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Statement

by

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**in the Thematic Debate
on
“Conventional Weapons”
in the First Committee**

New York
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Thematic Debate on *Conventional Weapons*
Statement by Mr. Khalilullah Qazi, Director General Disarmament,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, New York, 23 October 2007

Mr. Chairman,

In my intervention, I will touch on the subjects of conventional weapons, CCW, and the proposed Arms Trade Treaty.

Conventional Arms

The increasing focus on small arms and light weapons tends to divert the international community's attention from the regulation and reduction of conventional arms and armed forces.

Overemphasis on small arms eclipses the salience of sophisticated conventional weapons and technology being traded in huge quantities around the globe. Profit motivated trade in combat aircraft, aircraft carriers, airborne and early warning and control system, missile defense, nuclear submarines and warships disrupts regional balances and escalates tensions. Such trade flourishes in a moral vacuum.

In 1978, SSOD I characterized the global military expenditure as a "colossal waste of resources" and called for reduction in such spending and for reinvestment of resources into efforts to fight poverty and improve human condition.

In 2006, by comparison, global military expenditure exceeding \$ 1.2 trillion was staggering. In percentage terms, it was about 2.5 % of world GDP or \$ 173 per capita. The United Nations, mandated to maintain international peace and security, has a budget which is less than 1.5 % of world's military expenditure.

The developing countries are the "favored" destination for arms sales. New markets are being explored, created and sought after. The total value of international arms transfer agreements, during the period 2001 to 2004, was \$ 131 billion. Developing countries accounted for 63.2 % of all international arms deliveries.

Globalized arms production and sales ignore the grave humanitarian, political and strategic consequences of conventional weapons proliferation. Arms sellers encourage all sides in a conflict to buy more weapons. Some of them see conflict situations as a "unique selling opportunity".

Recent studies have also shown that asymmetries in conventional armaments in conflict areas propel military spending and promote insecurity.

It is, therefore, imperative that we pursue conventional arms control, at the lowest possible levels of armaments and military forces, in order to promote regional and

international peace and security. The preservation of a balance in the defense capabilities of states at the lowest levels of armaments should be the prime objective of conventional arms control.

SSOD I gave this clear direction: Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out on the balanced reduction of forces and of conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the need of all states to protect their security.

In this regard, we can adapt and follow good practices. The value of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, a cornerstone of European security, cannot be overemphasized. States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting such agreements for regional security.

We must step up efforts to curb excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons as well as their uncontrolled transfers.

Conventional arms control must (a) address the root causes of insecurity, emanating from disputes, conflicts and threat perceptions and (b) seek to promote balance among regional states. We need to follow up such affirmations with concrete action:

First, the Office of Disarmament Affairs can analyze the data on arms transfers and help states develop benchmarks for conventional arms control at regional and subregional levels.

The Conventional Arms Register and the Standardized Instrument, by themselves, would not lead to limitations in arms transfers. They should be used not only for reporting but also as a means to develop a global norm towards transparency in armaments. The data extrapolated from these instruments can serve as a significant early-warning mechanism, contributing to the prevention of conflict and exercising of restraint in arms exports.

Second, the Conference on Disarmament can consider formulation of the principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control.

A stable balance of conventional forces is necessary to ensure strategic stability, particularly in the regions riven with tensions. Massive induction of sophisticated weaponry accentuates conventional asymmetries and compels greater reliance on nuclear and missile deterrence in the regions that have such capabilities.

We believe that conventional arms control needs to be pursued primarily in the regional and subregional contexts since (a) most threats to peace and security arise mainly in states located in the same region or subregion and (b) aggressive

expansion of arms acquisition by one country can jeopardize efforts to promote peace and stability in the region

In South Asia, we are pursuing a Strategic Restraint Regime, which has three constituents: conflict resolution; nuclear and missile restraint; and conventional balance. Even as we sustain dialogue to address outstanding issues and work towards strategic stability and nuclear risk reduction, we will continue to strive for a conventional balance at the lowest possible level of armaments. In the interest of peace and security in South Asia, there must be restraint both in the demand and supply of conventional weapons.

CCW Review Conference

Four developments related to the CCW deserve recognition. One, the 2003 Protocol on ERW entered into force. Two, an agreement was reached to establish a compliance mechanism that would be supported by a pool of experts. Three, a plan of action was agreed to promote universality. And, four, agreement was reached on a sponsorship programme to facilitate participation of LDCs in the CCW-related activities. Differences remain on anti-vehicle mines (AVMs) particularly in the areas of detectability, active life, recording and removal of minefields, and categorization of fuses and sensors. We are of the view that the CCW and its five protocols adequately address humanitarian aspects of mines, including AVMs. We would welcome movement to regulate the **use** of cluster munitions.

Arms Trade Treaty

The proposal of an Arms Trade Treaty requires careful consideration and calibration. *First*, and foremost, the proposed GGE should reflect all views and perspectives. *Second*, GGE's deliberations should develop sharp understanding of such issues as the nature of the legally binding principles, 'irresponsible transfers', and application of human rights and humanitarian law to arms treaty. In fact, one should have a clear idea of what constitutes 'illicit' or 'illegal' transfer. *Third*, the process for the exploration of the treaty should be non-discriminatory, multilateral and transparent. *Four*, maximum attention should be given to defining the scope of such a treaty including the types of weapons and spares. *Five*, both the production and trade in armaments should be addressed. *Six*, preservation of balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armament should be the aim. *Seven*, before rushing to the issues of monitoring, verification and sanction regimes, the international community should address the questions of conventional imbalances in regions of tension. Asymmetry is a recipe for conflict, arms race and arms build up.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman