Statement by Finland at the
UNGA71 First Committee 2016
Thematic discussion on Conventional Weapons

Statement by

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(check against delivery)
Thank you, Mr Chairman

I would like to align myself to the statement delivered by the European Union. In the following I will highlight a few priority issues for Finland.

Illicit and irresponsible flows of arms and conventional weapons are one of the greatest challenges that we face today. Many armed conflicts know no borders. Civilians including women and children are increasingly targeted.

In light of this, Finland has joined the Declaration on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons prepared by France and we share the aim to give due attention to this topic during this year’s debate.

Mr. Chairman,

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is a landmark instrument which provides effective international standards for regulation of trade in conventional arms, making it more responsible and transparent.

The ATT also includes the concept of serious acts of gender based violence, as well as human rights and the respect of humanitarian law, as factors to be taken into account when making export assessments.

Finland welcomes the successful outcome of the Second Conference of State Parties to the ATT held in Geneva in August this year. The Conference elected Finland as the President of ATT for a period of one year. The presidency will culminate in the third conference of State Parties in September 2017.

There are two elements which I want to stress in our future work. The first is the role of national implementation and the second the universalisation of the Treaty.

Implementation is a real challenge. This includes the strengthening of national laws and regulations as well as enforcement mechanisms. This should contribute to the ultimate objective which is more responsible trade in arms. We should also tackle the spread of arms to unintended end users.

One of the tasks of the Presidency is to promote the universalization of the ATT. Taken that the Treaty is still relatively new, it has already been a success. We have heard some positive signals from those who are in the process of ratification. We would also like to call upon those States that have not yet done so to ratify, accept, approve or accede to the Treaty, according to their respective constitutional processes.

Finland has tabled the annual resolution on the ATT at this year’s First Committee session. We are grateful for all the support that the Finnish delegation received during the consultations on the draft. We thank the delegations which have already co-sponsored the resolution and encourage others to join before action is taken on the draft next week.

Mr. Chairman,

Finland welcomes the success of the Biennial Meeting of States on the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons held last June. The substantial outcome document provides a good basis for further work on the Programme of Action towards the next Review Conference in 2018.
We were particularly pleased to see gender issues and the link between illicit arms trade and sustainable development appropriately reflected in the outcome document.

Mr Chairman,

Regarding other important topics on the agenda of this thematic discussion I would like add that:

Finland remains strongly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols. The convention forms an important part of the international disarmament machinery. The Fifth Review Conference of the CCW will provide an opportunity to continue to address both long standing and newly emerging issues. It is important that the CCW lives up to the developments in the field of conventional arms. Finland strongly supports the recommendations made by the expert group on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), including the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts under the auspices of the CCW. Finland also welcomes the Political Declaration on Improvised Explosive Devices -(IED).

Finally, Finland continues to support implementation and universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Finland continues to engage at the global level to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war. The numerous conflicts around the world are also creating new mine fields and other explosive hazards. Finland will support humanitarian mine action during 2016-2020 with 12 million euros in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Somalia and Ukraine. Finland's humanitarian mine action employs a comprehensive approach that contributes to a wider effort to promote global security, stability and development.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.