STATEMENT BY

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Weapons

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Mr. Chairman,

In addition to the statement made on behalf of the EU under this agenda item - to which we fully align ourselves - please allow me to make the following remarks on the issue of conventional disarmament.

**ATT**

The Netherlands has strongly and consistently supported the efforts to better regulate the trade in Conventional Arms. We have participated actively in the recent July diplomatic Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty. Like others we too were disappointed that despite the impressive and relentless efforts of President Roberto Moritan - for which we commend him - we were not able to conclude that Conference with the adoption of a strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty. At the same time it is clear to us that collectively we have made enormous progress during these 4 weeks in July. The text of the 26th of July may not have been the ideal outcome for everybody, but it does contain all the main elements of an ATT. It is important that we build on this progress. It is therefore essential that we start our work in the follow up conference in March on the basis of this text. At the March conference The Netherlands intends to propose a limited number of changes with the aim to further improve the text.

Building upon the momentum created last July, we strongly believe that we can conclude a meaningful, strong and robust Treaty. We see the successful conclusion of the Programme of Action on the illicit trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons, as an encouragement, thanks not in the last place to the wisdom and efforts of the Presidency of Ambassador Ugwu of Nigeria.

We very much welcome and support the draft resolution that has been proposed to this Committee on the ATT. We hope it will get a maximum of support.

**Cluster munitions**

The Netherlands attaches great importance to stop the human suffering caused by the use of cluster munitions. We have signed and ratified the Cluster Munitions Convention. We have recently completed the destruction of our once considerable and modern stock of cluster munitions. In addition the Dutch government has decided to work towards the legal prohibition of investments in cluster munitions production. It is important that the Cluster Munitions Convention becomes truly universal. We call upon all states that have not done so to accede to this Treaty. We see it as an encouraging signal that a considerable number of States not party to the Convention participated in the third meeting of States Parties in Oslo. We also hope to witness a growing recognition of the norms contained in the Convention - also by States that are not yet in a position to join the Treaty.

The Netherlands is extremely concerned at the reported use of cluster munitions by the Syrian Army. These weapons can cause tremendous human suffering, even years after their initial use. The use of these weapons in the current conflict demonstrates the ruthlessness of the Syrian regime and its blatant disregard for human life of its own citizens.
Landmines

15 Years ago the Mine Ban Treaty was opened for signature in Ottawa. Since then we have seen a lot of progress. The use of anti-personnel mines has sharply declined and the trade in these mines has almost come to a standstill. However, the human, social and economic misery caused by mines has not ended. Many people in various countries around the globe are still facing the horrors of having to live or having to work in mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) infested areas. Continued attention for and support of mine clearance activities remains therefore of great importance. The Netherlands has supported clearance activities and victim assistance worldwide and will continue to do. For the years 2012 till 2016 the Netherlands has made 45 million euros available for these activities. Although many States have joined the Treaty, it is not universal yet. We therefore urge all states which have not done so, to join the Treaty.

UN Register

As is well known, The Netherlands is a firm believer in the importance of transparency in the field of Disarmament, Arms Control and Non Proliferation. Since its birth at the UNGA in 1991 the Netherlands has taken the lead in submitting the relevant resolutions on the UN Register on Conventional Arms Transfers to the UN membership. One of the important features of the register is that a regular review takes place by a Group of Governmental experts convened by the United Nations Secretary General. In conformity with operative paragraph 5 B of resolution 66/39 adopted by the last GA, a new round of GGE’s was scheduled to start in the second half of this year. When suggesting these dates last year we were expecting and hoping that by that time we would have a positive outcome of the ATT conference. The next GGE could reflect upon the consequences of an ATT for the Register. Unfortunately there was no outcome of the July conference and we will have to wait a little longer before we know what the provisions of the ATT and hence its possible consequences for the register will be. For this reason we will submit to this Committee a draft decision to postpone the start of the cycle of GGE’s on the Register to 2013. We have been informed that the suggested postponement of the GGE to April-July 2013 would still fall within the present UN budgetary biennium. This means that the approved 2012-2013 appropriations are still available to cover the costs of the meetings. The postponement therefore does not require any additional funds.

We hope the Committee can adopt this decision by consensus.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.