STATEMENT BY

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United Nations

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Mr. Chairperson,

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 co-operation and support.

Finland fully associates itself with the statement made by Belgium on behalf of the European Union. We would like to add brief national remarks on three topics, namely the Arms Trade Treaty, Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Ottawa Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

Finland has been an active proponent of an Arms Trade Treaty and was one of its original co-authors. ATT would provide an international regulatory framework and rules on conventional arms trade and help prevent the arms’ conversion to the illicit market. The current lack thereof continues to cause instability, fuel conflict, undermine human rights, hamper sustainable development and enable organized crime. By addressing the regulatory demands of conventional arms trade and clearly defining the rights and responsibilities of States therein we can set commonly agreed international standards and help resolve the aforementioned issues.

Recent developments have proven timely the decision by last year’s General Assembly to convene the Conference on the ATT in 2012 and its Preparatory Committees in 2010-2011. Finland is content with the work of the first Preparatory Committee held here in New York last July, which succeeded in defining a first outline and identifying the central elements of a future Treaty. The Chair, Ambassador Moritán and the three facilitators all did an excellent job in making that happen. What is needed now, prior to the next Preparatory Committees in 2011, is strong engagement by all.

The two remaining Preparatory Committee meetings in February and July must be used to maximum effect. In order to achieve this, the negotiation process requires a high level of preparation at the national level. Also, maintaining a sustained, constructive dialogue in various forms leading up to 2012 is important, and we welcome the efforts to this end put forward by the EU and others.

Finland believes that a generally agreeable outcome is eventually possible, whereby both the need for an ambitious international instrument regulating the global arms trade as well as the interests and concerns of all countries are addressed. A universal and robust ATT would be an important ingredient to stability and sustainable development.

Mr. Chairperson,

Preventing the illicit trade in and excessive accumulation of SALW is another important factor in attaining the said goals. They both bear a negative humanitarian impact and contribute to conflicts and their escalation.

Finland fully supports the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and welcomes the outcome document of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States held in June of 2010. We look forward to the Experts Group meeting in 2011 and the UNPoA Review Conference in 2012.

As a non-legally binding instrument, conscientious implementation of the UNPoA is essential for its success. We regret the waning level of national reporting under the UNPoA and stress the need for improvements in its implementation, all the more so as national reporting will be an important part of a future ATT.
Mr. Chairperson,

Mine clearance, disposal of explosive remnants of war, destruction of stockpiles and victim assistance remain topical challenges globally. To that end, Finland has supported humanitarian mine action which reduces post-conflict threat and impact of landmines and unexploded ordnance. In 2010, Finland has supported this action in seven countries, namely Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Chad, Ethiopia, Iraq and Somalia. We will continue our support for humanitarian mine action also in the future.

Finland will join the Ottawa Convention in 2012 and to destroy its landmine stockpiles by the end of 2016. We are committed to these timelines. The national legislative measures required for the accession to the Convention are underway.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.