Statement on behalf of the Delegation of the Republic of Latvia

Thematic debate on Conventional Weapons

First Committee of the 74th UN General Assembly

New York, 23 October 2019

Mr. Chairman,

The Latvian delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to add some remarks in a national capacity.

At the beginning of the 20th century, combatants accounted for 90% of conflict related casualties. Today, 90% of casualties in armed conflicts are civilians. Conventional arms kill around 500 thousand people per year, out of which 70 thousand are killed in conflict zones. These figures clearly prove that the international community must focus not only on weapons of mass destruction but also on conventional arms. *In this respect, Latvia provided its own contribution to international processes in the area of conventional arms by presiding over 2018 meeting of the High Contracting Parties of the CCW and 2019 meeting of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.*

Latvia is pleased with outcome of the Conference of States Parties (CSP 5) which resulted with adoption of a robust Plan of Action on gender and gender based violence in the context of ATT. It can be considered as the first intergovernmental agreement that aims at improving meaningful participation of women in disarmament fora, as well as outlines practical steps that states parties will take to implement provisions of the ATT related to risk assessment based on gender based violence criteria. In developing this plan of action all states parties engaged with civil society organizations and industry representatives whose contribution to the debate was invaluable.
Latvia considers that universalization of the Treaty is a key to a world without violence caused by illegal circulation of arms. In that respect we are pleased that the number of states parties to ATT exceeded 100 during the Latvian presidency and reached 104 by its end. We welcome Surinam, Lebanon, Botswana, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Palau and Canada as the full-fledged States parties of ATT. We call on all states yet to ratify the ATT consider it as soon as feasible. Adherence to the treaty should be considered as national contribution to decrease human suffering around the world that is one of the main aims of this treaty.

Let me conclude, Mr President, by expression of serious concerns about the high level of outstanding national assessed contributions to virtually all arms control treaties. The effectiveness of any Treaty depends on the availability of resources to carry out its mandated activities. Non-payment of assessed contributions or their delayed payment seriously hamper normal functioning of not only the respective Treaty Secretariat’s daily work but also the Treaty as a whole. Such a situation is not acceptable. Latvia calls on all member states to fulfil their obligations towards all conventional arms treaties and pay assessed contributions in time and in full.

As the Presidency of CCW 2018 Meeting of High Contracting Parties (MHCP) Latvia this year presented the draft resolution on CCW to this Committee. I hope that the resolution will enjoy traditional consensus of this Committee.

Thank you.