Check Against Delivery

Statement by

Michal Sehayek-Soroka

Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons

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Mr. Chairperson,

Over the course of the last year, the strategic situation in Middle East continued to deteriorate, and its stability became unpredictable and more fragile than ever. Oppressive regimes, terrorist organizations and other non-state actors continued to wreak havoc and misery in the daily lives of the region's inhabitants causing suffering, causalities and wide scale displacement. Weakened regimes by failed governance, have lost partial or full control over territories, and have ceded or abandoned them to terrorist groups.

In parts of the region, states fail to stop, and sometimes even support, the activities by terrorist organizations with radical ideology. When state's backing includes the transfer of large quantities of sophisticated weapons, such as short and medium range rockets and missiles, MANPADS and UAVs, as well as other means of support including financing and training, this becomes a threat of a different magnitude all together.

Mr. Chairperson,

Weapons are acquired and proliferated in the region through numerous illicit routes and means, for example; smuggling, transferring, looting, and even local production by terrorist groups. These weapons have claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in the Middle East and beyond in the past few years, and are a source for great concern as they are used widely and intentionally against civilian populations. Vigilance should also be accorded to the transfer of knowhow, technology and expertise and to Iran's continued weapons transfers to terrorist organizations through violation of numerous SC resolutions and international norms.

Israel views the threat caused by the proliferation of conventional weapons, as detrimental and is aware of its possible mass effect. Israel, individually and in collaboration with other stakeholders, actively works to counter this menace through the implementation of UNSC resolutions, international norms and standards and national tools and mechanisms. An important basis already exists in the form of UNSC resolutions taken under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, such as resolution 1373.
In this regards, the need to address the issue of non-compliance by states with their obligations and international norms is ever more essential.

The threat of MANPADS, short range rockets, mortars and surface-to-air missiles deserves our special attention. The devastating effects of these weapon systems have been clearly demonstrated in recent years, not only in the Middle East but in other regions of the world. These weapons systems, mainly MANPADS, have the potential to cause grave tragedies with harsh consequences mainly, but not limited to, the civilian population and therefore should only be in the hands of responsible sovereign states under appropriate stockpile management arrangements. Their transfer to non-state actors should be prohibited and every effort should be exercised in this regard.

Mr. Chairperson,

The UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, including the Marking and Tracing Instrument (ITI), is an important tool in combating the illicit trade and diversion of arms. Israel welcomes the successful meeting held in NY in June on the ITI and is looking forward to BMS 6 to be held next year, as these deliberation and exchange of views are important to the whole process.

As the UNPoA focuses mainly on the implementation of this instrument on a national and domestic level, it cannot and should not neglect the international dimension, including multilateral efforts, regional dialogues and other forms of cooperation, aiming at addressing and curbing this phenomenon. It is clear that the Middle East sorely lacks such venues for regional exchange between those states who share vital interests in this regard.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty last December. Israel, as a Signatory State, supports the goals and purposes of this Treaty and acknowledges the remarkable development that occurred in the international sphere through the
creation of this important treaty. The preparatory process and the Conference of State parties that took place in Mexico last August were very successful and managed to complete many of the tasks before us. The ATT is an important instrument that marks and shows the international community's efforts to promote regulation of the trade in arms. Many of the Treaty's principles and standards are already embodied in Israel's robust export control mechanism. Our greetings goes to Switzerland for hosting the ATT secretariat in Geneva, where the CCW and the CD are also located, serving as a hub for many arms control and disarmament experts.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel considers the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) an important instrument and the right forum for discussing many challenges on the conventional sphere, as it strives to strike the necessary balance between military necessity and humanitarian considerations in the application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Israel welcomes the work undertaken this year in the CCW on the issue of future Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) by the informal meeting of experts held in April, as well as the continued work on IEDs and looks forward to further work on these two issues. The issue of LAWS needs to be further explored, from both technical and legal aspects, inter alia, defining what is an "Autonomous Weapon System" and what is meant by the term "Meaningful Human Control". In the run up to next year's Review Conference it is important to engage in meaningful and substantive discussions and Israel is committed to doing so.

Thank you