STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA, MARIETA GARCÍA JORDÁN AT THE THEMATIC DEBATE ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS, FIRST COMMITTEE, OCTOBER 26, 2007

Mr Chairman:

More sophisticated and deadly conventional arms are developed and used every day. Their increasing destructing power brings them ever closer to weapons of mass destruction. Military actions in the last few years prove that the use of this type of arms causes more and more “collateral damages”, resulting in the death of thousands of innocent people.

As expressed in the Final Document of the XIV Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Havana, there is a major imbalance between the industrialized countries and the Non-Aligned countries as to production, possession, and trade of conventional arms. The industrialized countries should significantly reduce the production of such arms in order to promote peace and security at the international and regional levels.

We are concerned at the clear imbalance in the treatment given to certain categories of conventional arms to the detriment of others, such as sophisticated conventional arms, whose effects are significantly devastating.

Mr Chairman:

Illicit trafficking in arms continues to cause severe social, humanitarian and economic damage to numerous peoples in the world, whose right to life, peace and enjoyment of the benefits of sustainable development is seriously compromised.

In order to achieve a mid and long-term eradication of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, the causes generating it must be tackled. It is a matter of concern to see that the international efforts are essentially focused on addressing manifestations of the phenomenon in the developing countries, and not in fighting their deepest and most determining causes, such as growing poverty, underdevelopment, lack of opportunities for all, that is, the current international order, which is the main responsible for the perpetuation of the vicious circle of exclusion and inequality.

Cuba has supported and will continue to support the United Nations Programme of Action to prevent, tackle and eradicate the illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons in all its forms. Likewise, it has fully complied with the commitments set out and has cooperated with the Programme’s initiatives and practical measures.

Cuba strongly upholds the legitimate right of the States to produce, import and keep small arms and light weapons to meet their security and legitimate defence needs, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.
Cuba supports the implementation of an effective follow-up mechanism that assures full implementation of this Programme. Six years after its adoption, some progress has been made. However, much is yet to be done to achieve its full implementation.

International assistance and cooperation is paramount for the developing countries to advance towards full implementation of this Programme of Action.

Mr Chairman:

Cuba, which is a State Party to the Convention on Certain Conventional arms, fully shares the legitimate humanitarian concerns resulting from the irrational and irresponsible use of anti-personnel mines.

At the same time, it is well known that my country has been subject for more than four decades to a policy of constant hostility and aggression by the military superpower. Consequently, it is impossible for Cuba to give up the use of this kind of arms to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with the right to self-defence enshrined in the UN Charter. That is why my country is not a State Party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Ant-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

We will continue to fully support all efforts that, by keeping the necessary balance between humanitarian and national security issues, are aimed at eliminating the terrible effects that the irrational and irresponsible use of anti-personnel mines cause to the civilian population and the economy of many countries.

Cuba urges all States in a position do so, to provide the necessary financial, technical and humanitarian assistance for the mine-removal operations and the social and economic rehabilitation of victims.

I would like to conclude, Mr. Chairman, by emphasizing that Cuba remains fully committed to multilateralism and to the need to exercise it in all its extension to achieve effective solutions for international peace and security. In this framework, it is appropriate to inform to the Committee that Cuba has recently deposited its instrument of acceptance of the Amendment to Article 1 of the Convention on Certain Conventional Arms.

Thank you.