The 66th session of the UN General Assembly
First Committee
Conventional weapons cluster

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Aapo Pölhö
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(check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,

Finland would like to join you and other delegations in welcoming at the current session of the First Committee the Chairman of the Arms Trade Treaty Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Roberto García Moritàn to whom we have a very high appreciation. We are thankful for yesterday’s informal session where the delegations had the opportunity to exchange views with Ambassador García Moritàn, as well as, with Ambassador Claus Wunderlich. Ambassador García Moritàn has chaired the PrepCom skillfully and in a constructive atmosphere. Finland, as one of the co-authors of the Arms Trade Treaty Resolution, wishes that Ambassador García Moritàn would chair also the 2012 UN Conference.

From the very beginning, Finland has been amongst the most active supporters of the ATT. We have noted with satisfaction the strong engagement by UN Member States and various regional groups in the preparation of basic elements to the legally binding Arms Trade Treaty. Engagement by all is necessary in achieving our goal: an effective international legal instrument to regulate the arms trade.

Finland considers that the Chair’s draft paper reflects well the work done so far and would constitute an excellent basis for the final stage of the treaty negotiations. Therefore, we believe that the PrepCom should submit it to the 2012 UN Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Illicit trade and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons bear a negative humanitarian impact and contribute to conflicts and their escalation. To tackle this matter requires global efforts. Finland considers that on its tenth Anniversary it is fair to say that the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects, is an excellent tool for these efforts.

Finland looks forward to the 2012 Review Conference of the Programme of Action. We are convinced that the Review Conference will be most successful in finding ways to intensify implementation of the Programme of Action. Effective implementation is key to its success. We welcome the Report adopted at the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States and the Report adopted at the open-ended meeting of governmental experts held in New York in May 2011. We consider that these Reports constitute good basis for the work to be done in the Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Finland made a political commitment in 2004 to join the Ottawa Convention in 2012. The Parliament of Finland is processing the issue. Finland has already supported the implementation of the Convention via humanitarian mine action. Mine clearance, disposal of explosive remnants of war, destruction of stockpiles and victim assistance remain topical challenges globally. We have 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.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman