CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

Mr. Martin Klučar
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic
to the UN, OSCE and other International organizations in Vienna

at the Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons
of the First Committee of the 73nd Session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations

New York, 29 October 2018
Mr. Chairman,

The Czech Republic firmly supports the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We call on all States that have not yet done so to join it. We consider the ATT to be an effective international instrument with the objective to establish the highest possible international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms. In our view, the ATT contributes to international and regional peace, security and stability. One of our main goals is the universalization of the Treaty. In general, the number of States Parties has been increasing and we remain convinced that a broader universal adherence to the ATT will strengthen global security and will positively contribute to conventional weapons trade regulation.

We understand that for many of those States Parties that are not traditional exporters, the Treaty’s core requirements of establishing national arms control systems and national control lists are quite new and demanding tasks. In this respect, we would like to mention the role of the Voluntary Trust Fund that has been an important instrument for supporting national implementation and has been so far funded by donations from 14 States Parties. The reports of the VTF Chair proved its indispensable role in strengthening the implementation of the Treaty. The Czech Republic has supported the VTF financially by providing voluntary contributions in previous years and we hope to do so next year again.

We recognize that good progress has been achieved since the entry into force of the treaty in the implementation of obligations by States Parties. Our common goal is to achieve greater responsibility and transparency in the international arms trade. To this end, it is indispensable to strengthen reporting capabilities of States Parties so that they are able to fulfill their reporting obligations. We are convinced that an effective system of reporting will help States Parties and their national authorities in the risk assessment process while evaluating individual requests at national level.

The Czech Republic welcomes the progress achieved during the Third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects held in June this year. We consider the UN PoA as the universal framework to counter the threat posed by illicit SALW. We support its full and effective implementation at all levels and urge all countries to adhere to its principles, as illicit SALW continue to contribute to instability and armed violence in the world. We would like to emphasize that the implementation of the PoA is supported by synergies with international instruments having
similar objectives, such as the ATT. The Czech Republic would also like to stress the importance of The International Tracing Instrument, the only global standard on how and where to mark SALW. Although a very successful initiative, it is necessary to address the current developments in technology and design of SALW, especially the growing trend of modular design in small arms manufacture and the increased use of polymer frames. We would like to stress that curbing the illicit trade in SALW and ammunition is crucial in reaching the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UN Program of Action and International Tracing Instrument are essential tools on this way.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.