



BANGLADESH

Intervention by H.E. Ambassador M Shameem Ahsan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, in the thematic discussion on “Conventional Weapons” in the First Committee of the 71st UNGA, New York on 19/20 October 2016

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

In pursuance of our commitment to general and complete disarmament, Bangladesh recognizes the threats posed by the use or threat of use and proliferation of lethal conventional weapons to international peace and security. We find it logical to address these threats also in the context of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Bangladesh is a State Party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and all its five protocols. We were the first South Asian country to have become party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We remain the only signatory state from the region to the Arms Trade Treaty. We attach importance to strengthening our national capacity for implementing the UN Programme of Work on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Tracing Instrument.

Mr. Chairman,

In December this year, we would sit for the Fifth Review Conference of the CCW in Geneva. This Convention and its five additional protocols remain as the cornerstone of the global efforts on restricting conventional arms. This is of our concern that difficulties are being faced in securing necessary funding for the Review Conference. Since the entering into force of the Treaty in 1983, significant successes have been achieved, though this remains of our large concern that only 123 countries have so far become States Parties, and many of them have not joined all additional protocols. Therefore, universalization of the Convention and its Protocols should remain as a priority for us. We are also following the ongoing discussion under this Convention on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), and are of the view that further attention of

the international community is required in this area so that consensus can be reached in near future so that use of such weapons can be regulated by international laws and regulations. We are also of the view that further actions are to be taken under amended protocol 2 and protocol 5 of the Convention, as so is in the area of Mines Other than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM). This is indeed encouraging that Protocol VI on Cluster Munitions is in the process of being drafted at the expert level, as the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) appears too stringent to many of us.

Mr. Chair,

As a State Party of the Ottawa Convention, Bangladesh deplors in its strongest terms the use, of anti-personnel mines in conflict situations aimed at killing, injuring and terrorizing civilian population. We accepted certain obligations, including destruction of existing stockpile, reporting compliance and enacting national legislation banning use, production and transfer of APMs. We completed destruction of 1, 89, 227 APMs within the deadline for completion of destruction by 1 March 2005. 15,000 mines of different categories were retained under Article 3 of the Treaty only for training purposes We are complying with the article 7 of the Convention through annual reporting. This remains a matter of great concern that only 122 countries have so far joined the Treaty and several major military powers (US, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, ROK, DPRK) remains outside the Treaty. Therefore, we urge upon all non-signatories to join the Convention at the earliest. This is also important that all States Parties adhere strictly for the full implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan. We also underscore that this is important to provide the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian support to landmine clearance operations, the rehabilitation of the victims and full access of affected countries to technology and finance for mine clearance. We are hopeful that these areas would be comprehensively addressed in the upcoming 15th Meeting of States Parties of the Convention to be held in Chile in late November and early December.

Mr. Chair,

It is indeed an encouraging development that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) came into force in December 2014. As a signatory to the treaty, we hope that the treaty would put an end to the illegal trade in and illegitimate use of conventional weapons that caused and are causing untold sufferings to mankind. Bangladesh welcomes the outcome documents of the Second State Party Conference held in Geneva in August this year. At the same time, we would like to underscore the fact that there already exists considerable imbalance in the production, possession and trade in conventional weapons between developed and developing world, and we are of the view that this gap is needed to be reduced through the unilateral disarmament measures by the industrialized countries in order to minimize threats to global peace and security. We also would like to reaffirm our alignment with the NAM position that States have the sovereign right to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their components for security requirements and self-defence. Thus, this is

imperative that balanced, transparent and objective implementation of the ATT, in harmony with the UN Charter and the inherent right of self-defence and security of the each individual State, is ensured. We emphasize that no unilateral coercive measure should be placed on the transfer of such arms.

Mr. Chair,

I would conclude by underscoring that while nuclear and non-nuclear WMDs continue to pose major threats to global peace and security, it is conventional weapons that are turning out to be the real weapons of mass destruction in many parts of the world. Horrific consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) have paralyzed many populations. Therefore, this is the key time for all of us to exert due importance on the reduction of military expenditures, and the industrialized nations should take the lead role in this regard to reduce the existing imbalance. We need to devote our resources for the economic and social progress of our populations. The Goal 16 (Promoting peace and justice) 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, which has direct relevance to successfully resolving the challenges of disarmament and international security, is needed to be implemented through our collective work based on mutual trust and esteem. We believe that to ensure this, we must give due emphasis on further Multilateral engagements in this regard.

Thank you Mr. Chair.