CZECH REPUBLIC

Statement by

Mr. David ČERVENKA
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at

the Thematic Debate on Conventional Disarmament of the First Committee of the 68th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

New York, 30 October 2013

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Mr Chairman,

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the EU. I would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

The UN Register of Conventional Arms was meant to provide transparency in armaments as an important confidence-building measure fostering international peace and security. To fulfil that role, it has to contain a set of reliable and comparable data large enough to reflect the picture as well as developments of reality. A steady decline in reporting to the Register throughout the last years does not meet its original purpose. Moreover it discredits the efforts of those faithfully providing their national reports, including the Czech Republic. A logical question arises in this connection: Is there a lack of political will or are there rather technical obstacles preventing States from reporting? An adequate solution stems directly from the answer. Whatever improvement we introduce to the Register should also work well for other types of annual transparency reporting, starting from Military Expenditures and ending with changes in domestic regimes of Military Equipment and Dual Use Goods Controls.

The Czech Republic has had its representative in the Group of Government Experts (GGE) on the UN Register of Conventional Arms. We appreciate the fact that the Czech expert could take part in this periodical exercise aimed at keeping the Register up-to-date from the methodological point of view. We see the last round of the GGE’s work as useful and timely, especially in light of the recently adopted Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). All the more, we regret that GGE was unable to reach consensus on the inclusion of the military Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) as a new mandatory category in the Register. We deem it appropriate to further strive for its inclusion, availing ourselves of every opportunity.

We are of the opinion that the upcoming Biennial Meeting of States taking part in UNPoA SALW (BMS5) in June 2014 should not be missed, in order to continue negotiations for giving SALW the right place next to the 7 traditional categories of conventional arms in the Register. We would like also express our delegation’s sincere congratulations to H.E. Ambassador Tanin on his nomination as the Chair-designate of the BMS5 and assure him of our cooperation and support.

Mr. Chairman

The Czech Republic welcomes with satisfaction the adoption of the ATT by an overwhelming majority of the UN Member States this year. The Czech Republic voted in favour, signed it on the 3rd of June and will do its utmost to belong to the first 50 States ratifying it to enable its entry into force. We hope that this Treaty will not only change the landscape of trade in armaments but will also push different international control regimes to react by modifying their rules accordingly. The positive influence of the ATT and good spirit proving the willingness of the international community to change the rules of the game to the advantage of those suffering from illicit trade in weapons are present and shall not be diminished. In this regard we also welcome the adoption of the Security Council resolution 2117 (2013) on SALW. We regret that this historically first UNSC resolution has been not adopted unanimously.
Finally, let me inform you that the Czech Republic deposited, during this year’s Treaty Event, an instrument of ratification of the Firearms Protocol to the Palermo Convention.

Thank you

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