Statement by the Chinese Delegation at the Thematic Debate on Conventional Weapons at the First Committee of the 73rd Session of the UNGA

Mr. Chairman,

Recent years have witnessed increasing international concern as a result of indiscriminate use of conventional weapons. With concerted efforts, the international community has succeeded in achieving positive progress in the field of conventional arms control. The Third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (POA) has been successfully concluded. Under the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons(CCW), the Group of Government Expert on Lethal Autonomous Weapons System(LAWS) adopted a consensus report, establishing guidelines and authorizing further discussion on the issue. At the same time, concerns caused by indiscriminate use of conventional weapons are far from being comprehensively addressed. Conventional arms control mechanisms under the UN framework need to be further strengthened.

Conventional arms control is a wide-ranging and complicated issue. China advocates following principles in this regard.

First, to adhere to multilateralism. Multilateral mechanisms represented by the United Nations must play its full role. We must promote and encourage more countries to participate in the conventional arms control process, and continuously improve the universality of relevant UN mechanisms.

Second, to conduct consultation on a equal footing. It is necessary to respect reasonable security concerns of various countries, to balance humanitarian concerns and legitimate military security needs. We should proceed on this basis, striving for more consensus, and exploring reasonable and feasible solutions.

Third, to strengthen international cooperation. Developed countries
should increase their assistance to developing countries in terms of institutional building, funding, technology transfer, and personnel training. The United Nations could play a greater role in this regard.

Mr. chairman

As a "full member state" of the CCW and its five additional protocols, China has always supported the work of the Convention, fulfilled its obligations under the Convention, submitted national implementation report in time and made annual financial contribution to the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention. China actively participated in the drafting and revision of relevant regulations, participating, as co-chairs, in the drafting of the UN IED disposal standards, and participating in the revision of the International Mine Action Standards and the International Ammunition Technical Guide.

In recent years, humanitarian concerns arising from Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) have attracted increasing attention from the international community. China is of the view that international standards must be established through negotiation to regulation military application of artificial intelligence. China has actively participated in the UN GGE on LAWS and is willing to continue in-depth discussions on this issue under the framework of the convention.

The illicit trade of small arms and light weapons has greatly accelerated the spread of terrorism and extremism, and led to further regional deterioration. China believes that in order to properly resolve this problem, all countries should earnestly implement the UNPOA and international tracing instrument. China actively participated in the Third Review Conference and Preparatory Meeting of the POA, and attended the Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty as an observer earlier this year. China is willing to redouble its effort in promoting a reasonable international arms trade order, with a view to alleviating surges caused by the illicit transfer of weapons.

Military transparency is high on China’s agenda. Attaching great importance to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, China
has participated in relevant work in a constructive manner. In recent years, China has annually submitted data on arms transfers to the Register. China commends the positive role of the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures, and annually reports to the mechanism. China is willing to work with other countries to further enhance the universality and effectiveness of the above-mentioned mechanisms.

China is committed to the course of international humanitarian assistance. The Chinese government has provided more than 100 million yuan of humanitarian mine-clearance assistance to more than 40 countries through financial assistance, equipment, training programs, and field guidance, and trained more than 500 professional mine-clearance technicians. In September 2015, Chinese President XI Jinping announced at the UN peacekeeping summit that China will carry out 10 mine-clearance assistance programs in the next five years. China has by now over-delivered its commitment. This year, China organized a mine-clearance training course for Laos and Cambodia, and provided material assistance to the two countries.

China is ready to work in closer cooperation with all parties to jointly promote new progress and breakthroughs in the field of conventional arms control.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.