The 67th Session of the UNGA; First Committee;
Conventional weapons cluster
Statement of Finland

Statement by
H.E. Riitta Resch
Ambassador

New York, 25 October 2012

(check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,

Finland aligns itself with the statement given by the European Union

Mr. Chairman

We know, as many delegations here have pointed out, that arms in wrong hands cause unnecessary suffering around the world. They fuel conflicts, crimes and human rights abuses, victims of which too often are women and children. Hundreds of thousands of people die annually in armed conflicts. Conflicts also hinder economic and social development especially in areas where development would be needed the most. When stable economic and social circumstances prevail, also trade in goods and services expand and offer much wider possibilities.

It is clear that we urgently need global norms and standards to govern arms trade. We need a robust, strong and legally binding Arms Trade Treaty, that would benefit us all in the long term. It is high time to have such a treaty.

It was disappointing not to conclude the treaty at the UN Conference last July. However, due to the skillful guidance by the President of the Conference, Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritán, progress was made. We regret that Ambassador Moritán is not here to present the report of the Conference. We would very much hope that he would preside also over the next conference.

We believe that in July a solid foundation and genuine partnership has been forged. As one of the original co-authors of the Arms Trade Treaty process, Finland remains committed and determined to conclude the treaty in the months to come.

We have been encouraged by the wide support and engagement amongst the UN membership and civil society for the Treaty. This is particularly encouraging since we need each and every country in order to make the Treaty truly universal and to finally achieve our common goal: an effective international legal instrument to regulate arms trade.
Mr. Chairman,

In the 1st committee the co-authors are presenting a resolution, proposing a way forward. The resolution will request the General Assembly to convene the final UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in March next year. This time, for our benefit, we don’t have to start from scratch. We can continue our work from where we left in July. The draft Treaty text presented by the President of the Conference on 26 July 2012 shall serve as the basis on which the Treaty will be finalized. We call on all states to support this resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

At the same time, we also need to tackle illicit trade and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons. An excellent tool for these efforts is the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. Finland welcomes the results of the 2012 Review Conference of the Programme of Action and would like to congratulate Ambassador Ogwu of Nigeria on her excellent Chairmanship. The outcome document adopted by consensus is a success in reflecting common political will. We are convinced that building on this political will, we will be successful in further intensifying the effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

We are happy to announce that the Ottawa Convention entered into force in Finland on 1 July 2012. Destruction of Finland’s stockpile commenced shortly after the entry into force and we will have finalized the destruction of our APM stockpile by the end of 2015. Mine clearance, disposal of explosive remnants of war, destruction of stockpiles and victim assistance remain topical challenges globally. Finland will continue its strong support for humanitarian mine action also in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman