CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

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Mr. Chairman,

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and I will limit myself only to a few points I want to add in my national capacity.

The Czech Republic welcomes the outcomes and the success of the First Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) held last August in Cancún. The ATT is a success story in the development of internationally agreed standards to regulate the still unregulated global trade in conventional weapons. This success story has to continue through the process of universalisation and implementation of the ATT. The Czech Republic is ready to take its part and to contribute actively both through the work in the Management Committee and through active outreach and assistance across the globe.

The Czech Republic reiterates its strong support for the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Universality of the CCW and its Protocols remains one of the highest priorities. In this regard, the Czech Republic has carried out, also in the position of the President of the Eighth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V, bilateral consultations, intensive dialogue or diplomatic demarches via our missions abroad. The Czech Republic welcomes new drive in the discussion on autonomous weapons systems. We believe that the international community must establish a shared set of international norms on how autonomous weapons systems must perform in order to comply with international humanitarian law and other relevant legal regimes as the technology continues to develop.

The Czech Republic welcomes the substantial progress achieved since the last Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention. Taking into consideration there is still work to do, the Maputo Action Plan sets up an ambitious roadmap for implementation of the goals in all areas of the Ottawa Convention in next five years. Despite the tremendous achievements in the past 15 years, clearance of Anti-Personnel Mines in all contaminated areas remains a considerable challenge. There are still more than 10 million mines across the world which continue to be a threat to the civilian population. The Czech Republic belongs to the most engaged and dedicated donors in the field of demining activities, especially in the region of the Western Balkans and the Middle East. Since 1999 the Czech Republic provided more than 1,4 million USD to support international projects in many parts of the world.

The First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) held in Dubrovnik this summer reaffirmed and highlighted once again noble goals of the Convention
– prohibition of use, production, stockpiling and transfer of the cluster munitions, clearance of contaminated land, destruction of stockpiles and victim assistance. We welcome the adoption of new guiding documents, namely the Dubrovnik Action Plan and the Dubrovnik Declaration and we also welcome all the decisions which were made in order to further strengthen the institutional support of the Convention and its universalisation – one of the key goals I cannot fail to mention.

Each year small arms and light weapons (SALW), and their ammunition, cause the death and injure hundreds of thousands of people, including women and children. Their illicit trade and excessive accumulation adversely affect regional and international security and stability. The Czech Republic remains committed to working with all UN Member States in addressing these challenges within the framework of the 2001 UN Programme of Action. At the same time, the Czech Republic continues to support measures to ensure adequate marking of and record keeping for SALW and to strengthen cooperation in tracing illicit SALW. The Czech Republic cosponsored UNSC Resolution 2220 put forward by Lithuania in May this year. We share the opinion that emerging technologies offer new opportunities for the improved marking, tracing, record keeping and control of SALW and their ammunitions and should be further considered in the implementation of the 2005 International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit SALW.

Thank you for your attention.