Statement by

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Mr. Chair,

Since this is the first time I am taking the floor, allow me to start by congratulating you on your assumption of the chair. You and all the Bureau members can be assured of my delegation’s strong support.

Croatia fully aligns itself with the statement by the European Union, and wishes to add the following in its national capacity.

Mr. Chair, in our view, the uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons poses a significant threat to security and stability, but also to development in many parts of the world. For that reason, issues of disarmament and arms control remain high on our agenda.

Croatia's commitment to conventional arms treaties stems from the fact that these treaties do make a tangible difference on the ground and represent a proof of the impact that multilateral approach can have on disarmament. In that respect, we shall continue to be proactive in our efforts to address challenges we are facing through these frameworks and we stand ready to share our experience in this field.

We are particularly committed to the region of Southeast Europe. Alongside the bilateral security cooperation with our partners, we are equally active in regional multilateral security engagements. We are proud to host the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Center (RACVIAC), which enables and promotes dialogue and cooperation on security matters in Southeast Europe.

We would also like to use this opportunity and stress the important role that Civil Society has in the context of disarmament and arms control. Croatia cooperates closely and successfully with groups and members of Civil Society, and we wish to express our appreciation for their efforts and all the hard work.

Traditionally, Croatia has been actively engaged in global humanitarian disarmament. This year we hosted and presided over the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in September in Dubrovnik. Dubrovnik Declaration underlines the commitment of the States Parties to get rid of the cluster munitions, while the Dubrovnik Action Plan lays out a comprehensive five-year plan of how to achieve that noble goal.

We look at the successful outcome of the First Review Conference with pride and hope that it will pave the way for further strengthening of the Convention, its universalization and ultimately, world without cluster munitions.

However, Mr. Chair, we are well aware that there are many challenges to be tackled before we get there. Further universalization of the Convention is a must and a lot needs to be done in order to strengthen the norm of non-use of cluster munitions.
As one of the steps forward, Croatia took the lead and put forward a Cluster Munitions Resolution to be taken under consideration during this GA session under the item General and Complete Disarmament.

I would like to take this opportunity to say more about this resolution, contained in the document L.49 and already cosponsored by 35 Member States.

This resolution urges all States outside of the Convention on Cluster Munitions – an there is not a small number of them, since CCP so far has been signed by 118 and ratified by 98 – to join the Convention as soon as possible. It also expresses strong concern regarding recent allegations, reports or documented evidence of use of cluster munitions in different parts of the world.

The goal of the resolution is to contribute to universalization and raising the level of implementation of the provisions of the Convention on a global scale.

I use this opportunity to invite those Member States who wish to join the list of cosponsors and to extend their support to the resolution that is firmly putting cluster munitions on our disarmament agenda as a separate item.

Let me conclude the part of my speech concerning the cluster munitions by saying that we welcome the fact that all Central American states have joined the Convention and we hope that all the countries in our region will follow this example, so that Southeast Europe will also become cluster munitions-free area.

When it comes to Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, another issue of special importance for Croatia, despite significant progress achieved in landmine clearance, we fear that emplaced mines continue to threaten lives and install fear in communities. In Maputo we agreed to clear all antipersonnel land mines by 2025. However, some states’ requests for extensions on Article 5 obligations imply that a long way is still ahead of us, and we must do more than just acknowledge the difficulties some countries have in that respect.

We should continue our efforts by systematically exploring possible opportunities for States that are not yet Parties to adhere to at least some of its individual norms, and effectively implement concrete measures to that end.

It can also tackle humanitarian difficulties, such as restricted access for disabled people or inaccessibility to land or water due to minefields.

Arms trade is the single biggest global trade in terms of value, with strong detrimental consequences not only to security, but to the larger development agenda including respect for human rights. By establishing robust and effective common international standard for regulation of international trade in conventional arms, the Arms Trade Treaty will significantly contribute to international peace and security.
Following the productive conclusion of the Cancun Conference, it should be the duty of all State Parties to promote the universalization of the Treaty, along with its effective implementation by the countries involved.

We now need to make use of the ATT Outreach Programme to provide outreach opportunities to the newly established ATT Secretariat, and most of all, “lead by example” when it comes to our reporting obligations.

Mr. Chair,

We remain fully committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its five Protocols. CCW is a valuable multilateral instrument that offers a credible platform to discuss both on-going issues as well as emerging ones.

Croatia would like to see continuation of discussions on the issue of LAWS within the framework of the CCW in 2016 with a strengthened mandate. This topic is not so new anymore, it has been discussed thoroughly in the two informal meeting of experts in the CCW over the past two years, but in our view that is not enough. These meetings only proved that there is need for us to have more talks. We need more answers, more conclusions and, ultimately, some decisions need to be made regarding Lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Also, it is our belief that this process should include all the relevant minds and voices and they should collaborate closely. It is of utmost importance to have at the table, together with diplomats, scientists, academia, military, civil society, industry and all the other experts that can contribute.