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Statement by Ambassador Jürg Streuli
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Mr. Chairman,

The adoption by 107 States of the **Convention on Cluster Munitions** in Dublin on May 30 2008 was undoubtedly the most noteworthy event of the year in the area of conventional disarmament. Henceforth, the use of cluster munitions will not only be subject to the general principles of international humanitarian law. In addition, as soon as the convention enters into force, the development, production, stockpiling or transfer of these weapons will be illegal for those States that have ratified this document. Switzerland will sign the convention on 3 December during the Oslo conference.

Switzerland is also actively taking part in the efforts of the States party to the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons** (CCW), where an instrument concerning cluster munitions is being negotiated. We hope that these efforts will lead to an immediate and credible prohibition of cluster munitions which cause unacceptable damage to civilians. We believe that these efforts are of crucial importance. The aim is to find a set of regulations which would apply to the 90% of global stocks of cluster munitions which are not yet covered by the prohibition envisaged in the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The aim is to formulate regulations that convince the main States producing and using cluster munitions of the necessity for a solid instrument that provides security to civilians and meets military needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasise the importance of the implementation of **Protocol V** to the CCW concerning explosive remnants of war, which entered into force in 2006. The year 2008 also marks the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of **Protocol II** as amended on 3 May 1996 on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices. Switzerland, which will assume the presidency of the tenth annual meeting of the States parties to the amended Protocol II, will continue to support the efforts to implement this instrument and is currently assessing how the process can be revitalised.

Mr Chairman,

Switzerland participated actively in the Group of governmental experts mandated by the United Nations Secretary General to examine the feasibility, the scope of application and the general parameters of an **arms trade treaty**. My country is pleased that the group of experts was able to adopt a report, even though we would have wished for a more ambitious document. Switzerland is especially pleased with the report’s conclusions and recommendations. The logical next step is now the creation of an Open-Ended Working Group in order to discuss the recommendations of the GGE and work towards a legally binding treaty. We fully support the approach taken in the ATT draft resolution.

Switzerland is also particularly interested in the subject of **transparency in armaments**. Measures in this area are an important factor of confidence and security between States. My country notes that in 2007, only 67 States submitted information to the JN Register of Conventional Arms. This figure is lower than in previous years and is therefore a cause for concern. On the other hand, the number of States that have provided information about exports and imports of light weapons has increased considerably, which is a significant development. The Group of Governmental Experts dealing with the Register in 2009 will have to address these questions as well as the other challenges facing this mechanism in order to ensure that its relevance can be further strengthened.

Mr. Chairman,

In the field of **small arms and light weapons**, Switzerland attaches great importance to the process of the biennial meetings of States. At the Third Biennial Meeting of last July, I had the honour to assume the function of facilitator regarding the issue of stockpile management and surplus disposal. Switzerland is pleased with the adoption of a substantial outcome document. This document should allow for a concretization of the recommendations, the organization of regional and bilateral reunions, and finally the implementation of concrete projects on the ground. Let me
also mention here the excellent cooperation between New York and Geneva on the one hand, and between delegations, NGOs and academia on the other.

I would also like to draw your attention to the issue of **armed violence and development**. According to figures published in the report of the Small Arms Survey of September 2008, entitled "Global Burden of Armed Violence", there are more than 870 million firearms in circulation throughout the world, causing the deaths of 740,000 persons a year, including 490,000 deaths outside conflict zones. In 2006, to raise the level of awareness of this problem, Switzerland launched, together with UNPD, the **Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development**. The purpose of the declaration is to seek solutions to this problem and thus to improve the prospects of sustainable development at the global, regional and national levels.

Initially signed by 42 States, the Geneva Declaration enjoys - only two years after its launch - the support of 95 States. This testifies to an increasing and global awareness of the impact of armed violence on development, as well as of the role of the Geneva Declaration in this process. The value of the Declaration was moreover recognised by the United Nations Secretary General in the report on small arms and light weapons that he submitted to the Security Council in 2008. This report calls for additional efforts in several areas covered by the Declaration. It should also be stressed - still in the UN framework - that the document adopted at the Third Biennial Meeting of States on small arms and light weapons (July 2008) explicitly refers to the link between armed violence and development.

On 12 September 2008, a Review Summit on the Declaration brought together representatives of 85 States which, in the final declaration, solemnly stated that armed violence could be an obstacle to the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals. On this occasion, they reiterated their commitment to do everything in their power to achieve a quantifiable reduction of the global evil of armed violence by the year 2015.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge those States which have not already done so to subscribe to the Geneva Declaration and to its principles. Switzerland hopes that it can rely on the support of all the States that have subscribed to this initiative in its promotion in the relevant United Nations forums.

Mr. Chairman,

As President designate of the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Treaty I would like to briefly mention the upcoming Meeting of States Parties in November in Geneva. We chose the slogan "honour your commitment", which refers to the challenges the convention is facing due to approaching deadlines for mine clearance and stockpile destruction. Let me call upon all states to support the annual Mine Ban Treaty resolution, which is co-sponsored this year by Jordan, Australia and Switzerland. We particularly welcome support by states which have not ratified the Treaty, but which would like to signal their support for its noble humanitarian goals.

I thank you for your attention.