Statement by H.E. Amb. KIM Bong-hyun
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations
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Thematic Debate on Conventional Weapons
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1. The destructive power of conventional weapons may not surpass that of weapons of mass destruction, but their humanitarian and development implications require just as much attention as those of WMDs by the international community. In this regard, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) has an increasingly important role to play in the international efforts for promoting the goal of practical disarmament and in realizing the principles of international humanitarian law. As a State Party since 2001, the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the Convention and has faithfully implemented it.

2. Taking this opportunity, my delegation would like to inform all delegations that the Republic of Korea joined the Fifth Protocol to the CCW on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) in January 2008, and the Protocol entered into force in the Republic of Korea on 23 July 2008. We believe the Fifth Protocol is a significant and practical step forward in addressing the humanitarian problems of ERW, and my government is strongly committed to advancing the implementation of the Protocol.

3. In addition, my government has actively participated in the discussions of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on cluster munitions under the framework of the CCW. We believe that it is highly important to find a common ground in the negotiations based on due consideration for both humanitarian and security concerns, taking into account the different security, economic, and technological conditions that States Parties face.
4. With only one more mandated meeting left, the GGE has now reached a critical juncture. The Republic of Korea will continue to participate in the negotiations in a constructive manner and calls upon all States Parties to take a more flexible approach so that we can reach a realistic and viable solution within this year.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Small arms and light weapons are the weapons of choice in present-day conflicts, and their universal availability and excessive accumulation prolong armed violence and aggravate regional conflicts. Illicit trade in small arms is often closely linked with organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking. Also, different socio-economic and human rights problems such as child soldiers, refugees, food insecurity, and the illegal exploitation of natural resources are all associated with, and in many cases aggravated by, the proliferation of small arms.

6. In preventing and addressing the problems associated with small arms, restraining further inflow of small arms and improving the management of existing stockpiles are both critical. This is especially true in conflict and post-conflict environments, because reducing the number of arms in circulation is pivotal in preventing destabilization caused by small arms. We also need to keep in mind that nebulous networks of arms brokers often defy UN arms embargoes and other measures to control the illicit trade of small arms, there is a need to improve the system for the monitoring of arms embargoes.

7. In this context, my delegation welcomes the substantive report of the 3rd Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) to consider the UN Programme of Action (PoA). By identifying four key issues and practical recommendations to address the challenges to each of them, the Meeting has succeeded in reviving the momentum for global actions against the illicit trade in small arms. In addition, it will serve as a valuable guide, pointing the way forward for the full implementation of the UN PoA and International Tracing Instrument (ITI).

8. I would also like to express our appreciation to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) for launching the “PoA Implementation Support System (PoA-ISS)” and for improving the “Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA).” We believe that such initiatives will greatly facilitate coordination among all interested parties and thereby contribute to the full implementation of the PoA.

9. Finally, Mr. Chairman, my delegation welcomes the report by the Group of Government Experts on Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) established by GA Resolution 61/89, and hopes that this Committee will further the debate on this important subject based on the report.

Thank you.