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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by
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Thematic Discussion on
Conventional Weapons

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Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I will deliver an abbreviated version to adhere to the time limit. The full version will be available on PaperSmart.

Mr. Chairperson.

Conventional weapons play an important role in our daily lives. Problems emerge once conventional weapons are not in authorized hands, or are being abused to promote radical agendas. For one, it is clear that states need to abide by their international obligations, not to proliferate conventional weapons but rather to fight proliferation and be effective in the management of their stockpiles.

In the past few years, conventional weapons have been acquired and proliferated in the Middle East region in unprecedented quantities and quality. These weapons find their way, into the hands of oppressive regimes, terrorist organizations and terror-sponsoring countries, which use them to spread violence and extremism. It should be noted that some states in the Middle East region not only do not try to stop or curb the activities of terrorist organizations, but consistently encourage, support and back them.

In this context, Iran, in an attempt to gain regional dominance and spread its extremist ideology, is the biggest proliferator of conventional arms in the region, using proxy organizations and entities to inflict terror and engage in hostilities. In other cases, such as Syria, the regime tragically uses its weapons, conventional and non-conventional alike, against its own population and the death toll is outrageous.

The threat posed by some weapons systems, once they are in the wrong hands, such as MANPADS, short-range rockets, mortars and surface-to-air missiles, is immense. Weapons in general, and these weapons systems in particular, should only be in the hands of responsible sovereign states, which comply with the international norms and standards undertaken by them.

Mr. Chairperson,

The UN Programme of Action in Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Tracing Instrument (ITI) are important instruments in combating the illicit trade and diversion of arms. Israel welcomes the extensive work and achievements so far, but acknowledges that great challenges still lie ahead.
The 3rd Review Conference was valuable and Israel would like to express again its gratitude to the Chairperson, Ambassador Brunet of France for his leadership, his team and the Secretariat. The success of this instrument lies in its full and efficient implementation.

In this regard, we believe that there is a need to focus on the implementation of the PoA on SALW and its ITI and stay true to its scope, rather than to try to inject other elements that are not part of its scope. On ammunition, for example, we believe that the PoA is not the right venue as another venue was already chosen – the Group of Government Experts (GGE) meeting in 2020. Going out of the scope of the PoA will make its implementation more difficult and will create bigger gaps in the implementation.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel values the mechanism of the UN register and submits its report on an annual basis. It is very unfortunate that in the Middle East region, Israel is one of the few countries to submit an annual report. Israel urges all states to submit their reports, subject to their national security considerations. Israel submitted the Military Expenditure report as well. The SALW report is a work in progress.

Israel acknowledges the significance of the Arms Trade Treaty as a milestone in the international community's pledge to enhance efforts to curb the illicit transfers of arms. The 4th Conference of State Parties was valuable and Israel would like to express its gratitude to the Chairperson, Ambassador Takamizawa of Japan. Israel, as a Signatory State, supports the goals and purposes of this Treaty, and many of the Treaty's principles and standards are already embodied in Israel's robust export policy and control mechanisms.

Mr. Chairperson,

In Israel's view, the fact that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons strives to strike the necessary balance between military necessity and humanitarian considerations in the application of International Humanitarian Law, makes it an important instrument in the conventional field. It is also an appropriate forum for discussing many challenges in this sphere. Israel values very much its principles and finds the discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), Mines Other than Anti-Personal Mines (MOTAPM) and Improvised Explosive Devises (IED's), important for better understanding the challenges that lie before us.
In regards to the GGE meetings on LAWS, we would like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Amandeep Singh-Gill of India for his leadership. We found the deliberations fruitful. It is clear that there is a need for more understanding of what lies ahead and therefore an agreement to continue the current discussion mandate is important, especially when we talk about future potential technologies.

Mr. Chairperson,

We hope for good and constructive discussions.

Thank you.