STATEMENT by TURKEY

at the Thematic Debate on CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

68th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE

30 October 2013, New York
Mr. Chairman,

During this year's session of the First Committee, we have so far deliberated on weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. We have discussed their impact and destructiveness in case of use. We voiced our expectation for them to be never used again. However, there is another category of weapons, which is used on a daily basis in all corners of the world—whether it be in developed or developing countries—causing mass casualties and suffering: that is conventional weapons.

Each state has the legitimate right to manufacture, import, export, transfer and retain conventional weapons for its self-defense. But we need to pay more attention to their adverse effects.

In this context, we would like to highlight especially small arms and light weapons. Of all types of weaponry, small arms and light weapons are the most suitable for individual and non-professional use. We need to think of the issue in a multidimensional context. The issue of small arms and light weapons could be taken up from two broad and separate, nevertheless closely interrelated dimensions:

- First, from an international, regional and national security perspective, making it a disarmament issue;
- Second, the human life, safety and socio-economic perspective, making it a humanitarian and development issue.

Therefore, we should pay particular importance to the issue of small arms and light weapons. The illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation, uncontrolled spread and misuse of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to global peace and security, as well as to the social and economic development of many countries. Furthermore, there is a well-documented relationship between their illicit trade, terrorism and organized crime.

Thus, given these far-reaching consequences, addressing this risk effectively calls for a common and concerted global effort. One effective way to alleviate the outcome of risks associated with SALW, and other conventional arms, is to have a comprehensive and binding regulatory framework for the trade of such items. Therefore, Turkey was heartened by the conclusion and signing of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Since its outset, Turkey supported and actively participated in the process, thereafter signing the ATT. We intend to ratify it as soon as possible. The Treaty's real strength will be in its universalization and implementation. We therefore invite all states, in particular the lead exporters, to sign and ratify it, for the Treaty to enter into force without delay.

Turkey will continue to actively contribute to all efforts within the UN and other fora, for the establishment of effective norms and rules aimed at eradicating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. In this regard, Turkey remains committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Tracing Instrument. We were thus pleased that the 2012 Review Conference yielded results, and wish to see similar results during the 5th Biannual Meeting of States to be held in 2014. We also welcome UN Security Council Resolution 2117, the first resolution on SALW.

Confidence building and transparency play an important role in our efforts to strengthen global peace and security. In this context, we value and support instruments such as the UN Register of Conventional Arms, and the UN Report on Military Expenditures. We are among the countries that
report regularly, and invite all states to do so. Furthermore we support the inclusion of SALW as a mandatory category of the Register.

Turkey also fully shares the humanitarian goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and strongly condemns their use against civilian populations. On the other hand, Turkey is a state-party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and is committed to its full implementation. Additionally, Turkey is also a state-party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and views it as an important body, where many aspects of conventional weapons are discussed. We stand ready to engage constructively with all delegations during the upcoming annual meetings in November.

On the other hand, with the fast pace of technological development, our approaches to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control need to be forward-looking. We need to be able to react to such advances, and incorporate them effectively into our various instruments, arrangements and regimes.

Mr. Chairman,

Turkey is party to all international non-proliferation instruments and export control regimes, and wishes to see their universalization and effective implementation. The faithful observance and full implementation are among the fundamental principles of Turkey's defence policy and doctrine. In this view, Turkey favours and will continue to favour global overall disarmament, and supports all efforts in the field of sustaining international security through these mechanisms.

However, we believe that the most effective method to address the ill-effects stemming from conventional weapons is to tackle the root causes of conflict. The peaceful settlement of disputes, non-use or threat of use of force, respecting territorial integrity and sovereignty, international and regional cooperation, as well as development, are vital in promoting and cementing regional and global peace and security, and hence providing a safer world for ourselves and future generations.

Thank you.