Check Against Delivery

STATEMENT BY THE ZAMBIAN DELEGATION
TO THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

DELIVERED BY

MRS. ENCYLA SINJELA
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

AT

THEMATIC DEBATE ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS
OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

New York

18 October 2010
LANDMINES

Zambia attaches great importance to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction because we were greatly affected by the scourge of landmines both in terms of human resources and delayed economic development of the mined areas. Given our role as a base for a number of liberation movements during the wars of liberation in Southern Africa in the 1970s and 1980s Zambia had significant amounts of landmines in parts of the Country. However, a nationwide survey concluded that by September 2009 Zambia had succeeded in clearing almost all areas of the country of these mines and declared all such areas as safe for normal human activities.

Consequently, Zambia declared at the Second Review Conference held in Cartagena that it was in full compliance with Articles 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty. Through this Zambia is now ahead of schedule as regards its obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention which she ratified in 2001. In this regard, Zambia welcomes the assistance rendered by cooperating partners in making this achievement possible.

In spite of this, nine areas especially those along the borders with Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo are still contaminated with other explosive remnants of war. An independent evaluation of the Norwegian People’s Aid survey has concluded that these explosive remnants of war (ERW) will continue to be present in these areas for years to come because they are sparsely populated.

During the period July 2009 to December 2009, five sites covering an area of four (4) square kilometers contaminated with explosive remnants of war were cleared and in the process, 1420 ERW
were destroyed. Although Zambia is now landmine free, explosive remnants of war contamination is still a major concern which requires that risk education activities should continue in all affected areas. In this regard, Zambia Mine Action Centre (ZMAC) completed the development of an ERW risk education (RE) handbook for RE teachers and learners in 2009. Plans are under way to translate the RE handbook into local languages and distribute it to schools in risk areas once the Department of Curriculum Development in the Ministry of Education approves it.

**CLUSTER MUNITIONS**

Zambia suffered from the use of cluster munitions especially in its North-Western and Western Provinces by the colonial and minority regime surrounding us during the liberation wars in the the sub-region in the 1970s and 80s. Unlike landmines, this problem only covered an area of 912,000 square metres and was restricted to the districts. With the assistance of the Norwegian People’s Aid, a total of twenty-five (25) CB470 Alpha bomblets were destroyed by March 2010. Further, under the auspices of the Zambia Mine Action Centre, an army clearance team was deployed along the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo to clear the remaining area of the same. So far seven (07) unexploded submunitions have since been found by the team.

Under Article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Zambia is required to complete clearance of all areas contaminated by cluster munitions remnants under its jurisdiction or control by 1 August 2020. In compliance with Article 4, Zambia has already conducted a baseline survey to identify the affected areas and has since embarked on the process of clearing them.
SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Zambia wishes to express concern at the upswing in trade of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The continued proliferation of such arms in Africa is one of the urgent problems besetting the continent that is undermining good governance, democratization efforts and negotiations in addition to jeopardizing the respect for fundamental human rights and hindering economic development. As a landlocked country with limited resources, long and many international boundaries, Zambia finds it difficult to police the border against the flaws of SALW. This situation is made all the more difficult by unregulated global trade in SALW. Further, the illicit trade in SALW is often closely linked with organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking whose containment especially for developing countries and Zambia in particular entails the diversion of the much needed scarce resources from other priority areas such as education and health which are crucial in the attainment of the MDGs.

Zambia remains committed to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on SALW and will continue to strive to undertake various initiatives at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels aimed at addressing this problem. In this connection, Zambia appreciates and welcomes assistance from regional organizations such as the Regional Centre for Small Arms and Light Weapons whose efforts have culminated into the acquisition of the necessary technology and expertise for marking state owned fire arms. It is in this spirit that Zambia hosted the fourth Regional Coordinating Committee on SALW alongside a SADC workshop on Standard Operating Procedures of the SADC Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Related materials in 2009.
Since the illicit trade in SALW continues unabated coupled with their excessive accumulation, the security challenges this issue poses to developing countries in particular, demand a multilateral approach that should include among other things a requirement for Member States to submit relevant reports on SALW to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. In this regard, Zambia calls upon concerned civil organizations, regional groupings and the international community at large to keep track of any illegal transactions by reporting those engaged in this practice to the United Nations.

**ARMS TRADE TREATY**

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms continues to be an important global confidence-building mechanism which is promoting global transparency in conventional arms transfers. As the only global Register that contains almost 90% of all the information on annual conventional arms transfers in which all the Permanent Members of the Security Council participate and also includes all those countries considered to be the main weapons sellers its role as a promoter of both regional and international stability, peace and security cannot be over emphasized. However, the absence of a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) that could effectively regulate international trade in conventional arms makes the attainment of universal participation in the United Nations Register to continue being elusive. In this regard, Zambia strongly supports efforts towards the negotiation of a comprehensive and binding ATT.

Zambia acknowledges the importance of the ATT to national security and international peace and supports the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2012.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.