

STATEMENT BY MR. ARJUN CHARAN SETHI, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND
MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON THE THEMATIC DEBATE OF
CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS IN THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 63RD SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCT OBER 21, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

While weapons of mass destruction are rightly accorded priority in the area of disarmament and arms control, conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons constitute an import concern.

We associate ourselves with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement on this subject.

India is deeply concerned that conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, continue to pose grave danger to the security of States. Their indiscriminate and irresponsible use, including by non-State actors, has caused enormous humanitarian concern. Such weapons disrupt political stability and social harmony, derail pluralism and democracy and hamper growth and development. They also fuel international terrorism and internal conflicts.

Mr. Chairman,

The United Nations has had a measure of success in dealing with the threat posed by illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Programme of Action adopted in July 2001 outlines a realistic, achievable and comprehensive approach to address the problem at national, regional and global levels. The integrity of the POA and its consensus nature must be preserved and strengthened. India will contribute constructively to the follow up meeting being envisaged as part of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States.

India will also continue to pursue the objective of a non-discriminatory, universal and global ban on anti-personnel mines in manner that addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States. Landmines continue to play an important rile in the defence of States that have long land borders with difficult and inhospitable terrains. The process of complete elimination of anti-personnel mines will be

facilitated by the availability of military effective, non-lethal and cost-effective alternative technologies.

This we mark the 25th anniversary of the EIF of the CCW Convention, which remains the only forum of a universal character that brings together all the main users and producers of major conventional weapons, thus ensuring that the instruments that emerge have a greater prospects of making a meaningful impact on the ground. India is privileged to be part of the small group of countries that has ratified all the instruments of the CCW package. India has proposed a broad based dialogue to consider a new and strengthened format of the CCW Convention that would by common agreement, reaffirm and strengthen of application of international law in regulating the victims of warfare and protecting the victims of warfare.

Mr. Chairman,

We share the international community's concerns about the humanitarian impact of the irresponsible use of cluster munitions. India has contributed actively to ongoing discussions to negotiate an instrument in the CCW consistent with the mandate of the GCE adopted in November 2007 that strikes a balance between military and humanitarian concerns. We look forward to productive discussions in the GGE meeting in Geneva in early November.

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