Statement by Mr. Siddhartha Nath, First Secretary in the Permanent Mission of India to the CD

First Committee thematic debate on Conventional Weapons.

22 October 2014

Mr. Chairman,

India associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Nonaligned Movement

India shares concerns about the challenges posed by transfers of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, to terrorists and non-State actors, which today has become a major threat to international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN Programme of Action outlines a realistic and comprehensive approach to address the problem at national, regional and global levels. The full and effective implementation of the UNPOA and the International Tracing Instrument is a priority for India, especially as a means for combating terrorism and transnational crime which has adversely affected our national security. We welcome the successful conclusion of the Second Review Conference of the UNPOA with the adoption of the outcome document by consensus. We note with satisfaction the successful conclusion of the 5th Biennial Meeting on the Implementation of the POA held in New York 15-20 June 2014.

The CCW remains the only forum of a universal character that brings together all the main users and producers of certain conventional weapons, thus ensuring that the instruments which emerge have greater prospect of making a meaningful impact on the ground. India which is party to the CCW and its five Protocols, remains committed to the CCW objective of progressively strengthening the role and principles of international humanitarian law while striking a balance between addressing humanitarian concerns and military necessity of States.

India supports the vision of a world free of the threat of landmines and is committed to the eventual elimination of anti-personnel landmines.
We support the approach enshrined in Amended Protocol II of the CCW which addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States with long borders. India has discontinued the production of non-detectable anti-personnel landmines and observes a moratorium on their transfer. We are also contributing to international demining and rehabilitation efforts. Amended Protocol II also serves as perhaps the only UN framework which addresses the issue of Improvised Explosive Devices or IEDs which is today the weapon of choice for terrorists. India participated as an Observer at the Third Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention in Maputo 23-27 June 2014.

India participated in CCW Expert Level meeting on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) in May this year and supports continued discussions in the CCW in 2015 as per an agreed mandate. We feel that LAWS should be assessed not just from the viewpoint of their compatibility with international law including international humanitarian law but also on their impact on international security if there is dissemination of such weapon systems. We would like the CCW process to emerge strengthened from these discussions, resulting in increased systemic controls on international armed conflicts embedded in international law in a manner that does not widen the technology gap amongst states or encourage the use of lethal force to settle international disputes just because it affords the prospects of lesser casualties to one side or that its use can be shielded from the dictates of public conscience.

India supports the two major instruments promoting transparency in armaments, viz. the UN Register on Conventional Arms and the UN Report on Military Expenditures. India supports efforts for further improving the Register along with efforts towards greater participation in it. We also contributed to the work of the GGE on the UN Report on Military Expenditures in 2011 and have submitted our national reports for this instrument.

India has strong and effective national export controls governing the transfer of conventional weapons. India is undertaking a full and thorough assessment of the ATT from the perspective of our defence, security and foreign policy interests. During the negotiations, India had raised concerns on a number of deficiencies that remained in the final text. It remains to be seen if the expected entry into force of the Treaty will have a meaningful impact on stemming the flow of conventional arms to armed non-state actors and terrorists groups, in particular in some parts of the Middle East and North Africa, which today pose a major threat to international peace and security.
Thank you.