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Statement by HE Yann Hwang,
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CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

Thank you Mr Chair,

France fully associates itself with the statement of the European Union. I would also like to make the following additional remarks.

The deterioration in the international security context is a good reason to reaffirm our collective commitment to boost the universality, respect, and effectiveness of our instruments for disarmament and conventional arms control.

The proliferation crises of weapons of mass destruction must not occlude the fact that conventional weapons continue to pose a major security threat for all regions of the world, regardless of whether they are affected by conflicts. International measures on conventional arms are part of an overall disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control approach. These past years have proven that international action in the area of conventional arms must now take more consideration of the risk of terrorist groups acquiring and using them.

The efforts of the international community must not abate: on the contrary, this issue concerns all of us.
Mr Chair,

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to feed conflict, exacerbate armed violence, and fuel terrorism and organized crime. It constitutes a grave threat to international peace and security. SALW are today by far those that kill the most people worldwide. Because collaboration is the only effective response to this challenge, France is honoured to have chaired in June 2018 the third review conference of the United Nations programme of action on SALW. We are convinced that this event has gathered and remobilized States in trying to achieve our common goals, the fight against proliferation of SALW and its disastrous consequences. The preparatory process that France has led was inclusive, transparent and robust. Thanks to that, this conference has proven that multilateral discussion remains effective and is able to make us progress together. Negotiation in good faith, on the demanding path of consensus, remains the only possible method, and I believe that the June conference has made that clear.

Mr Chair,

The Convention on certain classical weapons is unique in the multilateral landscape because it brings together complementary expertise, be it political, legal, military, or diplomatic. This specificity of the CCW is a guarantee of the Convention's ability to address current and future challenges.

The fact that CCW States Parties are dealing with the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems, as proposed by France in 2013, is a significant development with regard to the Convention. France is pleased that the works of the GGE relating to these future systems continue, and, together with Germany, has formulated substantive proposals which contribute to the GGE's work, notably the project to negotiate a non-legally binding political declaration. France is pleased to see the wide support among States to this proposal and wishes to go forward in that regard in the meetings to come.
Mr Chair,

The threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) is a general concern that affects all regions. The international community’s mobilisation on this issue is essential. This mobilisation was revitalized by the adoption by consensus two years ago in the First Committee of the first resolution devoted to IEDs, as proposed by Afghanistan and sponsored by France and Australia. This resolution must be a guideline for the international community’s action. It is important that work undertaken on IEDs – both on a practical and political level – contribute to an overall coherence of the international community’s efforts, in keeping with this resolution.

France is fully committed as a State Party to the CCW to working on this issue as coordinator of the Group of Experts on IEDs. France is ready to contribute to work within the CCW on IEDs during the next cycle, particularly as chair of the meeting of high contracting parties to amended protocol II, that will take place next November in Geneva.

Mr Chair,

By creating a partnership of accountability between exporters, importers, and transit countries in every region of the world, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) should make it possible to regulate their legal trade more effectively and prevent their illicit flows.

Following a substantial preparatory process, which owes much to the remarkable commitment of the Japanese presidency, the 4th Conference of States Parties to the ATT underlined the need to make progress with substantive discussions, especially the implementation of the Treaty, notably on the issue of the fight against diversion. Naturally, France contributed to this. Now as previously, we must not lose sight in these discussions of our objective of making the ATT a truly universal standard.

It is also our collective responsibility to continue to fight for a high level of ambition, by continuing to push for the universalization of the Oslo Convention prohibiting cluster munitions, as well as the Ottawa Convention prohibiting anti-personnel landmines.
Mr Chair,

Certain financial difficulties have prevented several important meetings from being held in satisfactory conditions. This must not continue. As such we fully support the efforts made by UNODA. States need to pay their contributions, and to do so in a timely manner, so as to put an end to the alarming crisis of the disarmament Conventions.

France is fully mobilised on all of these issues and will remain committed to them in the future.

Thank you.