STATEMENT

by

MR. RAPHAEL S.C. HERMOSO
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at

the Thematic Debate on Conventional Weapons
of the
First Committee

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Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines remains deeply concerned with developments in the field of conventional arms. The different types of weapons that fall under this category are used widely and kill indiscriminately. They threaten entire regions and adversely affect the economic development of States.

**SALWs**

The Philippines views and considers the illicit transfer, manufacture, and circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) as a serious threat to international peace and security, since this type of weapon, is easily concealed, diverted and transported. Furthermore SALWs are durable and have a long shelf life. Illicit SALWs promote and prolong conflicts. They provide criminal elements with the means to commit crimes. What is worse is that small arms are in mass circulation all over the world with more than half in civilian hands.

The Philippines believes that the best way to solve the problems caused by illicit SALWs is through the implementation of the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALWs in All Its Aspects, which is the main framework for addressing the illegal trade in these arms. In this regard the Philippines welcomes the outcome of the Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Chairmanship of Amb. Jim McClay of New Zealand last May 2011 and looks forward to actively participating in the Preparatory Committee Meeting and the Review Conference next year.

The Philippines recognizes that the major arms producing States have a special responsibility and calls on them to strictly apply the legal restrictions that prevent the illicit trade of SALWs and to supply only responsible governments and their authorized entities.

The Philippines encourages States to utilize the UN Register on Conventional Arms as a means of monitoring arms transfers between States. For its part, my country is undertaking appropriate measures to prevent exports of SALWs that will violate sanctions issued by the UN or contravene bilateral, regional or multilateral commitments on non-proliferation of SALWs.

The Philippines wishes to highlight the need for greater cooperation between States in the areas of information exchange, sharing of best practices, and establishment of national points of contact. There should be increased cooperation in particular, among law enforcement, border, and customs control agencies. The Philippines supports efforts at capacity building and welcomes information on the type of assistance other States are willing to provide.

The Philippines calls for the strict implementation of the international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit SALWs, in a timely, expeditious and reliable manner. The implementation of the ITI is a joint responsibility with the major arms producing as well as receiving States. The Philippines cooperates with its neighbors on tracing through ASEANAPOL and the INTERPOL NCB- Manila. The Philippines also gives importance to marking SALWs and addresses the matter through legislation, which includes stiff penalties for violations relative to non-compliance in terms of marking requirements.

The Philippine government has made progress on the implementation of the Program of Action by maintaining appropriate partnerships with the local firearms industry, private security providers, gun clubs, and civil society. The country has several laws to prevent the illicit transfer of SALWs, which in some cases are even stricter than the Program of Action.
On the export and import of SALWs, the Philippines ensures that there is control through the use of End User Certificates or Letters of Intent. The Philippines also does not re-export or re-transfer previously imported SALWs.

**Cluster Munitions and Landmines**

The Philippines is mindful of the harmful effects of cluster munitions and landmines long after conflicts have ended. These indiscriminate weapons cause humanitarian crises by killing and maiming innocent civilians and preventing the use of economically viable tracts of land. The Philippines supports both the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

**ATT**

The Philippines, like many other states, sees the urgent need to regulate the trade in conventional arms through an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and views the unregulated trade in these weapons and their diversion to the illicit market as a threat to international peace and security.

An ATT should represent a reaffirmation of the existing responsibilities of Member States in adherence to international law and would crystallize the development of a mechanism for consistent, transparent, lawful, and effective application in the trade in arms. Its principles should be based on a range of existing multilateral and regional instruments already implemented by Member States, which would serve as the building blocks of the ATT.

The ATT should be able to address political and economic instability, international terrorism, and transnational organized crime brought about by illegal transfers of arms, while at the same time respect the inherent right of States to self-defense as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations as well as their right to territorial integrity and political independence. It must also be impervious to political abuse.

The ATT should have a clear, detailed, and standardized definition of conventional weapons. The Philippines believes that the scope of the ATT should encompass the seven categories covered by the UN register of Conventional Arms as well as SALWs. The ATT should contain a provision regarding the non-transfer of arms to countries under UNSC arms embargo and arms transfers do not undermine the stability of the region where the arms are being sent.

The Philippines believes that the ATT should contain explicit measures for effective monitoring and enforcement and should include mechanisms for increasing transparency and accountability in the international transfer of arms.

A future ATT must also have a mechanism on how to provide assistance to developing and less developed countries that do not possess the capacity, expertise and even resources to effectively implement the treaty.

The Philippines commends Amb. Roberto Garcia Moritan of Argentina for his efforts in guiding the previous Preparatory Committee Meetings to successful conclusions and looks forward to actively participating and contributing in the conference to negotiate an ATT next year.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.