STATEMENT

by

His Excellency
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Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic
to the United Nations

to the First Committee
of the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

on Conventional Weapons

- Check against delivery -

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Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time my delegation takes the floor during this session of the First Committee, I wish to begin by congratulating you on the assumption of your role and by wishing you all the success in your endeavors in steering this body. I assure you of my delegation's full support during your chairmanship.

Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement of the European Union delivered earlier on conventional weapons. Nevertheless, I would like to stress a few points from our national perspective.

Mr. Chairman,

Slovakia considers the entering into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to be a remarkable milestone in the long-term efforts aimed at establishing robust and effective common international and legally binding standards for the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms, as well as creating effective, responsible and transparent tool contributing to the fight against illicit arms trade.

We join other delegations in welcoming the successful outcome of the First Conference of States Parties to the ATT in Cancun during which crucial substantive and operational decisions were adopted. We thank Mexico for all its efforts in organising and hosting this Conference as well as the Provisional Secretariat of the ATT.

I also would like to congratulate Switzerland on the election by consensus of Geneva for the seat of the ATT Secretariat and Mr. Simeon Dumisani Dladla for his appointment as the first interim Head of the Secretariat.

We share the view that we need to intensify our efforts to further expand the number of ATT ratifications, to promote ATT universalization and to ensure its effective implementation across the globe.

We are looking forward to subsequent crucial ATT gatherings, among them: the extraordinary meeting of States Parties to be held in Geneva in early 2016 and the next Conference of States Parties in Geneva in 2016 under the Nigerian presidency.

Mr. Chairman,

We are happy to announce that this year Slovakia acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and will become its full-fledged member on 1st January 2016. Let me stress that even before this membership date, the Slovak Government has decided to provisionally apply the most important obligations of this Convention. We stopped the trade and the Slovak Defence Forces were ordered not to use the cluster munitions anymore. Any manipulation of cluster munitions was prohibited with the exception of training of pyrotechnicians and explosive ordinance (EOD) experts.

Slovakia was always standing by the development and promotion of the international humanitarian law. So it was the case with this Convention. Guided by strong conviction that
all cluster munitions causing unacceptable harm to civilians must be banned, Slovakia actively participated in the Oslo process from its very beginning and finally, it joined the consensus on the text of the Convention adopted at Dublin Diplomatic Conference.

We are deeply concerned about the reported use of cluster munitions affecting civilian populations in different parts of the world. We call upon all actors to refrain from such use and to fully observe the principles of International Humanitarian Law.

Slovakia is committed to promoting the universalization of the Convention and calls upon all states that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the CCM.

Mr. Chairman,

The Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) remains a very complex issue as the international community continues to develop appropriate policy responses at global level. The 2001 UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects laid the foundation for action countering the illicit trade and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons at the national, regional and global levels.

We would like to emphasize the importance that Slovakia attaches to the continued full implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) and the outcome document of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States in New York in 2014.

We reiterate our call upon all States to implement the International Tracing Instrument.

We are looking forward to the next Sixth Biennial Meeting of States in June 2016 in New York to continue our deliberations on challenges and pressing issues of SALW.

Last but not least, we wish to recognize the important contribution of the UN Security Council to international efforts in this matter, among them mainly the adoption of crucial resolution 2117 in 2013 and subsequent resolution 2220 in 2015 on SALW, which my country Slovakia also co-sponsored.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.