Statement by Mr. Hong-ghi Choi
Counsellor of Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations
First Committee of the General Assembly
Thematic Debate on Conventional Weapons
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Madam Chairperson,

1. Since this is my first opportunity to take the floor, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the chair of this important Committee.

Small arms

Madam Chairperson,

2. The proliferation of conventional weapons is a matter of increasing concern to the international community. Conventional arms, used recklessly and irresponsibly, inflict no less harm and misery than weapons of mass destruction. In many regions of the world, the widespread availability of small arms is severely destabilizing, putting at risk peace, security and development, serving as a catalyst to armed conflict, supporting criminal activity and causing tragic human suffering.

3. The international community has made real progress in addressing this problem. The adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2001, followed by the agreement on the International Instrument on Marking and Tracing and the effectuation of the UN Firearms Protocol last year, are substantive steps forward. Following on the heels of these achievements,
however, it was doubly disappointing that the PoA Review Conference in July failed to produce a final document with guidance for further measures and follow-up mechanisms.

4. My delegation hopes that this session of the First Committee will breathe new life into the PoA and our collective commitment to implement it fully. In this regard, it is of the foremost importance for us to agree at this session on a follow-up process. The first step of such a process should be convening a biennial meeting. In this regard, we support the main elements contained in the draft resolution on “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects” sponsored by Colombia, Japan, and South Africa. We also look forward to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Illicit Brokering of Small Arms, to be convened next month, which we hope will strengthen our commitment to the implementation of the PoA.

5. Indeed, we believe that much more can be done on the issue of small arms and light weapons. My delegation would like to express our support for the initiative for an international instrument to control international arms transfers. We share the concern that legal transfers of conventional arms are sometimes used as cover for illegal transactions, especially of small arms and light weapons. To address this problem, an effective, transparent system of controls over international arms transfers is a prerequisite. We believe that a good place to start would be to establish a Governmental Experts Group to further examine and elaborate this concept.

**United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNRCA)**

Madam Chairperson,

6. A meaningful achievement in the field of conventional arms was the agreement at the recent Governmental Experts Group meeting to further expand the scope of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNRCA). My delegation commends the panel for their achievements, including the decision to reduce the minimum size of warships from 750 to 500 metric tons and the provision of an optional standardized form for reporting transfers of small arms and light weapons.

7. We also welcome the steady increase in the number of Member States participating in the Register, and we strongly urge those States that have not yet participated to join. Similarly, we would like to see wider participation in the United Nations Standardized Reporting Instrument for Military Expenditures. By enhancing transparency in military matters, these mechanisms reduce international tensions and build confidence within the community of nations.
The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

Madam Chairperson,

8. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) has played a pivotal role in realizing the principles of international humanitarian law ever since it was adopted in 1980. As a State Party to the CCW, the Republic of Korea has faithfully implemented the principles of the Convention and participated actively in widening and strengthening the CCW regime. My delegation welcomes the upcoming entry into force of the Fifth Protocol of the CCW, on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), and informs you that my Government has begun the internal review process for its ratification.

9. The last two CCW Review Conferences have produced some successful results. My delegation is concerned, however, that with the Third Review Conference only a month away, the negotiations on Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) may be stalling despite the five years of hard work put in by the Group of Governmental Experts. Considering that this topic is to be one of the main focuses of the upcoming Conference, we hope that MOPTAPM will not become yet another disappointment in the field of multilateral disarmament issues.

10. My delegation supports the idea of a legally binding instrument that addresses the inhumane effects of MOTAPM. In light of the divergence of views that persists on key issues, however, we believe that if the States Parties to the CCW hope to see tangible outcomes produced at the Third Review Conference in November, we need to explore creative ways to implement practical, realistic procedures. We sincerely hope that all States Parties will demonstrate the political will necessary to bridge the remaining perception gaps on MOTAPM and work out a viable solution.

Thank you.