Check against delivery

64th Session of the General Assembly

Statement by

Delegate of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations

Thematic Debate: Conventional Weapons

First Committee

New York, 19 October 2009
Mr. Chairman,

Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by Non-Aligned Movement on “Conventional Weapons”. Under this cluster, we would like to speak on four issues related to conventional weapons.

On the issue of small arms and light weapons, it is clear that the illicit use and trade of such arms and weapons have played havoc to societies. These weapons very tragically continue to be the weapons of choice in many conflicts around the world. The lethal capacity of these arms to inflict heavy human and material suffering is self-evident. These weapons also contribute to organized crimes in which their menace continues to impede socio-economic progress in many countries. The innocent will continue to suffer and live in fear unless all members of the international community fully implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (SALW) in an effective manner.

Indonesia reaffirms the validity of the Programme of Action (PoA) and the International Instrument on Marking and Tracing, and underlines the importance of its continued and full implementation. In this regard, while we appreciate the outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States (BMS-3) last year, however, the efforts at national, regional and international levels need to be accelerated for effectively addressing the arms brokerage, marking and tracing, transfer control, and collection and destruction of illicit SALW. We hope that there will be further progress in this respect prior to the next Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) in June 2010.

As we had highlighted at the BMS-3, we stress the importance of regional approaches, and emphasize that it is vital that they are supported. As part of the PoA process, Indonesia will continue to work with the UN, and the countries in our region to facilitate meetings and programmes to address relevant issues in the Southeast Asia region.

The international support is critical for proper actualisation of PoA, particularly in those countries and regions where the required capacities are lacking. Hence, we support the creation of a common framework linking the needs with resources. We welcome the PoA Implementation Support System by the UN, as well as the work by UNIDIR to develop a database for matching needs with resources.

As we emphasize the role of international cooperation and assistance, we underscore the legitimate defence and security needs of the States, which must be fully respected. The inherent rights of states for self-defence, including their fundamental right to maintain territorial integrity, must not be impinged in any way in the efforts to prevent small arms from falling into the wrong hands.

With regard to Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Indonesia stresses the complete and undiluted observance of these inherent rights of the States also in the context of the ongoing deliberations for an ATT. The rights of sovereign states for acquiring and
possessing conventional arms, and the government to government trade relations pertaining to these weapons must be guaranteed.

In the discussion for an ATT, which we have keenly participated, both as a supporter and a sponsor of the last year’s General Assembly ATT resolution, we consider it important to reiterate some elements that remain essential to the ongoing inter-governmental deliberation process, as follows:

First, we need to have a fresh look on the issues related to ATT, particularly those that are key. We reiterate that the ATT should clearly reaffirm the rights of all States to maintain their territorial integrity and political independence. It seems that sometimes the discussion for the affirmation of the right of self-defence has interpreted that right as not covering the right of States to maintain their territorial integrity.

Second, there should not be any doubt that the right to maintain territorial integrity is fully recognised in the international law, as well as the UN Charter. Regionally and bilaterally also there are several ongoing States’ practices that support the States’ right to maintain their territorial integrity.

Third, the right of all States to maintain territorial integrity is neither against the intended “object and purpose” of the ATT nor against the international humanitarian law. It does not also affect the efforts by States to protect the individual rights of their population.

Fourth, the ATT should be a legally binding instrument laying down the highest possible common and non-discriminatory global standards. Being “non-discriminatory” entails that the ATT is not the universalisation of merely certain countries’ or region’s interpretations of conduct in arms trade. A present proposal to employ a “case-by-case basis” approach in the ATT should be discussed thoroughly in order to avoid the concept of inconsistent application in the future ATT.

Fifth, Indonesia looks forward to having a substantial discussion on objective and transparent ways that would determine how certain provisions of the ATT would be considered to be violated. We want to discuss who will decide that the provisions of the ATT such as ensuring that internal repression by States does not take place have been observed. There must be an open, inclusive and judicious mechanism guided by the established principles of international law and international humanitarian law, which categorizes such a situation. No one group of countries, including merely the weapon export countries should have the discretionary powers in this respect.

Lastly, the setting of all international standards for the ATT should be negotiated multilaterally under the principles laid down by the established international law and UN Charter. The process must duly consider the views and concerns of all Member States, including the developing countries that are main importers of weapons.

Mr. Chairman,
On the issue of Anti-Personnel Landmines, following becoming a party to the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Convention in 2007, Indonesia immediately started the implementation of its commitments as required by the Convention. We are pleased to say that in less than two years, we have destroyed all anti-personnel mines in our stockpiles.

We hope that steps will also be taken by other countries that remain outside the Convention, particularly in our region. The Southeast Asia is considered one of the most mine-affected regions in the world risking the lives of a large number of people.

The forthcoming Second Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention to be held in Cartagena in November next month will be very important in reviewing the challenges, and setting the course for our collective efforts to implement the Convention in the next five years. Indonesia will continue its active participation to achieve the goals and the universalization of the Convention, as well as to the objectives and efforts towards a mine-free world.

Pertaining to cluster munitions, the use of these inhumane and indiscriminate munitions that may cause harm to civilians is unacceptable. As part of the global efforts to promote the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), Indonesia is organising a “Regional Conference on the Promotion and Universalisation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions” in Bali next month. The Conference is being co-sponsored with the governments of Germany, Norway, Austria, Australia, the UNDP and the ICRC and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHID).

Indonesia assures all Member States of its support and cooperation to strengthen the relevant international agreements and conventions on conventional weapons to which it is a party. We hope that those remaining outside them will also join sooner than later to promote peace and stability for all.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.