STATEMENT

BY

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First Committee

Thematic debate on Conventional Weapons

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Mr Chairman,

Thank you for the floor. Since it is the first time that we speak at this year’s session of the Committee, allow me to congratulate you for your election to the post of the Committee Chairman. Allow me also to express our support to you and your fellow members of the bureau in order to successfully steer our work during this year’s Committee session.

In the course of last year we saw positive developments in the field of conventional weapons. Among those we would mention adoption of the Vientiane Action Plan 2010-2015 at the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Vientiane (Lao PDR) in November 2010, successful outcome of 10th Meeting of States Parties of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines and the outcome of the 2nd Meeting of States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The coming months will see some major events in the field of conventional weapons, notably the 4th CCW Review Conference in November 2011 in Geneva, followed in 2012 by the Diplomatic Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Furthermore, important work will continue in the framework of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines as well as in the framework of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Slovenia has been and will continue to be a committed participant in all these processes.

Mr Chairman,

Allow me to elaborate our national views on some pertinent issues from the field of conventional weapons.

First of all, let me say few words on the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the most recent international legal instrument in this field. Slovenia welcomes successful outcome of the 2nd Meeting of States Parties of the Convention that took place in September in the Lebanon's capital Beirut. We are satisfied with the success achieved at this meeting and in general in the short life of our Convention. At the Second meeting, the Parties set up important institutional infrastructure. We hope that before we will meet at the next meeting of States Parties in Oslo next September, the States Parties will establish a functioning Secretariat - Implementation Support Unit (ISU) that will have its seat in Geneva, Slovenia also supports all efforts for universalisation of the Convention. So far, 66 countries ratified the convention and thus became its States Parties. We call upon all other states signatories to ratify the Convention as soon as possible. Slovenia as committed State Party of the Convention is doing its best to fulfil its commitments. Thus, on 27th July this year Slovenia finally destroyed its entire stocks of cluster munitions and became cluster munitions free country. This way we contribute to our common goal - the world free of cluster munitions. We are convinced that other Parties will follow us soon.

Mr. Chairman, for Slovenia, a Convention on the Prohibition of the Anti-Personnel Mines, so-called Ottawa Convention, is also high on the disarmament agenda. That is why we put forward a candidature of Ambassador Kovačič for the post of chairman of 12th Meeting of States Parties that will take place next year in Geneva. In this regard we find universalisation as important priority of the States Parties. We command His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan for his work for the purpose of universalisation of the Convention. We welcome Tuvalu who a month ago became a 157th State Party to the Convention. We also welcome the decision of Libya's Transitional National Council, which expressed its support to the Convention. We hope that Libya will become next State Party of the Convention thus paving new avenue towards universalisation. All States Parties must do more for effective implementation of the Convention, notably in the field of assistance to mine victims by implementing the Cartagena Action Plan. Slovenia will continue to assist mine affected countries with the implementation of the Convention through activities of the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF). We are proud that the ITF became important player in the international mine action community.
Mr. Chairman,

Next year we will gather here at the Diplomatic Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Expectations in Slovenia are high - we are expecting successful conclusion of the ATT process. We hope that we will conclude a robust ATT, new legally binding international instrument that will establish common international standards for the transfers of conventional arms. By regulating the legal transfer of conventional arms, an ATT would contribute to preventing the diversion of conventional weapons to the illicit market. For this reason, the scope of the Treaty, in terms of types of arms and activities covered, should be as wide as possible. The ATT should require all States evaluate applications for arms transfers through highest possible standards including the respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and a thorough analysis of the risk of diversion to unintended final users. The ATT should also include transparency and reporting requirements, monitoring and assistance provisions. We believe that such an ATT is possible. Only universal ATT would have real impact on the conventional arms trade. Such a Treaty that would bring international transparency in arms transfers would consequently foster greater confidence among states and would thus strengthen international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

Second important global event in the field of conventional weapons in the field next year will be a Review Conference on UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We hope that this important conference will be concluded with concrete final document and that at the conference we will start serious discussion not only on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action, but also on expanding its scope, thus continuing our work that we started at the UN Conference in 2001.

Mr. Chairman,

Slovenia regularly participates in the UN Register for Conventional Arms for more than 15 years. In the course of the years a Register became important tool for fostering international transparency in the field of arms transfers. We note with regret that the number of national submissions continues to be low. In our view, we should aspire to increase the number of national reports to two thirds of the UN members. Even small countries as Slovenia that do not acquire or sell major categories of conventional arms can support the Register by submitting the "Nil Reports." Slovenia would like to reiterate its longstanding position that the scope of the Register must be widened by including new categories of conventional arms, foremost Small Arms and Light Weapons. Our experience with the implementation of the OSCE document on Small Arms is reassuring. We annually provide our figures on small arms for several years now, without jeopardising our national security. On the contrary, in our view the implementation of the OSCE document on Small Arms contributed to regional peace and stability.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Slovenia continues to support the "Geneva Declaration on armed violence and development", recognising close link between security and development. Slovenia joined the supporters of the Declaration back in 2006. We will participate at the Second Ministerial Review Conference on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development to be held in Geneva, on 31 October and 1 November 2011. In this context, we welcome the Oslo Commitments on armed violence. Slovenia appeals all States, international organizations and civil society to achieve measurable reductions in armed violence and to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals as agreed by our Heads of States by 2015.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.