be approached with caution. We agree that caution is important, and we look forward to finding and reaching those points in common so that we can take further action. After having chaired the seventh Biennial Meeting of Member States at the General Assembly, we are profoundly aware of the need not to mirror or undermine the mandate of the Meeting, but we believe that there is more that the Security Council can do beyond that mandate within its own specific area of work.

While we may not be able to immediately address every aspect of the challenge, we believe there are actions that are ready to be undertaken now.

Allow me to highlight four recommendations for the Council's consideration.

First, there is need for stronger collaboration and coordination among the relevant United Nations organs and agencies and regional and subregional organizations. That was underscored during 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 Kenya was privileged to chair.

Secondly, regional and subregional organizations should be enabled financially and technologically to advance information sharing, sensitization and inter-agency coordination in order to tackle the diversion and trafficking in arms. Since so much of the Council's efforts focus on African files, mechanisms such as the Regional Centre on Small Arms in our region should be strengthened and their capabilities extended to their counterparts across the continent.

Thirdly, and most critically, we need to see this challenge as part of an ecosystem of interacting destructive threats. Much more needs to be done to attack the criminal networks and ecosystems that are fuelling conflict, particularly those profiting from illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. From the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, criminal economies are worsening and prolonging the impact of insurgents and terrorist groups. If those criminal economies are not tackled with every tool available in the Council's arsenal, multiple State failure may be the result. We call for a more aggressive use of sanctions regimes in order to lower the perverse incentives of war and terrorist economies.

When Kenya has pushed for the listing of terrorist groups under the appropriate sanctions regimes, the negative response by some members has pointed to the threat of such action on humanitarian work. What is not considered with sufficient gravity is the escalation of the humanitarian need due to the increasingly protracted nature of terrorist and insurgent group operations. There is profit to be made in terrorism and insurgency, and there will be no end to war and waves of suffering if the Security Council does not escalate its action against the criminal economies that continue to advance a profit motive, as reflected in criminal

economies, not least in regard to the diversion and trade in illicit small arms and light weapons.

Fourthly, there is a need for the Council, in mission mandates, to include responding to the needs of host countries through technical support in security sector reforms, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and monitoring capabilities. Activities under such support can be reflected in the relevant Secretary-General's reports to monitor progress and address any challenges as a preventive measure.

I reaffirm Kenya's commitment to all efforts to comprehensively address this challenge of diversion and trafficking in small arms and welcome Mexico's efforts to seek and pass a resolution in that regard.

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I thank Foreign Secretary Ebrard Casaubón for presiding over today's meeting. I also thank Mr. Geiss and Ms. Devoto for their briefings.

In his Agenda for Disarmament, Secretary-General Guterres describes conventional arms control as disarmament that saves lives. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes reducing the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons (SALW) as an important target. That shows that the issue of small arms and light weapons has a bearing on peace, security and development. It also shows that combating illegal trafficking in SALWs is critical to safeguarding the economic development and social progress of all countries and that strengthening conventional arms control under a multilateral framework is a matter of urgency.

Over the years, the Security Council has made unremitting efforts to tackle the issue of small arms and light weapons. It adopted resolutions 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015). It has also taken under consideration the impact of SALWs when deliberating on regional hotspot issues. The illegal trafficking in SALWs remains a serious phenomenon that is intertwined with armed conflict, terrorism, transnational organized crime and other problems, thus aggravating the suffering of people in conflict areas and posing a great danger to international peace and security.

In order to address this problem, the international community should continue to focus its efforts on several areas.

First, we must strengthen the capacities of the countries concerned and achieve the full-cycle

management of small arms and light weapons. Those countries should assume the primary responsibility for cracking down on such weapons by establishing and improving laws and regulations and strengthening control. The Security Council should lend those countries political support for peace and reconciliation efforts and post-war reconstruction in order to help them effectively address the risk of proliferation of SALW during the ensuing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and security sector reform. Peace operations deployed in various mission areas should perform their duties in strict accordance with their mandates and respect the sovereignty of the countries concerned. They must also actively support capacity-building and provide assistance to those countries.

Secondly, the international community must help the countries of the region to recover from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and eliminate the root causes of conflict and violence. The root causes of the issue of SALWs lie largely in poverty and underdevelopment. Special attention should be given to economic development and people's livelihoods in war-torn areas and post-conflict countries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in order to help eliminate long-standing poverty and address underdevelopment. It is imperative to help developing countries bolster infrastructure development, accelerate the process of industrialization and modernization, achieve sustainable economic and social development and maintain lasting regional peace.

The global development initiative proposed by China is aimed at forging global synergy for development and meeting the development needs of all countries, particularly those of developing countries. China invites all parties to join that initiative in order to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve shared development in all countries.

Thirdly, we must strictly implement the Security Council's arms embargoes and stop the illegal flow of SALWs. All countries must strictly implement the resolutions on arms embargoes and the relevant provisions of the sanctions committees of arms embargoes by refraining from the transfer or sale of arms to countries subject to Security Council arms embargoes. In addition, the relevant resolutions should be correctly interpreted and accurately implemented, and the enforcement of such embargoes should not be

used as an excuse to interfere in the internal affairs of the countries concerned or infringe upon their sovereignty.

China has always maintained that sanctions are only a means, not an end. The original intent of Council arms embargoes is to help the countries concerned restore national stability and social order. They should not hinder those countries efforts to strengthen their own security capabilities. In light of the development and actual needs of the countries concerned, the Security Council should adjust arms embargo measures accordingly in order to help the Governments effectively uplift their own security capabilities.

Fourthly, the international community must strengthen multilateral and bilateral pragmatic cooperation and fully leverage the role of the United Nations as the main channel. Countries of the regional and subregion should actively exchange information and share experiences, as well as tighten border and export control and improve monitoring and law enforcement. We should support the United Nations in continuing its leading role in combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and promote the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; and the Arms Trade Treaty, among others, in order to support the development of thorough and robust international cooperation and assistance.

Under the framework of the United Nations, the conventional arms control mechanism should step up interaction and coordination and complement and promote the efforts of all parties in an effort to enhance synergies.

The Chinese Government has always opposed the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and has adopted a cautious and responsible approach towards the export of such weapons. Since joining the Arms Trade Treaty in July 2020, China has actively participated in global arms trade governance. In addition, in the context of the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the China-

United Nations Peace and Development Fund, China engages in international cooperation with developing countries to combat the illicit flow of SALW. China also established the China-Africa Peace and Security Cooperation Fund to support the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative, as well as China-Africa cooperation in the areas of peace, security, peacekeeping and stability.

Combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons cannot be achieved in an instant. Building a world free from gun violence is a long-term, arduous task. China stands ready to work with the international community in making unstinting efforts to jointly crack down on the illicit traffic small arms and light weapons and safeguard international peace and security.

**Mr. Dang** (Viet Nam): I thank the Mexican presidency for organizing this very important open debate, and I welcome you, Your Excellency, to preside over it. I also thank Mr. Geiss and Ms. Devoto for their informative briefings.

My delegation registers its concern over the impact of illicit small arms and light weapons in both conflict and post-conflict settings, particularly on women, children, law enforcement personnel, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers. Illicit small arms continue to further fuel, sustain and exacerbate armed conflicts. The risks of insecurity and disorder to societies increase when illicit small arms and light weapons fall into the wrong hands, including terrorist and organized criminal groups. Illicit weapons can therefore negate peace efforts, hamper post-conflict recovery and socioeconomic development and undermine the effectiveness and efficiency of the Security Council's work in the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation commends the efforts and achievements of Member States and the Security Council in adopting and implementing frameworks and measures to tackle the issue of illicit weapons. Yet the threat to civilians posed by such weapons remains considerable. According to this year's report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/839), 27 per cent of civilian deaths in armed conflict were caused by small arms and light weapons and 24 per cent by heavy weapons and explosive munitions; alarmingly, the death toll of armed violence occurring outside conflict is even higher. In that context, I would like to stress the following points.

First, it is imperative to uphold international law and the Charter of the United Nations, including

international humanitarian law, international treaties and Security Council resolutions. By doing that, conflicts can be prevented, the use of force can be refrained from and civilian casualties can be prevented or minimized.

Secondly, the Security Council should continue to consider applying the necessary measures and review them against developments on the ground and the particularities of given situations in order to best address the threat posed by illicit weapons to sustainable peace in conflict and post-conflict situations without negatively affecting the ability of States to ensure security and order in post-conflict settings. An adequate emphasis should be put on State capacity-building, including regarding disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform and the control and management of small arms and light weapons, as well as combating illicit weapons.

Thirdly, a holistic approach is required to effectively address the issue of illicit weapons. At the national level, States bear the primary responsibility for ensuring the effective control of weapons and the fight against crime and the illicit trade in weapons. Those efforts should be complemented by bilateral, multilateral, regional and global international cooperation and assistance frameworks. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons provide strategic avenues for Member States to devise appropriate national and regional actions. Regional initiatives, such as Silencing the Guns in Africa, can prove to be effective, as they can address regional particularities. Resolutions 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015) and several presidential statements remain relevant in helping to address the scourge of illicit arms in conflicts. We call for strengthened cooperation on all those frameworks.

Finally, we would like to reiterate the importance of ensuring the right of States to acquire, manufacture, transfer and retain licit weapons for their defence and security needs.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

**Mr. Hilale** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Let me begin by thanking Mexico for organizing this open debate on the impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security. The fact that His Excellency Minister Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, is presiding over the debate is a clear and powerful sign of the importance that Mexico, like the international community, accords to this issue. I would also like to thank the briefers for their detailed presentations and reflections.

The discussion of the various impacts of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security is an important and urgent debate, as illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW) are conventional weapons that are easy to access, conceal and use. Those weapons strike randomly and indiscriminately, particularly targeting children, women and young people. They make conflicts more deadly by bringing them into populated areas. Their potential for destabilization is enormous, particularly in Africa, where they fuel conflicts, violent extremism and even terrorism.

The diversion and trafficking of arms have both immediate and long-term impacts. In addition to the human costs, such trafficking generate and have devastating cross-cutting consequences, in particular for the socioeconomic fabric and peacebuilding and peacekeeping settings, as well as efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at the national, regional and international levels.

Morocco is further concerned about the increasing interconnections between illicit SALW and the rise in banditry and piracy networks, as well as the proliferation of non-State actors and separatist and terrorist armed groups. Those linkages regrettably go hand in hand with other related phenomena, such as population displacement, food insecurity and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Such devastating effects require comprehensive and integrated responses from the international community. In that context, the United Nations has an important role to play in curbing the impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security and in finding collectively developed and agreed solutions. In that respect, Morocco welcomes the fact that, thanks to the adoption by consensus of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2001, combating the illicit

trade in SALW became a priority for the international community. Now more than ever, the Programme of Action is just as relevant, robust and effective given the multidimensional impact of the diversion and trafficking of such weapons.

Morocco, which is chairing the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, welcomes the attention given by the international community to the effects of illicit SALW, their diversion and trafficking, particularly in the current context of marking the Programme of Action's twentieth anniversary and the successful work of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme, as well as the active mobilization of the members of the Security Council.

Given the alarming effects of the diversion and trafficking of SALW on international and regional peace and security, the Security Council has a particularly critical role to play, especially in the areas of prevention, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, the protection of civilians and security in peacekeeping operations.

The Kingdom of Morocco takes the opportunity of this open debate to stress the importance of ensuring that full national ownership and leadership must continue to be the guiding principle with regard to issues concerning small arms and light weapons.

As part of its commitment to the full relevance of the Programme of Action, as well as the International Tracing Instrument, Morocco recently modernized its legal arsenal by adopting, in August 2020, a law on defence and security materials and equipment, arms and ammunition, in which particular attention has been paid to the tracing of arms and ammunition. It should be noted that marking procedures have been developed in the light of the standards recommended by the United Nations Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium.

The Kingdom of Morocco reaffirms the imperative need for international cooperation to counter illicit SALW. In that regard, Morocco will spare no effort in contributing to an effective fight against the scourge of illicit SALW, whether at the bilateral, triangular, South-South, multilateral or international levels. The cooperation programmes implemented by Morocco, particularly with its brotherly African countries, are aimed in particular at strengthening the capacities of the most affected countries through training, qualified

human resources and equipment adapted to monitoring SALW from their entry and throughout their life cycle.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

**Mrs. Balázs** (Hungary): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and your country, Mexico, as President of the Security Council for November, for convening this open debate on the impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security. I would also like to thank Mr. Geiss and Ms. Devoto for their useful briefings.

This issue is extremely important and, unfortunately, remains relevant for the foreseeable future. Illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their diversion represents a very serious threat to international peace and security, as well as to sustainable development. Today's modern wars are fought to a large extent by small arms and light weapons that kill or injure more people than any other kind of weapons and play a central role in initiating, aggravating and sustaining armed conflicts. SALW is a global challenge, highly relevant to each and every State across all continents, and thereby requires our concerted efforts.

Let me also draw attention to the clear nexus between the spread of SALW and the heinous terrorist attacks committed all around the world, including in Europe. Hungary is convinced that one of our top priorities should be preventing the acquisition of SALW by terrorists. Needless to say, the illegal possession and smuggling of these weapons is also facilitated by illegal migration.

The international community has a significant role to play in finding a viable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and smuggling of such weapons and their ammunition, as well as to stockpile management. This year, when we mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, is a moment for a recommitment to ensuring its relevance and effectiveness in the years to come in order to strengthen its far-reaching positive impact on global, regional and human security.

We believe that the Programme of Action is one of the most important and universal tools in our global efforts to combat the threats mentioned earlier. In that respect, I would like to emphasize that we consider

bringing ammunition into the scope of the Programme of Action as highly relevant, because just as a pen cannot write without ink, weapons cannot kill without ammunition. That is why United Nations embargoes on SALW usually entail prohibitions on ammunition as well.

The Programme of Action is not the only tool in the area of SALW. Synergies with other international instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty; the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; and regional organizations like the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are vital as well. Hungary also attaches great importance to ensuring effective export control procedures that meet all existing international requirements.

Given our vicinity to the region, Hungary has joined the initiative of France and Germany to create an action group on illicit firearms trafficking in the Western Balkans. We have also been active in our national capacity in enhancing stockpile security in the region. Within the framework of the OSCE, we have provided financial support of €250,000 to two projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro to help their efforts in mitigating the challenges of stockpiling those weapons and ammunitions.

Based on the above, we are of the view that the Security Council should have this issue on its agenda from time to time, as well as examining how it can contribute to further advancing the pertinent conclusions and recommendations contained in the latest report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons that was issued at the end of September (S/2021/839).

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Mr. Takht Ravanchi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): We share the concerns about the humanitarian, socioeconomic and security consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their diversion to unauthorized recipients.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is the only universal framework to address those multifaceted

challenges. That non-legally binding voluntary instrument, which emerged from a consensus-based process within the United Nations and has greatly contributed to mobilizing international efforts against the illicit trade in small arms, remains valid and relevant.

As a victim of foreign-backed terrorists and faced with the threat of organized crime and trafficking in drugs linked to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the Islamic Republic of Iran highly values the Programme of Action and calls for ensuring its balanced, effective and full implementation, including through identifying and addressing its implementation challenges. As has clearly been articulated by the Programme of Action, Governments bear the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and, accordingly, they must define the problems associated with such trade and find ways of resolving them.

To ensure the Programme of Action's full implementation, the capacities and priorities of States and regions must be taken into account. In that context, priority must be accorded to providing the developing countries with sufficient financial resources, required technological means and technical knowledge, including the transfer of related technology, which must be sustained, sufficient, non-discriminatory, non-selective and unconditional and upon the request of the States concerned. It must also take into account their policies and priorities, as the Programme of Action has recognized that the regulation of trade in small arms is primarily a national responsibility.

In all efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the right of each State to manufacture, export, import and retain such weapons must be fully respected. That, of course, is among the requirements of exercising the inherent right to self-defence reaffirmed in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. According to the Programme of Action, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects sustains conflicts, exacerbates violence, contributes to the displacement of civilians, undermines respect for international humanitarian law, impedes the provision of humanitarian assistance to victims of armed conflict and fuels crime and terrorism.

In that respect, the Security Council may deem it appropriate, in certain cases, to consider and address the impact of the illicit trade in small arms and

light weapons and their diversion to unauthorized recipients in conflict situations. That, of course, must be conducted without undermining licit trade in such arms. Additionally, the scope of such efforts by the Council must be limited to those aspects that are related to the serious adverse impacts of the diversion of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on the conflict concerned.

The adoption of a comprehensive approach is essential to finding a viable and long-term solution to this multifaceted challenge. This must be duly taken into account by the General Assembly and the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

**Mr. Ishikane** (Japan): I would like to express my deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting and to the briefers for their thoughtful insights.

Small arms and light weapons reportedly take at least half a million lives annually and pose a serious threat to the freedom from fear that all people are entitled to. To ensure human security, which places people at the centre of our security paradigm, the diversion and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons must be addressed with priority.

The successful conclusion of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July was a testament to the strong desire among Member States to advance discussions on this important issue. In this context, Japan welcomes, as one of the main sponsors, the adoption of resolution A/C.1/76/L.43, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", in the First Committee, which set the date for the next Biennial Meeting of States and renews our collective commitment to this important issue.

I would like to highlight three perspectives relating to the Security Council's role in tackling the issue of small arms and light weapons.

First, Council members must take into consideration, as highlighted at the seventh Biennial Meeting of States,

the new developments since the adoption of resolution 2220 (2015), the most recent Security Council resolution exclusively on this issue, was adopted in 2015. Indeed, new dual-use technologies pose additional complexities in addressing the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons. In June, my mission organized a workshop on small arms and light weapons, focusing on the impacts of fast-developing technologies. I would like to reiterate the importance of in-depth discussion of the challenges posed by new technologies to this issue.

Secondly, it is evident that swift sweeps of remaining arms and weapons after conflicts are vital to ensuring human security in war-torn communities and helping to prevent the recurrence of conflict. Japan would like to underscore the critical role of the Security Council in effectively realizing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in post-conflict zones. Security Council arms embargoes are also critical to preventing the diversion of arms and weapons to unlawful actors. All Member States are obliged to strictly observe their obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions.

Thirdly, Japan, as a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Council for 2023-2024, actively contributes to addressing the issue of small arms and light weapons. In fact, Japan's commitment to tackling this issue dates back to the mid-1990s, when it took the initiative to establish the United Nations Panel of Experts and the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts, which paved the way for the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2001. More recently, Japan has contributed \$2 million to the United Nations-led Saving Lives Entity fund, launched in 2019 and based on the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament. Japan has also supported regional initiatives, including the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative.

In conclusion, Japan remains fully committed to this important agenda and will continue to support the relevant work of the Council.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

**Mr. Lam Padilla** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala thanks the delegation of Mexico, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of November, for convening this open debate on the impact of the diversion and trafficking



of arms on peace and security. We are grateful for the participation of Ambassador Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico; the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research; as well as the panellists.

The consequences of the proliferation of firearms for peacebuilding are important and affect countries both in conflict and in post-conflict situations, as well as other countries with significant levels of insecurity and violence. The global production of such weapons and their respective ammunition is not decreasing and their diversion to the illicit market remains an ongoing problem. Moreover, the diversion of small arms and light weapons contributes to other security challenges, such as the facilitation of drug-related activities and the existence of organized crime, undermining the protection of people and hindering the creation of an environment conducive to the promotion of human, economic and social health.

It is undeniable that in order to comprehensively address the firearms issue, we must include the issue of ammunition, which, owing to its characteristics, is proliferated and diverted as much or more than firearms. We must not delay in addressing this. States must comprehensively regulate this issue, as well as continue to work in a harmonized manner in order to establish unanimous criteria and effective control mechanisms, such as marking, in order to allow for effective tracing.

Hence, the importance of undertaking broad international efforts to comprehensively address this issue, including the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Arms Trade Treaty and the initiatives undertaken at the regional level. It is important to mention that cooperation and assistance to strengthen our countries' capacities remain relevant. Without that valuable support for many of our countries, the effective implementation of the various international instruments is impossible to achieve.

When talking about the issue of arms and ammunition, we believe it necessary to include in the discussion the issue of stockpile management and the establishment of measures to prevent illegal diversions through the continuous destruction of surplus stocks and weapons linked to illicit activities. Having databases on

arms and ammunition and their owners not only allows those who use and trade arms to exercise their rights, but also establishes permanent controls. Moreover, as expressed in other forums, Guatemala considers it important to have disaggregated data on the impact of firearms, as that allows us to take stock of the problem in order to take preventive and protective measures.

An awareness of the effect of firearms on the lives of men, women, children and vulnerable populations is crucial. I would be remiss if I did not mention the important role that women play as peacebuilders. It is important to encourage their participation in the tasks of prevention, reconstruction and the search for peace, as established in resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

Guatemala is convinced that the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons have humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences that pose a serious threat to the peace, reconciliation, security, stability and sustainable development of our societies. It is important to emphasize that it is not possible to address the realities of illicit acts without strengthening the legal framework. To counteract that scourge, it is necessary to strengthen subregional, regional and global cooperation and tools and mechanisms that are applicable to specific situations and circumstances. My delegation recognizes that the magnitude and nature of the peacekeeping challenge require close strategic and operational partnerships with national Governments and other key stakeholders, so that we can achieve sustainable peace together.

Therefore, and by way of conclusion, we deem it necessary for States to address the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons comprehensively, while bearing in mind the importance of not dissociating arms from ammunition. While the challenges for each country differ at the national level, we are confident that the results in achieving better living conditions for our people can continue to progressively make progress.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Malta.

**Ms. Gatt** (Malta): Malta thanks Mexico for organizing this open debate, focusing on the impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms, which continue to represent a major concern for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The illicit flow and diversion of small arms and light weapons (SALW) continue to fuel both conflict and post-conflict situations and have clear destabilizing effects on entire societies. They also have direct impacts on our fight against terrorism, the protection of human rights and humanitarian access.

The multifaceted nature of this challenge has been reflected in the work of the Security Council, with the issue of small arms and light weapons permeating many country-specific and thematic areas. Malta continues to support the integration of this important topic in the work of the Security Council, in line with the recommendation by the Secretary-General in his most recent report on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839).

States Members of the United Nations have a responsibility to prevent and combat the diversion and illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons. International legal instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons and the International Tracing Instrument remain indispensable tools that establish a rules-based international framework for small-arms control.

Linked to these efforts is also an acknowledgement that new technologies relating to the production, distribution, marking and tracing need to be taken into account in our deliberations. Developments in this field, such as 3D printing, modular and polymer weapons, necessitate that we develop best practices and norms, so we are not left vulnerable to increased illicit trade and diversion.

Malta also welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendation to enhance the role of peacekeeping missions when dealing with illicit weapons and ammunition. We believe that peacekeeping missions would be well placed to increasingly contribute to monitoring, tracing and seizing illicit weapons in line with international instruments and standards.

Furthermore, it is important to underline that we find continued scope in mainstreaming issues related to weapons and ammunition in the Security Council's work on sanctions regimes and arms embargoes. The illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons in the context of arms embargoes remains a serious concern, and, in this context, we welcome the Security Council's role in investigating and combating transnational criminal networks and armed groups in violating these embargoes. Malta commends the work of sanctions

committee panels of experts and their detailed reporting on sanctions implementation.

Malta also underscores the importance of a gender-sensitive approach to the control of small arms and light weapons, in view of the disproportionate impact of armed violence on women and children. We support continued streamlining of SALW-control efforts with those related to women, peace and security.

In closing, Malta believes that the Security Council is strategically placed to oversee substantive discussions and take appropriate cross-cutting action when dealing with the illicit transfer and diversion of arms. Taking into account the need for increased synergies across the United Nations system, the Security Council can be a driver for the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action and for regional mechanisms that enhance the control of small arms and light weapons and combat illegal diversion.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

**Mr. Hauri** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland thanks Mexico for organizing today's debate.

The diversion and illicit proliferation of arms and ammunition fuel conflicts around the world. To ensure the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and peacekeepers, as well as a lasting peace, we must all contribute to preventing illicit flows and reducing the demand for arms and ammunition. The Security Council can play an important role by paying particular attention to three elements.

First, I would cite the analytical capacity of United Nations missions. The quantity and diversity of weapons and ammunition in circulation are good indicators of a threat to international peace and security. It is important that missions take these indicators more into account in their risk analysis. For this reason, Switzerland supports the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in the development of an arms-specific risk-analysis tool. Switzerland therefore calls on the Security Council to strengthen the risk-analysis capacities of United Nations missions in this area.

Secondly, we must promote innovation in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes. For example, the United Nations has developed the community-violence-reduction tool. This innovative tool reduces the flow of and demand

for illicit weapons and addresses the drivers of conflict in contexts where a traditional DDR programme is not yet possible. Within this framework, it is essential to address the specific protection needs of women and children and include them as agents of change in community-violence-reduction measures. The Security Council should more systematically consider these measures when mandating missions. For its part, Switzerland will continue to provide DDR experts to support the Secretariat and missions.

Thirdly, sustainable national capacities are key to preventing the diversion of arms and ammunition and to better implementing arms embargoes. This requires the United Nations and its States Members to help States hosting United Nations presences to strengthen their technical expertise, as well as their organizational structures, processes and capacities. Such support will help institutionalize this expertise.

The United Nations International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, recognized in resolution 2220 (2015), provides a robust approach to the safe and secure management of ammunition. When mandating missions, the Security Council should pay particular attention to building sustainable national capacities. Switzerland will continue to support the further development of the Guidelines as well as their implementation in the States concerned.

Combating the illicit flow and abuse of arms and ammunition is essential for peace, security and sustainable development. The Security Council should therefore consider these challenges across its entire agenda. As a candidate to the Council, Switzerland will continue to advocate an integrated approach to this issue in the spirit of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, in which he emphasized that we need a new focus on disarmament that saves lives.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

**Mr. Espinosa Cañizares** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Just 11 days ago, more than 60 inmates died in one of Ecuador's main prisons as a result of violence linked to transnational organized crime. A few days earlier, 119 more inmates lost their lives during the most lethal clashes in the history of my country's prison system. Small arms and light weapons are at the heart of this tragic situation, which is a consequence of the worst risk to peace and security in the Western Hemisphere:

namely, the confluence of drug trafficking, organized crime and arms trafficking and diversion.

Dozens of pistols and rifles of different calibres and degrees of sophistication, as well as thousands of rounds of ammunition, in addition to other firearms, have been seized, and the security forces of my country are making great efforts to stop and prevent the violence caused by transnational organized crime and drug gangs inside prisons. This is just one more example of the dramatic impact that illicit arms trafficking has on peace and security.

This is not a theoretical discussion, nor are we addressing a future threat. Today's debate addresses the cause of one of the greatest tragedies for the Western Hemisphere and for all humankind: the proliferation, trafficking and diversion of arms, which is directly related to the global drug problem. I therefore thank Mexico for organizing today's meeting, which is also closely linked to the 16 November debate on preventive diplomacy (see S/PV.8906). In the area of security and the fight against violence and crime, what better prevention effort could there be than to stop arms trafficking? Moreover, combating the diversion of arms is a fundamental part of preventive diplomacy.

I also thank the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the representative of civil society for their briefings. Global solutions are needed for this global problem.

To meet indicator 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we must be effective in combating arms trafficking. The destabilizing accumulation of firearms and their unrestricted flow does not contribute to the promotion of peaceful societies.

This scourge is also directly related to drug trafficking, money-laundering and human trafficking. Small arms are a main tool of "coyotes" and exacerbate migratory crises with crowds in border areas, exposing migrants to extremely high-risk situations, which in turn considerably increases the vulnerability of the entire region.

Ecuador supports the ongoing use by the United Nations in Haiti of the integrated management of weapons and ammunition as a central support for the reduction of violence, disarmament and peace. This is relevant because of the link between violence as one of the main factors that trigger irregular migration.

Finally, I would like to share four main recommendations to address this challenge.

First, the Security Council must revitalize its efforts to implement resolution 2020 (2015) and take into account all multisectoral axes, as well as the need for synergies within and outside the United Nations system.

Secondly, simultaneous efforts are required at the local, regional and global levels, including the strengthening of and support for border, port and airport control, due to the emerging challenges resulting from rapid technological changes.

Thirdly, it is essential that the Council encourage States to expand international cooperation, commensurate with different situations and capacities, to combat diversion and to support countries that require it. In that regard, I note yesterday's visit by the President of Colombia to Ecuador, during which he announced important cooperation agreements on this issue. I would also highlight, as mentioned by the representative of the United States this morning, the cooperation Ecuador has received.

Fourthly, the Security Council must implement the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/839), while the United Nations must strengthen alliances to integrate efforts not only with the normative and policy frameworks, but also through of more concrete actions on the ground.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Greece.

**Mrs Theofili** (Greece): First, allow me to congratulate Mexico on convening this timely meeting.

Greece is especially sensitive to the destabilizing impact that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons can have on our wider region. At a national level, we apply cohesive European Union regulations when it comes to the legal trade in defence-related items, and abide by the obligations that emanate from international treaties. While the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a global problem, it can best be addressed through national or regional efforts.

Such an effort is the regional 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, adopted during the Western Balkans Summit, held in London

in 2018. This initiative is indicative of the necessity for collective and coordinated regional cooperation, which can mitigate illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons, thereby reducing human pain and suffering.

Regional synergies feed into global solutions, and the Security Council plays a pivotal role in that task. Peacekeeping operations, mandated to uphold the peace, should also address cross-cutting issues, including ways to mitigate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Security Council should continue taking the necessary measures so that, when reviewing the mandate of a peacekeeping operation, consideration is given to the inclusion of small units that would focus on mitigating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The tools are there. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Arms Trade Treaty constitute a strong foundation for peacekeepers to draw guidance from.

Only through achieving peace and security can the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals be realized. We are confident that by maintaining the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons high on the United Nations agenda and by continuing to seek institutional synergies at the regional and global levels, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons will be mitigated and socioeconomic development achieved.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

**Ms. Eneström** (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden.

Let me start by thanking you, Sir, and Mexico for convening this important meeting, and the briefers for their valuable insights.

The illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunitions are key drivers of conflict and armed violence at the national, regional and global levels. They facilitate organized crime, impede humanitarian assistance and endanger civilians, including women and children. Therefore, we must intensify our efforts to combat all irresponsible and illegal trade in or use of SALW. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's

seventh biennial report on SALW (S/2021/839), our efforts must pay special attention to the serious effects of uncontrolled arms flows on children and youths.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons are important tools for reducing the threats posed by uncontrolled SALW. The Nordic countries are also firm supporters of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which provides fundamental norms for responsible trade in conventional arms. Innovative approaches and the promotion of synergies among the relevant instruments, as well as regional initiatives, will be vital in advancing our joint efforts on SALW control.

Advancing the integration of gender perspectives across the entire spectrum of disarmament and arms control is a key priority for the Nordic countries. The serious effects of weapons on sexual and gender-based violence cannot be stressed enough. To address the gendered impacts of SALW, we should strive to streamline SALW control efforts with the women and peace and security agenda, including by ensuring the full and equal participation of women in disarmament dialogues.

The consequences of uncontrolled or illicit flows of SALW go far beyond the immediate human impact of armed violence; they seriously hamper attempts for economic and social development. As highlighted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, uncontrolled flows of arms and ammunitions are a global development issue that must be addressed in a comprehensive manner. The Nordic countries are long-time supporters of work in SALW control in several countries and regions, and we support several programmes of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, such as the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, research institutions, the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund, the Saving Lives Entity, civil society actors and bilateral cooperation projects to that end.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

**Mr. Rae** (Canada): I thank you, Sir, for giving us the opportunity to meet with you today.

It is important to remember that every single day, small arms and light weapons are used to kill, maim, wound and threaten millions of women, men, girls and boys in conflicts in all regions of the world. In 2020, 27 per cent of civilian deaths in armed conflict were linked to those weapons, making them the primary cause of such deaths. With that sombre reminder, Canada continues to be steadfast in its support for multilateral frameworks and policies that address the illicit trade, diversion and trafficking of such weapons. In our view, that is an essential part of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. That applies to us at home, as well as around the world.

(*spoke in French*)

The illicit trade, diversion and trafficking of small arms and light weapons represent a widespread and ongoing phenomenon, fuelling deadly violence, organized crime, corruption and security problems across the world. Small arms and light weapons remain the main weapons used in the majority of conflicts throughout the world. Given that situation, Canada supports the instruments adopted by the United Nations, such as the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In 2019, we became a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty.

(*spoke in English*)

As my colleague from Sweden just said, we must also recognize the differentiated impacts of such weapons on women, girls, men and boys. We welcome the progress made in the international community and within United Nations bodies in recognizing the gender dimension of small arms and light weapons through both legal and normative frameworks. We echo the call in resolution 2122 (2013) to ensure

“women’s full and meaningful participation in efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons” (*para. 14*)

and for “information and analysis on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls” (*para. 1*).

We are also a champion of the full and equal participation of women in decision-making processes. That is reflected in our work on both peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

In that context, we recognize that frameworks and policy must be aligned with action, mutually supporting each other. To give just one example, the Small Arms Survey's handbook *Gender-responsive Small Arms Control: A practical guide* was created as an easy-to-use resource for policymakers to increase their knowledge of gender and arms control and adopt gender-responsive approaches to policy development.

We are pleased to support both the gender and disarmament programme of the United Nations and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and to develop and deliver gender-sensitive training activities to prevent and combat trafficking in firearms.

In conclusion, the spread of small weapons is a significant cause of global insecurity, death and injury. We must maintain our focus on that issue and keep working together, both to protect life and to advance the rule of law.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

**Mr. Lagatie** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium thanks Mexico for having convened this open debate. We also thank the briefers. Their interventions underlined the devastating consequences of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) for peace and security and the need to improve the Security Council's approach to effectively combating such proliferation.

To that end, I will mention three courses of action that the Security Council could consider and that my country believes to be key. Those three avenues are based on the basic observation that if we want to effectively prevent flows of illicit weapons, we must have a clear picture of the diversion routes and the weaknesses in control throughout the life cycle of the weapons.

First, in conflict areas, law enforcement agencies often lack the capacity to conduct investigations. United Nations peace missions could be involved if they had a mandate and the technical capacity to record and support efforts to trace all weapons recovered or seized during their operations. My country believes that creating arms embargo units within missions is also an effective tool for collecting relevant information on arms flows through a joint civilian and military effort. Moreover, peace missions are particularly well placed to provide assistance to the host country in safe and

secure stockpile management and the collection and destruction of surplus weapons and ammunition.

Secondly, Belgium believes that expert groups have a complementary role in that scenario, since they monitor compliance with arms embargoes and their reports provide valuable information on traffickers, methods and trafficking routes. The development of an easily accessible institutional repository should be encouraged and cross-referenced information among expert groups should be facilitated. Expert groups and United Nations peacekeeping operations should work closely together in their efforts to map arms flows and trace the origins of illicit small arms and light weapons. That requires dedicated resources and trained personnel. Tracing requests from expert panels regarding diverted weapons are sometimes not sufficiently detailed, which can hamper efforts to properly trace their origin. Technological developments will further hinder such efforts, as polymer and modular weapons pose particular challenges for tracing operations. My country therefore actively encourages adapting the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons to accommodate new technologies in order to increase its effectiveness. Experts' findings should also be followed up, including through contacts with countries of the region, as the latter are often the final stage before possible diversion. Countries with major port or airport hubs also have a role to play in monitoring transit and transshipment in order to fully implement United Nations embargoes.

Thirdly, Security Council action must go hand in hand with measures taken elsewhere. For example, the Arms Trade Treaty recently established the Diversion Information Exchange Forum, which provides a dedicated platform for States parties to exchange information in a confidential setting, allowing for increased mutual trust, while sharing sensitive information. The Forum should help to identify diversion routes and methods, thereby strengthening arms-export assessment procedures. The Arms Trade Treaty may not be a universal instrument, but it can nevertheless reinforce the implementation of other instruments, such as the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as arms embargoes, which remain a key tool of the Security Council.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

**Mr. Bahr Aluloom** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on Mexico's presidency of the Security Council for November. I wish to thank you for the initiative to dedicate this meeting to discussing the impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security. We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered this afternoon by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Arab States. I also wish to thank Mr. Geiss and Ms. Devoto for their briefings.

Iraq is well aware of the importance of combating the diversion of, and illicit trade in, small arms and light weapons, as well as their harmful effects, which pose a threat to the security of States and societies. We have seen an increase in armed violence. Such weapons fuel and sustain conflict, and they have a negative impact on economic growth and development in our countries. The main victims of that scourge are civilians, in particular the elderly, women and children. Today the international community is at a critical and delicate juncture. Terrorism and organized crime are exacerbating a number of regional and international crises.

For all the reasons I just mentioned, a number of initiatives, resolutions and international conventions have been drafted with the aim of countering and eradicating terrorism and organized crime. For that reason, Iraq believes that there is a need to shoulder our responsibility collectively, as well as to redouble our efforts to demonstrate the political will required to stamp out that scourge.

We have therefore supported all instruments, resolutions and international initiatives, specifically those under the umbrella of the United Nations, that are aimed at curbing the uncontrolled flow of small arms and light weapons, in addition to preventing their illicit trade. We have adopted tangible measures at the executive level in order to prevent the illicit entry of those weapons onto our territory, to confiscate unlicensed weapons and to establish a database dedicated to their inventories. Furthermore, we have strengthened our legislation in that regard, including through a law on weapons adopted in 2017, updating our legal instruments and supplementing mechanisms related to the carrying of such weapons.

Two decades have elapsed since the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Nevertheless, the flow of those weapons continues unabated. Their illicit trade, stockpiling and nefarious use in many parts of the world, specifically in the Middle East, are destabilizing factors. Peace and security are jeopardized and lamentable human casualties are heavy.

For that reason, Iraq welcomes the adoption of the outcome document of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1) and calls for its full implementation. Likewise, we welcome the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus on combating those issues.

We wish to call on international partners to redouble their efforts in capacity-building assistance, specifically to developing countries, on the basis of requests from those States themselves. We wish to emphasize the importance of mechanisms to address the needs of countries by providing them with the necessary resources. We would also like to underscore the need to promote information-sharing and the exchange of best practices on small arms and light weapons in order to build capacity and shore up expertise in developing countries as part of international efforts to implement Sustainable Development Goal 16.

To conclude, we wish to reaffirm our commitment to United Nations-led and international efforts to achieve our noble goal of strengthening international peace and security and maintaining it throughout the world.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria.

**Ms. Stoeva** (Bulgaria): I would like to thank the Mexican presidency of the Security Council for convening this important open debate and to thank the briefers for their very informative and thought-provoking presentations.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

According to the latest report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839), in 2020, 27 per cent of civilian deaths in conflict-affected areas were caused by small arms and light

weapons and over 50 per cent of all victims of homicide globally were killed with firearms. Those are gruesome statistics and the coronavirus disease pandemic has further exacerbated that trend. Decisive actions by the international community are urgently needed to prevent the diversion of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, as they fuel international and regional instability and sponsor terrorism and organized crime.

The Security Council has been addressing the direct impact of illicit flows of small arms and light weapons on peace and security since 1999. Its most prominent product in that regard — resolution 2220 (2015), which Bulgaria is happy to have co-sponsored — focuses on a wide range of areas in which international cooperation in illicit small arms and light weapons prevention could be bolstered, such as well-targeted sanctions regimes, appropriate United Nations peacekeeping mandates and effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

Yet, more needs to and can be done by the Security Council. In particular, Bulgaria believes that the Security Council should pay special attention to the following.

First, the Council should consider increasing capacities in monitoring and enforcing arms embargoes. Arms embargoes have proven to be an effective tool against the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons in conflict and post-conflict areas. However, not all Member States possess sophisticated systems for controlling arms transfers, or their law enforcement authorities may be poorly equipped to pursue arms embargo violations. It is therefore crucial to strengthen those capacities, as well as to equip United Nations peacekeeping missions with the necessary mandates to monitor arms embargo implementation and to assist in national and regional capacity-building.

Secondly, the Council should encourage the implementation of and improving synergies between the various instruments at our disposal, such as 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; the Arms Trade Treaty and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing

the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The Arms Trade Treaty, in particular, is an excellent example of how the application of common standards for regulation of the international trade in conventional arms can contribute to security and stability on a global scale.

Thirdly, the Council should encourage the establishment and maintenance of robust national export control systems as indispensable tools in preventing illicit flows and the diversion of small arms and light weapons and ammunition flows. In that context, the need for regional and international cooperation and information exchange on cases of weapons tracing and diversion is essential to identify and eliminate trafficking routes and illicit supply chains.

Fourthly, the Council should urge States to establish a marking and record-keeping system for small arms and light weapons that provides for the adequate tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons and ammunition transfers.

Fifthly, the Council should encourage the effective life cycle management of small arms and light weapons and ammunition, including safety and security stockpile management. An effective fight against the diversion and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is unthinkable without addressing their ammunition. In that regard, Bulgaria welcomes the adoption by the First Committee of the resolution on ammunition (A/C.1/76/L.47) and looks forward to the next steps towards a new global framework that would address the existing gaps in life cycle ammunition management.

Finally, the Council should encourage participation in existing reporting mechanisms, such as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, especially on the transfers of small arms and light weapons.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

**Mr. Koba** (Indonesia): We wish to convey our sincere appreciation to you, Sir, for convening this important meeting.

Indonesia remains concerned by the negative impacts caused by illicit small arms and light weapons. As has been correctly pointed out, such weapons contribute to the exacerbation of conflicts. In that regard, allow me to emphasize the following.



First, international cooperation based on universally accepted instruments is essential. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in All Its Aspects remains a fundamental basis for mobilizing political will. Through the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action and the Review Conference, measures and challenges towards the effective implementation of the Programme of Action were discussed.

Over the years, we have noted differences among States Members of the United Nations with regard to the Programme of Action, including its scope and relation to other instruments. Nevertheless, we should focus on the points of convergence and continue to effectively implement it. In that regard, we would like to reiterate our principled position that regulations on SALW should not hinder the development of national capabilities, especially for developing countries.

Secondly, in discussing the issue of SALW, the Security Council should focus on the very pertinent work of its mandate. Identification and prioritization in disarmament measures are important, particularly to support a nationally driven security sector reform. Disarmament measures could also benefit peacekeeping operations in effectively and efficiently exercising their mandates.

In the context of sanctions, our principled positions remains that it is a last resort and only a means, not the objective. It should always be a part of broader political and peacebuilding strategy to address the situation. Similarly, in the context of sanctions related to SALW, this principle should also be upheld.

Thirdly, regional mechanisms are important owing to the complex and transborder nature of many ongoing conflicts and SALW issues. Indonesia, through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), has been working tirelessly in implementing the Programme of Action on Small Arms. The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the annual meeting of the ASEAN Association of Heads of Police are among the few examples in our region. On a broader scale, enhancing cooperation among regional organizations is needed to sharpen the global effort against illicit SALW.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating Indonesia's support and commitment in combating illicit SALW,

including through the Security Council in exercising its mandate.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

**Ms. Chan Valverde** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica would like to thank Mexico and its team, as well as today's briefers for their briefings. Allow me to stress the following points.

First, Costa Rica regrets that the Security Council has not yet fully integrated the consideration of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition into its work, including in its thematic and country-specific discussions. While small arms and light weapons and their ammunition are the fire we are fighting today, ammunition is the oxygen that fuels it, turning guns from inoperative items into lethal weapons. Nevertheless, it took the Security Council 68 years to adopt its first resolution on the matter, resolution 2117 (2013). Costa Rica commends the role of the elected members for breaking fresh ground on this issue and encourages the Security Council to establish a follow-up mechanism to the biennial reports of the Secretary-General.

Secondly, while arms export assessments are supposed to consider the risk of gender-based violence, it is not clear how — or even whether — that happens. Exporter States must take stronger measures to ensure that arms transfers do not facilitate or exacerbate gender-based violence or abuses against women and girls in recipient States. There is also an urgent need to improve transparency in the decision-making process for arms transfers to States with poor human rights records and to create a public space for debate on this matter, as well as for possible judicial review of export licenses.

Thirdly, implementing and enforcing Security Council arms embargoes at the national and regional levels continues to be a challenge, as is the case with weapons and ammunition management and guidelines. We welcome the Council's establishment of clear and well-defined benchmarks that could guide reviews of the consequences of its arms embargoes on targeted States. We also encourage the Council to engage in regular consultations with targeted States and provide them with capacity-building, similar to what has been undertaken with regard to both terrorism and nuclear proliferation.

Global military spending rose to almost \$2 trillion last year, an increase of 2.6 per cent in real terms from 2019, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Such reckless spending levels represents clear evidence that Article 26 has been, for the past 76 years, a dead letter in the cemetery of intentions in the Charter of the United Nations, which still upholds the values of this edifice. Costa Rica urges all States to commence without delay the phased and intentional reduction of global military spending. Such a reduction is not only feasible, but also imperative.

Peace cannot be forced or imposed at gunpoint. We have to convince ourselves that human security remains a requirement for global security.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

**Ms. Leendertse** (Germany): First of all, I would like to thank Mexico for keeping the Security Council seized of this important issue.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) fuels armed conflicts around the world, and the illicit trade in these weapons is often also connected to organized crime, terrorism and human trafficking. Moreover, small arms and light weapons do not magically disappear after the end of a conflict, but facilitate violent crimes, and therefore pose a challenge for post-conflict recovery.

We need to look at the issue more holistically. That is why, during our term on the Security Council, we tried to update resolution 2220 (2015), which was adopted in 2015. It is unfortunate that our endeavours were met with heavy resistance. I believe the ideas that we put forward together with our partners are still valid and supported by an overwhelming majority of Member States, including those on the Council. Let me repeat some of them here.

The Security Council needs to acknowledge the gendered impact of SALW and promote the equal and meaningful participation of women as actors and leaders in the control of SALW. It also should take into account recent developments in small arms manufacturing, technology and design that pose new challenges to the marking, record-keeping and tracing of these weapons. The Council should increase its support to, and understanding of, weapons and ammunition management in peace operations. Finally, it should also

acknowledge the importance of regional cooperation in combating illicit cross-border proliferation.

International instruments such as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Arms Trade Treaty are of key importance, and they effectively complement the work of the Security Council.

Regional processes such as the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative and the Western Balkans road map for the control of small arms and light weapons, jointly initiated by Germany and France, as well as the Caribbean firearms road map, also negotiated under the auspices of Germany, have become models for effective regional arms control. Overall, such regional processes are an important contribution to security, particularly in Africa and Latin and Central America and the Caribbean, where illicit weapons pose a significant threat to peace and stability. Along with regional processes, numerous national and local initiatives around the world play a vital role too. Germany considers it essential that civil society, women and youth be included in all those efforts.

In the past, we did not have a forum to address an important related aspect, namely, ammunition. Fortunately, we are about to close that gap. The Group of Governmental Experts to consider further steps to enhance cooperation with regard to the issue of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus, chaired by Germany, paved the way for an open-ended working group, which is now mandated by the First Committee.

To save lives, we jointly need to step up our efforts and strengthen control over small arms and light weapons, including ammunition, during all cycles of conflict, using all instruments at our disposal. Germany stands ready to help advance these causes.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

*The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m.*