STATEMENT

by

TURKEY

at

the THEMATIC DISCUSSION
on CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

of

the First Committee
of the 69th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly

23 October 2014, New York
Mr. Chairman,

Given the limited time we have today to complete our work, we would be presenting a brief statement today under the conventional weapons cluster. This, however, does not indicate less importance we attribute to this category of weapons. It is actually this type of weapons that is used on a daily basis in all corners of the world, developed and developing countries alike, causing mass casualties and suffering. They are even regarded as weapons of mass destruction in some parts of the world.

In this context, we would like to especially highlight small arms and light weapons, as they are the most suitable for individual and non-professional use. From a multidimensional context, this issue 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.

In this context, the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation, uncontrolled spread and misuse of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to peace and security, as well as to the social and economic development of many countries. There is a well-documented relationship between their illicit trade, terrorism and organized crime.

With this, Turkey wholeheartedly welcomes the upcoming entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on December 24, 2014. We express our gratitude to Mexico for hosting the first informal consultations in the run up to the First Conference of States Parties in 2015 and look forward to the second informal consultations in Berlin in upcoming weeks. With the understanding that addressing the risk of conventional weapons calls for common and concerted global effort, Turkey has supported the ATT process since its inception and is committed to continue to do so.

Turkey will also 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. 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 is committed to the full implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We actively participated in the Third Review Conference held in Maputo in June this year and confirmed our commitment to achieve a mine-free world. In our view the documents adopted during this Conference will serve as guidelines to these which are already enshrined in the Convention.

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 welcome the recent discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons held in CCW meetings.
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, 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 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.