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Provisional

President: Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco. (Mexico)

Members:

China	Mr. Wu Jianjian
Estonia	Mr. Löhmus
France	Mr. Le Floc'h
India	Mr. Saurabh
Ireland	Ms. Burns
Kenya	Ms. Nyakoe
Niger	Mr. Djibo Bartie
Norway	Mr. Richardsen
Russian Federation	Mr. Shevchenko
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. Andrews
Tunisia	Mr. Laouani
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Dix
United States of America	Ms. Garellek
Viet Nam	Mr. Phan

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)

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 resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on the list for this meeting. 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 Brazil.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): Let me begin by congratulating Mexico on keeping the issue of small arms and light weapons prominent in the deliberations of the Security Council. The Arria Formula held meeting in September and today's high-level open debate are proof of Mexico's commitment to mainstreaming discussions on that matter.

States have every right to acquire and use small arms and light weapons to ensure their public security, self-defence and national sovereignty. However, with that right comes the inseparable duty to control flows and stockpiles of those weapons. Uncontrolled flows of such weapons, as well as their ammunition, have profoundly destabilizing effects on societies around the globe and can constitute a threat to international peace and security.

The diversion of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition to illicit markets and unauthorized non-State actors fuels transnational organized crime, fosters terrorism and exacerbates conflicts, with devastating impact on the lives of civilians, including women, children, refugees, internally displaced persons and other groups in vulnerable situations. It can also threaten the safety and security of peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, thereby hindering the implementation of peacekeeping mandates and the provision of assistance.

We recognize the efforts made by the Council to address the threats posed by illicit flows of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, in particular in situations of armed conflict, as well as its endeavours to prevent the acquisition of weapons by terrorists. Likewise, we acknowledge the importance of the imposition of arms embargoes in preventing flows of weapons to conflict situations that pose a threat to international peace and security. We therefore welcome initiatives from Member States with a view to strengthening the role of the Council in that field.

In the areas of its competence, the Security Council can and should encourage the application of the relevant provisions contained in instruments developed by the General Assembly, 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 and the International Tracing Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (ITI), which require States to ensure that weapons are properly marked and that records pertaining to them are established and kept.

Brazil is firmly committed to the comprehensive implementation and strengthening of both the Programme of Action and the ITI. We welcomed the successful convening of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which produced a strong and substantive outcome document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1) that reaffirms, inter alia, the importance of efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit flows of ammunition. Brazil has been at the forefront of efforts in that field, including by adopting pioneering legislation and industry practices on the marking and tracing of ammunition.

In many situations, illicit flows of ammunition fuel conflict and crime to a greater extent than the illicit trafficking in weapons itself. It is no longer acceptable for that issue to remain inadequately addressed by the United Nations. Brazil therefore takes this opportunity to welcome the successful conclusion arrived at in September by the Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus. The Group of Governmental Experts adopted by consensus a report containing comprehensive recommendations to enhance the safety and security of conventional ammunition, which was recently endorsed by the First Committee of the General Assembly with overwhelming support. The recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts should be the starting point of negotiations on a new global framework to address the safety and security of ammunition when the First Committee's open-ended working group on ammunition management convenes for that purpose in 2022.

Small arms and light weapons are the most frequently used weapons in the majority of recent armed conflicts. The threat posed by the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled flows of such weapons

and their ammunition, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations, cannot be overemphasized. As an incoming member of the Security Council, Brazil is ready to contribute to the Council's work in tackling this issue, as we have been actively doing in other international forums.

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

Mr. Sabbagh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation believes in the critical role that the United Nations system plays in the matter of disarmament to fulfil the objectives of its Charter, foremost of which is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We join previous speakers in stressing the importance of countering the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

At the same time, we stress that the General Assembly and its First Committee are the most appropriate forums for dealing with issues related to small arms and light weapons, as they enable all Member States to submit proposals and address relevant concerns. The General Assembly and the First Committee provide the necessary framework to engage in a common endeavour to achieve the shared objectives of Member States. My delegation would like to take this opportunity of this open debate to make the following points.

First, over the past 10 years in my country, Syria, certain Governments have been supplying terrorist groups, namely, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and the Al-Nusra Front, also known as Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham, and individuals and entities associated with them, with various types of weapons, including small arms and light weapons. That aggressive approach has had serious repercussions; it has perpetuated the crisis and claimed the lives of thousands of Syrians.

Secondly, some Governments, known to all, have funded the procurement of those weapons and facilitated their smuggling to other countries to destabilize them. My delegation considers such acts to be in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and friendly relations among States, and the relevant Security Council resolutions on countering terrorism. Those acts must be explicitly and clearly condemned and deterrent measures must be taken in response to them.

Thirdly, my delegation stresses that facilitating the acquisition by terrorist entities of small arms and light weapons and other types of weapons constitutes a threat to the security and stability of our countries and exposes civilians, including women and children, to significant risks. Consequently, it is imperative that Member States take joint efforts to adopt regulatory frameworks and measures to prevent the transfer of such weapons and end the illicit trade in them.

Fourthly, my delegation emphasizes the need to strengthen national efforts and intensify bilateral and multilateral cooperation to combat this grave phenomenon.

Fifthly, my delegation calls on all States that produce those types of weapons to ensure that legal restrictions are applied to prevent the illicit trade in them, and to verify their final destination. We note with concern that some States have not been fulfilling their obligations with regard to final destination or end user agreements and are permitting or condoning the transfer of large quantities of their weapons stockpiles to terrorist groups in a number of countries, including in my own.

The Syrian Arab Republic calls for the full implementation of the relevant international treaties and for the end of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We reiterate that Member States have the right to acquire, manufacture, transfer and retain such weapons for their defence and security needs and to protect their citizens.

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

Mr. Chatrnúch (Slovakia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important open debate, which provides the opportunity to share the insights and experiences of different actors on how to address the role of the destabilizing accumulation, illicit transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in fuelling and exacerbating armed conflicts. Slovakia associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union. Allow me now to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

The diversion, illicit trade and unauthorized use of SALW and their ammunition constitute a serious impediment to peace, growth, development and security in the world. Illicit small arms are fuelling

armed violence and organized crime, global terrorism and conflicts. They destabilize entire regions, States and their societies and increase the impact of terrorist attacks. In that regard, Slovakia welcomes the successful outcomes of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider 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 seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. We need to further strengthen international cooperation aimed at the effective implementation of United Nations arms embargoes and the prevention of the illicit international transfer of SALW to unauthorized recipients.

The collection of small arms and light weapons used in the context of armed conflict, violent crime and drug trafficking and the establishment of their illicit origin are also important steps towards promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, in line with Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Slovakia very much appreciates the role of the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) in the implementation of relevant international instruments on arms regulations and the promotion of increased sustainability through more predictable sources of funding. I am pleased to say that Slovakia has made a financial commitment to UNSCAR for 2021.

We also appreciate the fact that the Security Council has played an important role in developing initiatives to address the SALW issue. The Council needs to continue advancing solutions under a common global approach in that area. Slovakia welcomes the Council's role in mandating some peacekeeping missions to address the issue of SALW as part of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and supports host States in addressing the threat posed by the illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of SALW.

Slovakia also welcomes the stronger role of the formal and informal subsidiary bodies of the Council in the formulation of adequate responses to the evolving challenges posed by the unrestricted flows of small arms and light weapons.

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

Mrs. González López (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador thanks Mexico, in its capacity

as President of the Security Council, for including in its programme of work this open debate on the impact of the diversion and trafficking of small arms on international peace and security.

Our country attaches particular importance to that issue, given that El Salvador recognizes that the illicit use of small arms and light weapons, as well as their diversion, pose a threat to many countries in various contexts such as civilian security, violence in urban centres, transport security and peacekeeping, to name but a few. That hinders efforts to achieve sustainable development, disarmament, peace and security.

The Salvadoran authorities also recognize that the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is used by criminal organizations to increase their armament and sophisticate their criminal activities. For that reason, joint actions are being taken with national, regional and international actors to strengthen national control and prevent the illegal entry of weapons through air, land or sea borders, preventing and counteracting their illicit traffic; reinforce the exercise of controls over the seizure and detection of parts that comprise small arms and light weapons in order to effectively prevent their illicit manufacture; and to avoid any link or form of financing that this activity may provide both to transnational organized crime groups and to terrorist groups recognized as such and identified in accordance with national legislation and jurisprudence.

El Salvador supports a preventive approach in relation to the diversion of small arms and light weapons. Along those lines, my country recognizes the relevance of having specialized studies that allow a better understanding of the type of arms and ammunition that are the object of illicit trafficking in countries like ours and of how they are related to violent acts. Such studies would make it possible to determine the origin and provenance of such weapons and, above all, would help decision-makers to formulate and adopt laws and policies that reduce their flow.

In that vein, El Salvador advocates the strengthening of the systems for the control and registration of weapons and ammunition in circulation in the countries of the region and the training of public forces and competent national institutions in the use of information and communication technologies that make it possible to prevent and regulate the emerging varieties of trafficking among criminal groups, particularly the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, as

well as the perpetration of crimes. Moreover, it is of crucial importance to strengthen intelligence systems and the investigation of cases that concern arms and ammunition trafficking.

Taking into account the lack of resources and varying capacities among Member States, El Salvador encourages greater cooperation from the United Nations system with developing countries, including middle-income countries, on the formulation and implementation of policies, with a view to adequately addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Such cooperation could include increased financing, technology transfer and appropriate training and support programmes. In that respect, we commend the creation of the Saving Lives Entity and call on countries that are able to do so to support that funding facility and also to provide financial assistance to States bilaterally so that they are able adequately to confront this scourge.

Given that the trafficking of small arms and light weapons is a serious problem that the international community must address, we acknowledge the work carried out by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council in addressing the consequences and impact of this question. El Salvador calls for greater coordination among the various bodies, including the Peacebuilding Commission.

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

Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa): South Africa notes with appreciation the convening of this open debate on the impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security.

We believe that it is timely to build on the successful outcomes of both 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, as well as the seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, in order to give greater attention to this matter.

South Africa is also pleased to note the adoption by the First Committee this year of the annual draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (A/C/1/76/L.43), of which South Africa, Colombia and Japan are traditionally the main sponsors.

Six years on from the adoption of resolution 2220 (2015), this open debate presents an opportunity to take stock of its implementation, as well as to reflect on certain pertinent related developments. Recently, however, the Council has recognized the adverse impacts on international security of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, particularly on the African continent, through the adoption of resolution 2457 (2019), concerning cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security — Silencing the Guns in Africa.

South Africa wishes to make three points.

First, South Africa would like to call on the Council to encourage support for initiatives undertaken at the national and regional levels, consistent with the Programme of Action, through international cooperation and assistance, not only in material support but also in information exchange, technology transfer and, importantly, in capacity-building, to ensure that countries are able to take ownership of controlling this scourge and threat. We should address the challenge at its root to enable an effective response.

Secondly, South Africa also supports efforts to bring the work of the Council in line with and complementary to all other initiatives to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, thereby further operationalizing the Programme of Action.

Thirdly and finally, South Africa calls for the equal, full and effective participation of women — including in leadership roles — in all policy, planning and implementation processes around efforts to address the impact of small arms and light weapons. That is especially important given the disproportionate impact of the use of those arms on women and children.

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

Mr. Stefanile (Italy): I wish to express Italy's appreciation to the Mexican presidency for convening this debate and for dedicating special attention to the global challenge of the trafficking of arms. I also wish to thank the briefers for their contributions.

Italy aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the European Union (EU) and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

First, I wish to reiterate Italy's enduring commitment to all international efforts, particularly within multilateral forums, to curb the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. We attach the utmost importance to the universalization of all relevant multilateral instruments. We will continue to work towards the effective implementation of 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; 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 illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons constitutes a very serious threat to peace and security in every region of the world. There can be no underestimation of the devastating consequences of the widespread and illegal availability of these weapons; it contributes to instability, violence and insecurity and undermines the effectiveness of development efforts. The risk posed by illegal arms flows has steadily evolved to the extent that, today, arms trafficking is not only associated with transnational organized crime but also, and increasingly, with terrorist entities. The use of online marketplaces, including the dark web, to sell and acquire weapons creates further challenges for national Governments and law enforcement agencies. Moreover, in recent years, non-State actors have improved their capabilities to design and produce improvised explosive devices with commercially available dual-use components.

Illegal arms trafficking is a key driver of violence and contributes to the erosion of institutional stability and the rule of law. The Security Council has often addressed that scourge by tasking peacekeeping operations with assistance to national authorities in controlling the flow of small arms, developing appropriate legal frameworks and improving law enforcement capabilities. In the light of the latest report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839), we encourage the Council to remain fully seized of the challenges posed by the illicit transfer, excessive accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

It is also important to recall that illegal weapons usually start as legally produced and traded weapons. However, their irresponsible diversion and export can produce harmful effects and facilitate the spread of illegal flows. In recent decades, the international community has become increasingly aware of the pernicious consequences of illicit, unregulated or irresponsible transfers of conventional arms in fuelling conflicts. The Arms Trade Treaty is a crucial instrument that has the potential to mitigate that risk. We supported this year's thematic focus of the presidency of the seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty on eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and we consider this to be a positive contribution to addressing human rights violations, terrorist phenomena and gender-based violence.

Italy stands ready to actively contribute to the efforts of the international community to curb the accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, including by offering its cooperation to interested States and partners. In that regard, we welcome the successful outcome of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and continue to believe that applying the provisions of the Programme of Action also to small arms and light weapons ammunition would be beneficial. Moreover, we express our full support for the EU 2020–2025 Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking, which complements the road map for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in the Western Balkans.

Finally, let me stress the importance of including gender-based issues and perspectives at all negotiation tables, including when discussing strategies on non-proliferation and disarmament, conventional arms and small arms and light weapons. In that spirit we welcome the significant progress made in the seventh Biennial Meeting, and specifically the fact that the outcome document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1) calls for the equal, full and effective participation of women in all processes related to the Programme of Action.

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

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): Latvia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU).

Latvia agrees with the stark assessment of the Secretary-General that the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, as well as their ammunition, remains a defining factor that undermines peace and security at the national, regional and global levels. The diversion and trafficking of small arms and light weapons fuel conflicts, contribute to organized crime and heighten the risk of terrorism. This challenge demands the continued attention and active engagement of the Security Council. Therefore, we applaud Mexico's initiative to organize today's open debate.

Latvia welcomes the steps taken by the Security Council to address this challenge, including by integrating language related to small arms and light weapons in country-specific resolutions. Furthermore, Security Council-mandated missions continue to play an important role in monitoring and disrupting the illicit flows of arms and ammunition. Those efforts should be redoubled.

Taking a step forward, we would like to encourage a gender-sensitive approach by streamlining efforts to control small arms and light weapons with those related to women, peace and security, as well as gender-based violence. Furthermore, the Security Council should pay particular attention to the implications of new technological developments. The use of polymer frames and the manufacturing of modular weapons and 3-D printed weapons are just a few examples of developments that affect the marking, record-keeping and tracing of small arms and light weapons.

All of those aspects were at the forefront of discussions during 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 in July. Serving as a Vice-Chair of that meeting, Latvia contributed to the efforts of States parties to agree on a substantial outcome document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1). Now, it is important to focus on its implementation and the preparations for the next meeting, which will take place in 2022. The eighth biannual meeting should not be a mere repetition of the discussions we already had this year; it should constitute a clear step forward, particularly when it comes to the consideration of new developments in the

manufacture, technology and design of small arms and light weapons.

To effectively address the diversion of small arms and light weapons, we require consistent efforts to ensure the responsible international trade in conventional arms. As one of the current Vice-Presidents of the Arms Trade Treaty, Latvia is a strong advocate of this instrument and emphasizes the synergies between the Treaty and the Programme of Action. It is worth noting that this year's Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty had a thematic focus on small arms and light weapons and stockpile management. It concluded with a set of concrete proposals for States to consider implementing.

Using the framework of the Treaty, Latvia actively provides assistance and shares best practices with other States and regions. This year, Latvia participated in development of an Arms Trade Treaty outreach library. It is a European Union project led by French expertise that is aimed at supporting the practical implementation of the train-the-trainer principle. Furthermore, Latvian cooperation with partners includes regular participation in EU Arms Trade Treaty projects led by Germany's Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control. They cover various regions, including South-East Asia, Africa, Central Asia and the Western Balkans. We believe that such cooperation provides collective benefits that go beyond the security dimension, as tackling illicit flows of small arms and light weapons also contributes to economic development and prosperity. Latvia is determined to continue its proactive role in these international efforts.

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

Ms. Quintero Correa (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation thanks Mexico for convening this open debate. My delegation also wishes to express its thanks to the briefers.

The trafficking and diversion of arms and ammunition continue to be a concern and a threat to peace, security, sustainable development and world stability, due to their humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences and their connection to violence and other crimes, including illicit drug trafficking, terrorism and transnational organized crime. The dimensions of the problem demonstrate that it is the result of the conjunction of national realities with regional and global flows and variables. That is why it is essential

to strengthen at all levels coordinated actions aimed at preventing and combating the trafficking and the diversion of weapons, their ammunition, parts and components to unauthorized recipients.

As noted by the Secretary-General in his latest report to the Security Council on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839), weapons continue to play a central role in initiating, exacerbating and sustaining armed conflict, pervasive violence and acts of crime and terrorism. In addition to their humanitarian impact, the flows and availability of weapons and ammunition have an impact on security risks. That is a problem of global dimensions that requires us to continue to strengthen alliances, assistance and coordinated action, particularly in relation to border control and customs; stockpile management; marking, records and tracking, as well as the identification of associated groups or individuals. Likewise, it is essential to strengthen international cooperation and assistance, including capacity-building, knowledge and technology transfer, and exchange of information and best practices.

We welcome the success of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the adoption of the outcome document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/1). We also value efforts within the framework of other instruments at the global, regional and subregional levels. We also value and encourage intensified bilateral efforts. However, the persistent and new challenges are many. The rapid advance of technology and the adaptability of criminal organizations require States to act swiftly, both to guarantee the application and effectiveness of existing voluntary and binding instruments, and to expand and update them.

We must address current and emerging challenges, integrating efforts in the implementation of the Programme of Action and other instruments with those aimed at the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promoting the equal, full and effective participation of women and the cooperation and assistance of civil society, especially by recognizing and empowering the contributions of young people.

The task of identifying and taking advantage of the synergies among the various instruments is important, as are parallel efforts to promote sustainable

development. As the Secretary-General also points out in the aforementioned report, there is enormous potential to link disarmament goals at the operational level with many other Sustainable Development Goals, so that the historical relationship between disarmament and development can once again receive international attention.

The trafficking and diversion of arms and ammunition continue to claim lives, destroy families, affect communities, prolong conflicts and undermine peace and development efforts. The objective of reducing the human suffering caused by this scourge and of increasing respect for life and human dignity by promoting a culture of peace allowed us to adopt the Programme of Action in 2001. That remains our collective purpose and responsibility, and it must continue to guide our deliberations and action. No country is alien or immune to this phenomenon, which has an impact on the life, integrity and dignity of individuals, families, communities and entire nations. We must do everything within our capacity to mitigate this global tragedy.

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

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Let me start by expressing our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate.

Ukraine remains gravely concerned by the fact that the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) continue to be part of domestic and transnational organized crime and terrorism, posing a serious threat to international peace and security. As of today, small arms and light weapons are the main cause of the vast majority of casualties in armed conflicts, having a wide range of negative human rights, humanitarian, development and socioeconomic consequences, as well as undermining the rule of law, respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law. That is why Ukraine is fully committed to continuing to implement international instruments in the sphere of small arms and light weapons. The production, possession and destruction of small arms and light weapons in my country are licensed and supervised in accordance with a number of international and national regulations.

We attach particular importance to ensuring effective export control procedures. In that regard,

Ukraine strictly adheres to decisions of the Security Council, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and international export control regimes. In particular, the Security Council resolutions dealing with sanctions regimes serve as guidelines for the adoption of relevant legislation and regulations in Ukraine and are strictly implemented by the national authorities. A number of national legal acts adopted by Ukraine's Parliament, President and Cabinet of Ministers regulate all forms of activity related to export control, including that of SALW.

We recognize the important contribution that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects brings to the dialogue and concerted actions of States in their efforts to realize its objectives. Ukraine emphasizes the need for the equal, full and effective participation of women in all decision-making and implementation processes related to the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Civil society, for its part, plays an important role in supporting States' efforts for the full and effective implementation of the international instruments on SALW.

Countering the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a top priority for Ukraine, given the existential security challenges we are currently facing in the defence of our sovereignty and territorial integrity. In particular, Ukraine is countering on a daily basis large-scale illicit trafficking in SALW via the huge segment of its uncontrolled border with Russia in the temporarily occupied areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as was also confirmed by the Secretary-General. We receive regular reports on clandestine night-time convoys entering and exiting Ukraine through the uncontrolled points away from the border crossings. More weapons and military equipment, including SALW and conventional ammunition, are finding their way into Ukraine through those border points under the false pretext of the provision humanitarian assistance. All of those clandestine convoys and cargos have been entering and exiting the territory of Ukraine in blatant violation of its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Such actions contradict the letter and the spirit of the Programme of Action and its International Tracing Instrument and undermine global and regional efforts in this field. They also erode the internationally

established export control and licencing procedures that secure effective customs and border controls. The only viable way to end those violations is to restore the full control of the Government of Ukraine along the entire stretch of our country's internationally recognized borders. Any progress in that regard would substantially strengthen the security of the entire European region.

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

Mr. Penaranda (Philippines): The Philippines appreciates the efforts by Mexico, led by Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, to organize this very timely and important open debate.

There is indeed an urgent need to prevent and combat the diversion and the illicit international transfer of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized recipients, as noted by Member States in the outcome this year of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider 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.

In the Philippines, addressing the diversion of small arms and light weapons that may eventually end up in the hands of terrorists and criminals is of critical importance. We have seen that arms smuggling is part of the operations of terrorists. Civilians on the island of Mindanao paid a high price, with dozens killed and widespread destruction of homes and property, amid the battle of Marawi, which pitted the Philippine military against militants allied to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham. The Security Council should enjoin Member States to act cooperatively to prevent terrorists and criminals from acquiring weapons. There are various issues that need to be addressed collectively, but I would like to highlight the following recommendations.

First, we should improve data analysis. The Philippines sees value in the Council deepening its support for long-term, standardized, systematic and disaggregated data collection and analysis, including small arms surveys. The aim is to identify trafficking routes and patterns, diversion points and other methods of concealing weapons for the purpose of trafficking. Those will have to be coupled with effective regulatory impact analysis and assessment in the country that employs an efficient methodology for determining the

viability, effectiveness, cost, benefit and implementation framework of a given policy.

Secondly, we should build capacity. Building the capacity of Member States — for instance, to report the number of seized and collected small arms and light weapons — will be crucial to monitoring progress on Indicator 16.4.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Security Council can find ways to contribute to building capacity, and it can encourage Member States to develop synergies. For instance, in resolution 2370 (2017), the Council encouraged Member States to share information, establish partnerships, with both the public and private sectors, and develop national strategies and capabilities.

Thirdly, we should strengthen engagement with industry stakeholders. The goal is to improve controls of small arms and light weapons. The industry is the first line of defence in the battle against weapons proliferation.

Lastly, we should address ammunition. Excluding ammunition would mean that, once weapons are successfully smuggled, the supply of the corresponding ammunition is free and limitless. We need to track the movement of ammunition to ensure that it also does not fall into the wrong hands. Multilateral and bilateral transparency measures are crucial to combating the black market for weapons and ammunition. The Security Council could encourage debates and initiatives on securing a full-life cycle approach on small arms, light weapons and ammunition.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight the importance of allowing the increased involvement of the greater membership of the Council to make decisions on this subject. The Council should take on board the perspectives and contributions of the Member States and regions most affected by the diversion and trafficking of arms.

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

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): The proliferation of small arms is a key driver of conflict across the world, including in situations on the Security Council's agenda. Nearly half of all violent deaths between 2010 and 2015 involved the use of small arms. The proliferation of small arms has intensified and prolonged the duration of armed conflicts and frustrated attempts to prevent and resolve them. The Council has the power to prevent

the flow of small arms and other weaponry into conflict areas, and it must ensure that measures to that effect are respected by all Member States.

In the case of Libya, the Security Council in 2011 required all Member States to prevent the sale or supply to Libya of small arms, among other weaponry and related material. However, the recent report of the Panel of Experts refers in stark terms to the total ineffectiveness of the arms embargo, citing violations that are “extensive, blatant and with complete disregard for the sanctions measures.” (*S/2021/229, summary*) We regret that the Council has been unable to guarantee the effective implementation of the measures, including those in connection with small arms, by all members of the Organization.

In the case of Yemen, resolution 2140 (2014) decided on a targeted arms embargo for designated individuals and entities. However, the flow of small arms continues to fuel the conflict in Yemen and adds to the significant number of civilian-held firearms that are already present in the country. The latest report by the Panel of Experts on Yemen (see *S/2021/79*) discusses seizures of small arms in violation of that more focused embargo.

If effectively implemented, arms embargoes could constitute a significant step in the right direction for other situations on the Council's agenda and potentially strengthen the Council's relationship with the other principal organs of the United Nations. In Myanmar, military forces have used small arms to attack the civilian population in a systematic manner, which has greatly exacerbated the situation and created a massive crisis with regard to the protection of civilians. In addition, there has been an alarming escalation in violence in that conflict between certain ethnic groups, recently in Chin state in particular.

Liechtenstein continues to call on the Council to act on the situation in Myanmar in order to ensure de-escalation and a return to a peaceful transition to a political arrangement in line with the expressed will of the people. In doing so, the Council can draw on the action taken earlier this year by the General Assembly, which called on all Member States to prevent the flow of arms into the country. Taking such a step would also set a clear example of the coordination and collaboration among the principal organs of the United Nations in preventing the further proliferation of conflict, as envisioned during the Council's open debate this past week (see *S/PV.8906*).

The violence caused by the proliferation of small arms has a disproportionate impact on women and girls. Our analyses of, and actions taken to end, the widespread suffering caused by small arms must therefore be gender-sensitive, and efforts to achieve disarmament in the area of small arms must include the full, meaningful and effective participation of women and girls in all its aspects. We welcome the relevant calls in Council resolutions to that end, most recently resolution 2220 (2015), and hope to see further progress in the Council's consideration of the links between gender and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

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

I want to thank Mexico for giving the EU the opportunity to share its views on this important topic.

The diversion, illicit trade and unauthorized use of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition still constitutes a serious impediment to peace, growth, development and security in the world. Illicit small arms are fuelling armed violence in organized crime, global terrorism and conflicts, which thwarts sustainable development and crisis management efforts. They destabilize entire regions, States and their societies and increase the impact of terrorist attacks. The EU considers that, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal Targets 16.1 and 16.4, sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security, and that peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development.

The EU remains committed to preventing and curbing the illicit trade in SALW and their ammunition and is promoting accountability and responsibility with regard to their legal trade. Three years ago, the EU adopted its strategy against illicit SALW and their ammunition, entitled "Securing arms, protecting citizens". The strategy takes into account the evolved security context and the developments in SALW design

and technology affecting the capacity of Governments to address the threat. To that end, the strategy is guided by the following principles.

The first principle concerns unity: taking a joined-up and coordinated approach across external policies, between Member States and the EU, and between internal and external policies. The second principle concerns promoting cooperation and partnership at all levels. The third principle concerns taking responsibility in relation to priority regions, especially those likely to pose a threat to the EU's security and most likely to benefit from EU action. The fourth principle concerns promoting a global rules-based cooperative order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core, based on respect for international law, including international human rights and international humanitarian law, with a view to creating a peaceful and sustainable world. The fifth principle concerns incorporating gender and diversity aspects in SALW-control projects and actions.

The majority of assistance projects supported by the EU can be considered as classic SALW-control projects, with a focus on voluntary civilian disarmament campaigns, the collection and destruction of surplus SALW and ammunition, physical security and stockpile management for SALW and ammunition and capacity-building for marking, record-keeping and tracing. In order to increase the efficiency and sustainability of assistance efforts, the EU calls for improved coordination with relevant regional organizations, donors and implementing agencies, with full ownership of the Governments of recipient States and steered by national action plans and strategies.

In line with its 2018 strategy on SALW, the EU systematically mainstreams gender considerations in the design of new projects relating to the fight against gun violence and SALW control in general. When gender dimensions are not adequately dealt with in legislative and policy frameworks, the success and effectiveness of interventions are limited. The EU provides funding to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for the implementation of a global, multi-year project, which seeks to translate gender-related global commitments on small arms control into regional, national and local practices. The EU also strengthened its dialogue and cooperation with regional organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) by aligning our activities with regional strategies and action plans. In 2018, the EU adopted a Council decision supporting

the OAS efforts to counter the illicit proliferation and trafficking of SALW and ammunition and their impact in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The EU considers that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects continues to provide an effective framework for States to consider, commit to and implement activities. The EU is a convinced supporter of the International Tracing Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons as one of the most important achievements of the Programme of Action and an essential tool in the fight against the diversion, unauthorized re-export and the illicit trade in SALW.

The EU and its member States reaffirm their strong support for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as a key international instrument aimed at establishing the highest possible common international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms as well as eradicating the illicit trade in conventional arms and preventing their diversion. The universalization and full implementation of the ATT ranks high among the priorities of the EU. In that light, we call on all Member States, especially the major arms importers, exporters and transit States, to ratify or accede to the ATT without further delay. In order to reinforce international cooperation and effective implementation of United Nations arms embargoes and to promote the necessary synergies across the United Nations system, we need to build on the momentum generated by the successful outcome of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States of the Programme of Action and the seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

In conclusion, we are convinced that military weapons have an indispensable role in the preservation of security, freedom and peace, provided that they are used in accordance with international law, international including human rights law and international humanitarian law. At the same time, weapons of war are, by definition, capable of inflicting death and destruction. That dilemma means that Governments that control such weapons must ensure that they are traded in a responsible and accountable way and should prevent their diversion to terrorists, criminals and other unauthorized users.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Ms. Courtois.

Ms. Courtois: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is grateful for this opportunity to address the Security Council and welcomes the attention to the impact of diversion and trafficking of small arms and light weapons on peace and security.

Contemporary armed conflicts tend to be protracted, fuelled by a steady inflow of arms and ammunition and are rarely fought alone, leading to a diffusion of responsibilities, fragmented command chains and unchecked flows of weapons. Every day, the ICRC witnesses the suffering caused by the widespread availability, poor regulation and misuse of arms and ammunition. We see high levels of armed violence and insecurity. Medical and humanitarian assistance is hindered or halted. Humanitarian impacts are often gendered, including when weapons are used to commit or facilitate sexual and gender-based violence.

Too often, children are victims of violence. In South Sudan, for example, our surgical teams have cared for a staggering 9,000 patients wounded by weapons over the past decade, and a quarter of those treated for gunshot wounds have been women or children. More than 40,000 wounded Afghans have been treated at ICRC-supported medical facilities over the past month. It is heartbreaking to see our wards filled with people who have lost limbs, particularly children.

Despite the advances made in regulating the international arms trade, including the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013, weapons and ammunition continue to be supplied in large numbers to parties to armed conflicts — States and non-State armed groups alike — and diverted to unauthorized end users and end uses. There is a gap between the obligations assumed by States under international law and the arms-transfer practices of too many States.

The problem of small arms and light weapons must be addressed in a manner that mitigates the risks from small-arms violence and assists victims. Towards that aim, the ICRC encourages States to, first, adhere to the abundant number of existing instruments related to small arms and light weapons as well as other conventional arms and to faithfully implement them, including the Arms Trade Treaty. Secondly, States that support warring parties must leverage their influence and mitigate adverse humanitarian consequences. They must take steps to better manage arms stockpiles,

ensure recipients have training and the means to adhere to international humanitarian law and human right obligations, and safeguard arms transfers so that no arms are transferred if there is a clear risk that international humanitarian law or human rights law would be violated.

Failing to manage the supply chain, without regard to how weapons will be used, is putting a dirt-cheap price on the lives of civilians. We urge States to take an honest look at how actions and inactions perpetuate violations, insecurity and suffering. The well-being of millions of people depends on that.

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

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): Today's discussion concerns an issue that is crucial for international peace and security on several counts — ranging from terrorism to transnational organized crime, armed conflicts, gender-based violence and sustainable development.

At the outset, I thank the briefers for sharing their valuable insights.

Turkey remains highly concerned with the threat posed by the proliferation of illicit conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. Such diversion of weapons to unauthorized recipients, especially to terrorist groups, poses an exceptionally grave threat, as experienced first-hand in our region. We know all too well that it is innocent people and our societies that pay the price when terrorist groups obtain the means to threaten national security and disrupt socioeconomic development. Therefore, we must take all the necessary measures at the national, regional and global levels in order to prevent and eradicate the accumulation and illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons.

Turkey is firmly committed to the effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. On the historic occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Programme of Action, we need to ensure this instrument's continued relevance — and that begins with renewing and strengthening our commitments. Indeed, there is an urgent need to effectively address challenges resulting from recent developments in the

marketing, manufacture, technology and design of these weapons. To that end, we welcome the successful conclusion of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action and its substantive outcome document. We look forward to building on that as we work towards the eighth meeting, which takes place next year.

Furthermore, we are encouraged by the consensus agreement on a report (see A/76/324) by the Group of Governmental Experts on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects regarding problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus. We also believe that the Security Council can build on its existing body of work in this field. The recommendations in the latest report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839) provides a good basis for discussions, most notably the terrorism-arms-crime nexus.

Moving forward, we see a need to increase capacity-building assistance to better implement the Programme of Action, as well as effective border and export controls, risk assessments, sharing best practices, transparency and reporting. The Security Council also has a key role to play in post-conflict settings, as small arms issues can be integrated into peace operation mandates, country-specific resolutions and sanctions regimes. It is clear that we need to harness this momentum if we are to protect the people we serve. Turkey stands ready to contribute to this collective effort.

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

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Last week we gathered in this very Chamber (see S/PV.8906) to highlight the importance of preventive diplomacy. All speakers agreed that prevention must be placed at the heart of our collective efforts to build and sustain peace. That is very important and promising. This debate, for which we thank the Mexican presidency, reminds us that, in order to properly invest in conflict prevention, we must invest in the effective management of small arms and light weapons, including their ammunition. Needless to say, there is lot more we can and must do in that regard.

Small arms and light weapons cause the most casualties worldwide, in conflict and non-conflict areas. They are easy to use, hold and hide. They are often the weapon of choice in conflict situations. Illicit small arms are fuelling armed violence and organized

crime, global terrorism and conflicts. In his latest report on small arms and light weapons (S/2021/839), the Secretary-General encourages the Security Council to consider the relevance of weapons dynamics in its thematic discussions, including on children and armed conflict, peacekeeping, mine action, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and women and peace and security.

Let me now highlight a number of key aspects from our national and regional perspective.

First, we are happy to join our voice in calling for the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty, a crucial instrument with real potential to mitigate risks. We remain committed to the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument as the main framework for measures within the activities of the international community to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We are encouraged by the outcome of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in July, and congratulate Kenya in leading the process. Aware of the magnitude of human casualties and suffering, especially among children, caused by the illicit proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons — and not only in conflict areas — the Government of Albania has approved its national strategy and action plan on small arms and light weapons and has established a national commission.

Secondly, allow me to highlight the importance of regional and subregional organizations in tackling the trafficking and the diversion of small arms and light weapons. Concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels are needed to prevent, combat and eradicate their illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation. South-East Europe is lucky to benefit from European Union assistance regarding conventional arms transfer at the national and regional levels. Considerable work is carried out through close cooperation, coordination and joint actions of all countries in the region and relevant local agencies. In the context of the Western Balkans road map, Albania has set a national target to substantially reduce by 2024 the estimated number of firearms in illicit possession and to improve its legislation regarding the legalization, voluntary surrender and destruction of seized small arms, light weapons and ammunition — always adhering to environmental standards.

Thirdly, I want to recall the importance of arms embargoes and their implementation by all Member States, as a peaceful measure authorized by the Charter. The illicit trade, misuse and diversion of small arms and light weapons constitute a threat to international peace and security, and it is the responsibility of the Council to address that threat and reinforce its efforts. We all know that illicit flows of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition undermine the effectiveness of peace operations. We support initiatives mandating peacekeeping operations, when relevant, to ensure the tracing of weapons and ammunition and the collection of relevant data.

Last, but not least, there is something we must never forget: although entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict, the most vulnerable, women and children, are those particularly affected. Violence against women and children is exacerbated and facilitated by the presence of guns and other arms. The consequences of their proliferation include murder, intimidation, rape, torture, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, threats and humiliation, forced prostitution and the trafficking of women and girls. Sexual violence at gunpoint is a threat for every woman, but it is especially common in conflict situations, as it is used as a war strategy. During the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, for example, more than 20,000 women were raped as a deliberate policy of warfare.

Let me conclude with the words of the late Secretary General Kofi Annan:

“The death toll from small arms dwarfs that of all other weapons systems ... In terms of the carnage they cause, small arms, indeed, could well be described as ‘weapons of mass destruction’.”

Let us not forget them.

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

Mr. Ferreira Silva Aranda (Portugal): Allow me, first of all, to commend Mexico for maintaining high on the agenda the impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms for peace and security. This issue is as important as it is difficult, as shown by the guiding questions (S/2021/892) and the latest report by the Secretary-General (S/2021/839) on this issue. In that context, let me also commend the work undertaken by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research with a view to addressing those questions. In addition

to the European Union (EU) statement, I would like to offer three very brief remarks in my national capacity.

First, let me highlight the problem of non-regulation. Although many countries are affected by non-regulation, they often deal with different root causes that trigger the illegal diversion of weapons. Attention should therefore be given to cases where arms are illegally owned as a result of historic legacies, such as recent armed conflicts or a change in national legislation.

The second issue I would like to address is theft. Although the impact is larger if theft occurs from Government stockpiles, commercial actors, production facilities and destruction sites, private individuals are also often the victim of targeted thefts of legally held arms. Regular exchanges of good practices on this topic as well could be useful.

Finally, I would like to recall the importance of data collection. We need the standardization of data in all aspects, supported by well-functioning databases that are accessible by competent authorized users.

Let me conclude by reiterating the importance of cooperation among States and organizations. Instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects play an essential role. Portugal will continue to work towards the implementation and universalization of those important instruments.

Cooperation is also needed, not just among but also within States and organizations. That means working across both external borders and internal silos. We therefore commend regional processes such as the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative and the Caribbean Community's Firearms Roadmap. While focusing on the impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security, we should not lose sight of the importance of the respective impact on sustainable development and human rights, in particular those of women, children and youth.

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

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I speak on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

We would like to sincerely congratulate Mexico on its presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. We would like to thank Mr. Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico,

for presiding over this meeting. And we would like to thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for all her efforts to support the United Nations system in addressing the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

The crisis in the Middle East has threatened peace and security in the region over the past decade. The region has also experienced the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which has been used by illegal armed groups and terrorist groups to undermine peace and security, leading to the exacerbation of conflicts. We have also seen the exacerbation of conflict in other regions of the world due to the spread of small arms and light weapons. We must therefore work together to address illicit trafficking and to curb the phenomenon.

The Arab Group supports the active role played by the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We reiterate the importance of supporting that role by maintaining Member State consensus on the Programme of Action and its goals. We are also of the view that it is important to avoid controversial issues in the context of the Programme of Action, which is a political declaration and not a binding agreement on Member States. We wish to underscore that this year coincides with the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Programme of Action. In that context, the Arab Group would like to reiterate its support for the Programme of Action as well as for the International Tracing Instrument, with a view to curbing the negative impact of the spread of small arms and light weapons when it comes to the various conflicts raging around the world and to assisting people in achieving their sustainable development aspirations.

We welcome the completion of the work of the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in July, as well as the outcome document and its conclusions. Moreover, we eagerly await the eighth meeting, which will be held in 2022, so that we can build on the outcomes of the previous meeting.

The Arab Group welcomes all recommendations on supporting efforts to maintain peace by combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their negative effects on conflicts throughout the world. We also welcome the completion of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the illicit trade in small

arms and light weapons in all its aspects and the Group's report. The Group recommended the establishment of an ad hoc working group, and that recommendation was adopted by the First Committee. We are convinced of the importance of strengthening cooperation to transfer expertise to developing countries and to provide them with the necessary equipment to allow them to build their capacity when it comes to marking, tracing and border oversight. We would also like to highlight support to the Programme of Action to assist all efforts made to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

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

Mr. Vidal (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the Mexican presidency for taking the initiative to organize this open debate in the Security Council. We are also grateful that the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico was present to preside over this meeting.

The illicit trade in firearms, especially small arms and light weapons, moves billions of dollars a year around the world. The global concern to combat this crime is due to the use of these weapons in armed conflicts as well as their use by criminal groups, which creates a serious threat to public safety. Chile has spoken out in favour of disarmament and the protection of citizens, for which reason we are part of the main treaties against the illicit trafficking of firearms, their components and ammunition.

Small arms and light weapons trafficking impacts society in various ways. It constitutes one of the main problems in the context of human security and is the focus of efforts to maintain order and enforce the law. Firearms are decidedly responsible for violence, especially homicides. The trafficking of small arms and light weapons also plays a fundamental role in organized crime and amplifies the incidence of armed and terrorist conflicts. We must understand the link between the excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons, criminal violence and illegal drug trafficking.

For that reason, we are confident that multilateral efforts are key to combating this scourge. Accordingly, we wish to highlight the results achieved 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. We call on all members to agree on common positions among States in pursuit of cooperation and assistance for capacity-building in the areas identified in the Programme of Action, bearing in mind that the principles of sovereignty and non-interference must always be respected. We emphasize that this illicit trade is one of the major impediments to peace and security, as well as to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 16 and specifically indicator 16.4.2.

In conclusion, I would like to indicate the special importance that Chile attaches to the following four themes: first, the promotion of complementarities between the Programme of Action and other international instruments, including the Arms Trade Treaty; secondly, the promotion of the meaningful participation and representation of women in policymaking, planning and implementation of the Programme of Action and its connection with the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000); thirdly, highlighting the relevant role of civil society and the private sector in our common effort to fully implement the Programme of Action; and fourthly, continuing the debate on new technologies for the manufacture, design, stockpiling and trade in small arms and light weapons.

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

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the delegation of Mexico for convening today's important open debate, and His Excellency Mr. Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, for his briefing.

At a time of deepening regional tensions, the expansion of terrorist and criminal networks and the intensification of inter-State conflicts that wreak havoc on our peoples, it is important that Council members are meeting to discuss one of the key issues in this crisis: the problem of the diversion and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition.

While the Council has dealt with small arms as part of its thematic and country-specific agendas, its decision to address this issue as a single agenda item for the first time in 1999 has allowed for an inclusive and comprehensive approach to small arms. This inclusive approach is vital, given the relevance of small arms to a variety of contexts, from arms embargoes, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, child soldiers, and counter-terrorism, to the protection

of civilians in armed conflict and transnational organized crime.

The multidimensional and cross-cutting nature of small arms is indisputable. Argentina attaches great importance to this problem, the consequences of which, as we have noted, are devastating for our societies and directly threaten their sustainable development. In that regard, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, together with the International Tracing Instrument, the Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty, form a legal framework for control, with many complementarities and points in common that should be examined in depth for better implementation at the national, subregional, regional and global levels.

Argentina chaired the sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, proposing as an issue the transparency and exchange of information and its role in the prevention of diversion. To this end, Argentina drafted a working paper that was later adopted by consensus, whose main recommendations regarding this debate were the following: first, use all available information exchange tools; secondly, designate, communicate and update national points of contact; thirdly, consult and exchange information to verify the authenticity of import, export and transit or trans-shipment documents in cases of international transactions, corroborate the legality of end-users and end-uses as well as entities and actors involved in international transit and trans-shipment, and carry out post-shipment operations in relation to exports and imports to exchange information on authorizations issued; and fourthly, exchange information at bilateral, subregional and regional levels.

A forum for the exchange of information on diversion has also been established under the Arms Trade Treaty and is expected to hold its first face-to-face meeting in 2022. Further, at the regional level, the meetings within the framework of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials are noteworthy. In this forum, work is currently under way to establish a regional cross-border communication mechanism on illicit transfers of firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials, a process in which Argentina is actively participating. This mechanism, once ready, will make it possible to improve the information available for considering cases of diversion.

My country also participates actively in the meetings of the Southern Common Market States parties and associated States working group on firearms and ammunition, which it chaired at its most recent meeting. This forum makes it possible to strengthen the exchange of information, including the possibility of addressing cases of diversion. It should be noted that the importance that Argentina attaches to strengthening these mechanisms is part of a broader commitment that the country has made to the development, implementation and strengthening of confidence-building measures. It is important to note that in examining the problem of the diversion and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, consideration should also be given to the issue of ammunition.

The human, economic and social costs of the use of illicit small arms and light weapons are immense. Preventing, combating and eradicating this destructive trade is urgent and essential if we are to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as the agenda for sustaining peace. We will continue to do everything in our power to achieve this objective.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Ms. Devoto to make a closing statement.

Ms. Devoto (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having each of the countries that took the floor address the issue of highlighting the Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We know that Mexico and all countries, especially in those regions affected by small arms and light weapons, will make strenuous efforts to combat, prevent and eradicate the illicit trafficking and diversion of weapons. I thank them and wish them every success in this task.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Devoto for her closing remarks and for her participation throughout the day.

As there are no more speakers on the list, I would like to once again thank all the speakers who have joined us today. I would like to thank the Member States and the regional groups that have so far submitted written statements on the subject of the debate. Statements received by the end of the day will be included in the compilation of statements for this meeting, and we look forward to receiving further contributions.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.