LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS NUOLATINĖ MISIJA JUNG Tinëse TAUTOSE
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STATEMENT BY
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to the United Nations

Thematic discussion on Conventional weapons
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Mr. Chairman,

Let me first of all congratulate you on assuming this task and assure you of my delegation’s full and constructive support.

Portugal on behalf of the European Union has earlier delivered an exhaustive statement on the issues related to conventional weapons, which Lithuania fully endorses. I will focus on a few issues, which Lithuania takes into particular consideration.

Mr. Chairman,

In a relatively short 10 years period the Mine Ban Treaty has made extraordinary contribution towards a mine-free world. Beyond that, the treaty has set off new patterns of partnerships between governments and civil society not seen before.

Despite its unquestionable success some important challenges nevertheless remain, destruction of stockpiles being one of them. Although meeting the treaty obligations is the responsibility of a State Party concerned, this heavy-duty task, especially for affected States Parties, could and should be facilitated through international and regional cooperation and assistance. As the incoming Co-chair of the Standing Committee for Stockpile Destruction Lithuania calls for acceleration of such international efforts and is ready to mediate accomplishment of this task.

Mr. Chairman,

The snowballing support to address humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions has been distinctly felt by this Committee in recent years. In 2006 during the Lithuanian coordination of the Group of Governmental Experts on ERW, deliberations on cluster munitions took shape and speed within the framework of the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Lithuania has consistently advocated adoption of high humanitarian
norms at all levels and domains. This also applies to regulating the use of cluster munitions. It is in this spirit that Lithuania was supportive of the issue within the CCW and also signed the Oslo declaration. Although we still see both processes - within and outside the UN system - as mutually reinforcing and directed towards one final goal, we feel that the CCW States Parties at their annual meeting in November have to achieve substantial progress in order to prove the relevance and credibility of CCW and the UN in general, and our capacity to work hand in hand with civil society in addressing humanitarian concerns. Lithuania calls upon all States Parties to CCW to support the mandate for the negotiations proposed by the EU in this regard. Lithuania is convinced that a legally binding international instrument to ban the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians shall be negotiated without delay, preferably by the end of 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

The last review cycle of CCW has proved to be a remarkable success. Entry into force of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War is certainly its most important achievement. Now the States Parties to the Protocol have to agree on modalities of its implementation and start putting its provisions into practice without delay, thus demonstrating its relevance and encouraging others to join. In our view the results of the Preparatory Committee and intersessional open-ended consultations are substantial, in particular recommendations to develop a mechanism for consultation and cooperation pursuant to Articles 7 and 8 of the Protocol, and to establish two databases - one consisting of specific information submitted through initial and annual national reports, and another one on existing explosive remnants of war consisting of the requests for assistance pursuant to Articles 7 and 8. Lithuania supports the preparatory work undertaken by the President-designate and looks forward to a promising First Conference of High Contracting Parties in November.

Other significant achievements of the Third Review Conference are the adoption of the Plan of Action to promote Universality of the Convention and its annexed Protocols, and the establishment of the CCW Sponsorship Programme. The Sponsorship Programme is designed to stimulate universalisation and observance of the Convention and its annexed Protocols, enforce their implementation, as well as enhance cooperation among the State Parties. As a coordinating country of this programme Lithuania invites all eligible ERW and mine affected countries to benefit from the offered support and calls on the countries, in a position to do so, to contribute to the programme.

Finally, Lithuania looks forward to a new review cycle of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects that would start with the Biennial Meeting of States Parties in 2008. Failure to agree on an Outcome Document in 2006 did not bring the process to a standstill and engagement continues. Lithuania welcomes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider further steps to enhance international co-operation in preventing, combating and eliminating illicit brokering in SALW and looks forward to implementation of its recommendations.

I thank you.