Statement

by

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before the First Committee
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Thematic Debate
“Conventional Weapons”

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Please check against delivery
Mr. Chairman,

1. The proliferation and illicit use of conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons (SALW) remain a serious threat to peace, security, stability and development in many parts of the world. Many types of conventional weapons and SALW are common, widespread, and closely linked with armed violence, transnational crime, terrorism and human rights violation. It is therefore imperative for states to take responsible action as well as for the international community to intensify its efforts to ensure against illicit diversion of these weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

2. Thailand supports 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 (UNPoA). We believe that the UNPoA is a key multilateral framework in coordinating efforts of Member States to curb the proliferation of SALW.

3. To effectively implement the UNPoA, at the national level, Thailand has strengthened its domestic legislations and procedures to effectively monitor imports and exports as well as to control any proliferation of illicit weapons. Thailand also stresses the importance of cooperation at the regional and international levels in information sharing and exchange of best practices in addressing illicit SALW, including technical know-how on marking and tracing of weapons. Thailand has also actively participated in the Open-Ended Meeting of Governmental Experts held this year and other related activities. We are also preparing to participate in the UN Review Conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action to be held next year.

4. Thailand reaffirms its full commitment to implementing the UNPoA and cooperating with the international community in combating the illicit trafficking of SALW.

5. For conventional weapons, we also report to the UN Register on Conventional Arms on a regular basis – a submission that is voluntary and helps increase transparency in armaments. The reporting of Member States constitutes an important confidence-building measure in maintaining peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

6. Common standards to prevent illicit arms transfers can curb irresponsible arms use. Thailand welcomes the preparatory work leading up to the negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2012, which will help assure responsible transfer of conventional weapons and SALW and minimize the social and humanitarian impacts from the flow of such illicit weapons. In our view, discussions and negotiations on ATT, as well as any other international legally binding agreements on arms control and disarmament, should be pursued within the framework of the United Nations. Such approach would produce an outcome that is universally accepted and can be widely and strictly implemented. In
this connection, Thailand looks forward to participating in the UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty next year.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Certain types of weapons generate indiscriminate effects and produce adverse humanitarian impacts on innocent civilian lives. Thailand has ratified the Mine Ban Convention since 1998, contributing to the realization of a world free of anti-personnel mines. We are fully committed to our obligations under the Convention, namely mine clearance, promoting universalization of the Convention, victim assistance, and mine risk education and has completed our obligation on stockpile destruction since 2003.

8. Thailand expresses its readiness to work with all parties and appreciates all technical and financial assistance received according to Article 6 of the Convention. However, continued assistance from the international community is important to enable us to fulfill our obligations under the Convention in the specified timeframe. Once our task is completed, we are determined to use our know-how and remaining resources to assist others in need. Thailand will participate in the 11th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to be held in Cambodia from 28 November to 2 December 2011 and wishes the Meeting every success it deserves.

Mr. Chairman,

9. With regards to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Thailand supports the principle of the Convention of which humanitarian concerns caused by cluster munitions remains at its heart. Although we have not yet joined the Convention, we have continued our serious engagement on this issue. A Workshop on the Convention of Cluster Munitions was recently held in Bangkok to raise awareness and broader understanding of the Convention across Thai agencies and civil society. Last month, we also participated as an observer in the 2nd Meeting of States Parties to Convention on Cluster Munitions held in Lebanon. Most importantly, we actively contribute our efforts towards victim assistance, awareness raising, and providing education on this issue to people who are prone to be affected.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The risk and threat posed by the proliferation of conventional weapons and SALW as well as associated with certain types of conventional weapons are strongly evident and relevant. Resources invested in addressing these problems could be spent on more productive activities for societal benefits. Thailand stands ready to cooperate with all Member States in addressing and tackling these common global challenges in order to maintain international peace and security as well as to promote social and economic development.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.