Statement by Finland
H.E. Ambassador Pekka Ojanen

First Committee of the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly
Thematic discussion on conventional weapons

United Nations, New York
19 October 2009

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Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time Finland takes the floor, we wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair. You and your bureau can rely on our full cooperation and support.

Finland fully associates itself with the statement made by Sweden on behalf of the European Union. We would like to add brief national remarks on three topics: small arms and BMS4, Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, and Arms Trade Treaty.

The humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of excessive flows of small arms and light weapons are well known to all of us. The illicit spread of SALW does not respect state borders. It is a shared problem. While some parts of the world are more heavily affected by SALW than others, the human cost makes it every state’s concern. To find effective solutions, a concerted effort of the international community is required.

Finland has a long-standing commitment to address the problems related to the proliferation of SALW. In our view, the United Nations must have a central role in establishing global, effective means to counter these problems.

Finland consequently underlines the importance of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons as the global framework addressing these issues. We were encouraged by the progress in the Biennial Meeting of States in 2008, since the outcome document gives us tools to a more effective implementation of the UN Programme of Action.

We urge all UN Member States to work constructively for a successful BMS4 in 2010. Finland will do its part towards this common goal.

With regard to the complexity and extent of the problems related to SALW in different regions we welcome the key role regional and sub-regional organisations can play in complementing the work of the UN. We appreciate the important work carried out by ECOWAS and other regional organisations.

From the European perspective, we can express our satisfaction with the fact that the OSCE has SALW issues high on its agenda. Only last month the Organisation held a review conference on the OSCE Document on SALW. The outcome of this conference will contribute to the preparations of the BMS4.

We would also like to underline that the SALW issues cannot be isolated from the overall concept of development. On the contrary, they should be an integral part of it. As a core group member of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development Finland continues to be active in highlighting the direct link between security and development. We also emphasize the role of the civil society in this regard. Implementation of the Geneva Declaration has also moved to the country level. In the case of Finland, we have the honour to act as Focus Country Political Coordinator in Kenya.
Mr. Chairman,

Concerning the Arms Trade Treaty, Finland has been encouraged by the progress in the Open Ended Working Group and looks forward to the beginning of actual negotiations on a treaty.

Time has come to take a decisive step forward. To that end, Finland together with six other coauthors has tabled a draft resolution with the aim of arranging a UN Conference on the ATT in 2012.

Arms Trade Treaty would provide an international regulatory framework and global rules on arms trade and help to hinder the flow of arms into irresponsible hands. Lack of such rules has, over the years, caused instability as well as undermined human rights and sustainable development.

All states should comply with the same, agreed rules on conventional arms trade and to prevent legal transfers ending up to the illegal market. ATT would set common standards on responsible transfers of conventional arms to all countries without affecting the right of states to self defence.

As we are on the verge of a historic decision, we hope all delegations will work together for a consensual ATT resolution, which would enable us to launch effective preparations for the 2012 UN Conference.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.