Statement by Thailand
First Committee Thematic Discussions: Conventional Weapons
19-20 October 2009

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

1. Thailand associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and would like to highlight some additional points.

Mr. Chairman,

2. At present, the international community continues to face risks posed by conventional weapons. Peace, stability and development are threatened by non-traditional threats such as terrorism and transnational organized crime. These in turn have been made more deadly by the illicit transfer and abusive use of small arms and light weapons, which have a devastating impact in many parts of the world. It is therefore an urgent and important task of this Committee to address these challenges in a concerted manner.

3. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are often linked with armed violence, transnational crime and terrorism. To address this issue, Thailand supports the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action (UN PoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which, in our view, is the key multilateral framework in coordinating efforts of Member States to prevent the illicit manufacture, export, import and transfer of SALW.

4. To strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action, resources and capacity building need to be ensured, especially in developing countries. In this regard, a regional approach should be explored. Regional cooperation in information sharing and exchange of best practices in controlling SALW would further contribute to the ability of Member States to comply with the provisions in the Programme of Action.

5. The outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) on Small Arms and Light Weapons held last year reflected the collective will of Member States to tackle the illicit trade in SALW. Thailand was pleased that the third BMS was able to adopt a final document that identified a number of measures for improving and strengthening the implementation of the Programme of Action. It is our hope that the Fourth BMS to be held next year will also succeed in furthering the international community’s work on this important issue.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The diversion of conventional weapons to unauthorized recipients can pose a serious threat to political stability and economic development. That is why Thailand wishes to reaffirm our support for discussions on an Arms Trade Treaty. We are ready to work closely with the international community towards its establishment. We commend the work of the Open-Ended Working Group which has achieved some progress during its two substantive sessions held earlier this year. We also support the efforts to convene regional seminars which will provide opportunities for exploring opinions and perspectives on an Arms Trade Treaty. Work remains to be done to bridge different positions of Member States.
7. To attain an effective ATT, Thailand is of the view that a step-by-step process is desirable. Discussions and negotiations on the ATT should be further pursued within the United Nations and based on a relevant existing framework that is universally accepted, such as the Programme of Action.

8. In addition, the work process towards the ATT should also take into consideration different capacities and circumstances of Member States in implementing the future ATT. Pending the conclusion of the ATT, Thailand is of the view that in the course of multilateral negotiations, the manufacturing States, exporting States and receiving States should share responsibility in preventing unregulated trade in SALW and hold discussions on ways to forge cooperation through exchanges of experiences and know-how.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Another area where concerted action on conventional weapons is well underway is in the international effort to rid the world of the scourge of anti-personnel landmines. Thailand is fully committed to fulfilling the obligations under the Mine Ban Convention, namely mine clearance, stockpile destruction and promoting universal acceptance of the Convention.

10. During the 9MSP, Thailand was granted the extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas. To complete our mine clearance within the requested deadline, Thailand needs to mobilize its internal resources and develop existing capacities. In the meantime, international assistance is also a key to success. Thailand is ready to work with all parties concerned and will increase its efforts to obtain financial and technical support from the international community in accordance with Article 6 of the Convention.

11. From our experience, mine action needs combined effort, integrated planning, and adequate financial resources. It is our belief that international cooperation, especially in terms of technical and financial assistance, will further enable affected States Parties to overcome the challenges of mine action. Thailand supports and encourages all efforts to secure international assistance in mine action within existing international frameworks.

12. Thailand attaches great importance to the socio-economic consequences of landmines and to victim assistance. As co-chair of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration, together with Belgium, we wish to reaffirm our commitment to promoting the well-being of landmine survivors, so that they can be rehabilitated and reintegrated into their societies as fully productive members.

13. It is our hope that the upcoming Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World will not only review the progress in the implementation of the Convention, but also work on a concrete plan to further strengthen efforts to put an end to the suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines. Thailand stands ready to work closely with other States Parties and actively participate in this important Summit.

Thank you.