

Statement by Ambassador Sujata Mehta, Permanent Representative of India to Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, on Thematic Debate of Conventional Weapons at the First Committee, of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on November 01, 2012

Mr. Chairman,

India shares concerns about the challenges posed by conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, to international peace and security. We attach importance to measures aimed at conventional arms control to address these challenges and to make progress on the goal of general and complete disarmament. Since last year's First Committee meetings significant activity has taken place under the UN auspices on conventional arms. The Review Conferences of Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Diplomatic Conference for negotiating an Arms Trade Treaty were held during this period. India engaged actively and constructively in these meetings.

India associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the successful conclusion of the Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons with the adoption of the outcome document by consensus. We attach high importance to the UNPOA as the cornerstone of multilateral efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in SALW. The full and effective implementation of the UNPOA and the International Tracing Instrument is a priority for India, especially as a means for combating terrorism and transnational crime which has adversely affected our national security. We note with satisfaction that the Review Conference reaffirmed the key commitments of States under the UNPOA. The Implementation Plans of the UNPOA and ITI and the Schedule of Meetings for 2012-18 outline the roadmap for the UNPOA for the next few years. It will be important to maintain consensus in the UNPOA process in the coming years while making further progress on both the political and technical aspects of the UNPOA implementation.

India is privileged to be a party to the entire CCW package and attaches importance to the spirit of the CCW which aims to strike a balance between addressing humanitarian concerns arising from the use of certain conventional weapons and the military necessity of such weapons. It remains the only forum of a universal character that brings together all the main users and producers of certain conventional weapons, thus ensuring that the instruments which emerge have greater prospect of making a meaningful impact on the ground. We were disappointed that the CCW Review Conference held in November last year could not adopt the cluster munitions protocol. The draft protocol would have addressed the humanitarian concerns caused by cluster munitions and made a real impact on the ground by bringing into its ambit the States that produce and stockpile the bulk of the world's cluster munitions.

India remains committed to the CCW process in progressively strengthening the role and principles of international humanitarian law. India supports the vision

of a world free of the threat of landmines and is committed to the eventual elimination of anti-personnel landmines. The availability of militarily effective alternative technologies that can perform cost effectively the defensive functions of anti-personnel landmines will facilitate the achievement of this goal. We support the approach enshrined in Amended Protocol II of the CCW which addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States with long borders. India has discontinued the production of non-detectable anti-personnel landmines and observes a moratorium on their transfer. We are also contributing to international demining and rehabilitation efforts. India participates in the Ottawa Convention meetings as an Observer. India has shouldered various responsibilities in relation to CCW's Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War; for the past two years we have coordinated the work on national reporting.

India supports the two major instruments promoting transparency in armaments, viz. the UN Register on Conventional Arms and the UN Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditure. India has regularly submitted national reports to the UN Register on the export and import of conventional arms and has contributed to the three-yearly reviews of the Register. India would support efforts for further improving the Register along with efforts towards universalizing participation in it. We also contributed to the work of the GGE on the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures held in 2011.

India participated in the Diplomatic Conference held in July this year to negotiate an Arms Trade Treaty. Given the complexities of the issues involved it was not possible for the Conference to adopt an agreed text. We believe that further work needs to be done and a treaty of this kind which would be legally binding when in force should not be rushed through. The treaty should make a real impact on addressing illicit trafficking in conventional arms and their diversion to terrorists and other non-State actors. It should establish a balance of obligations of exporting and importing States and ensure that national implementation and domestic jurisdiction are fully respected. It is important to bring all stakeholders on board in a manner that promotes the prospects of a treaty that is practical and implementable and is able to attract universal adherence. India is prepared to engage in further work on an ATT in a consensus based process and outcome.

Thank you.

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