Statement

By H.E. Ambassador Petko Draganov
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria
to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva

Cluster of conventional weapons
Agenda item 90 “General and complete disarmament”
First Committee
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Madame Chairperson,

As I am taking the floor for the first time, allow me to express my satisfaction in seeing you preside over our proceedings. I am confident that your professional qualities and energetic personality will help the First Committee address in a meaningful way the challenging issues on its agenda.

Madame Chairperson,

Bulgaria already aligned itself with the statement on conventional weapons made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore confine my intervention to just one point of particular relevance to my country.

I am referring to the draft-resolution “Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms”. Bulgaria is cosponsoring this initiative launched by the UK delegation in collaboration with Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Kenya, and Japan. Quite understandably this undertaking is increasingly enjoying wider-ranging support from countries coming from the different regions of our globe. It is in our common, and may I say - global - interest to put in place an effective Arms Control Treaty that would establish legally binding principles of trade in
conventional weapons. Setting effective international standards in the field of arms trade is essential for reinforcing our commitment to deal with the human security and humanitarian concerns associated with the illegal arms trade. We believe that the gradual approach emerging from our deliberations can lead us to a vision on the scope and parameters of a possible treaty. Bulgaria supports the proposal to establish a Group of Governmental Experts, entrusted with the task to produce recommendations on the core elements of a future instrument.

Madame Chairperson,

Establishing common criteria for export, import and transfer of conventional arms is largely dependent on the ability and political will of countries to adopt robust national control measures and practices. Bulgaria has established a viable national export control system based on the principles and best practices applied within the framework of the UN, the EU and the OSCE. The current Bulgarian legislation envisages licensing procedures for both exporting companies and brokers, as well as the issuance of a permit for each individual transaction, the provision of pre- and post-shipment assurances and verification, including end-user certificates by the competent authority of the recipient country and a delivery verification certificate. Non-re-export assurances are also required in confirmation that the goods shall not be re-sold or otherwise transferred to a third party. Strict sanctions are envisaged for possible violators and the arms trade control instruments are constantly looked at for possible improvement and amendments.

International cooperation and our partners’ shared experience have been vital in achieving higher national standards in arms trade control - and this is, essentially, how we see the importance of the initiative for an arms trade treaty.

Madame Chairperson,

Let me express the conviction of my delegation that this resolution is both timely and fully deserving of the approval of our Committee. Bulgaria stands ready to cooperate closely and to contribute to the process.

I thank you.