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Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons  
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– For Delivery –  

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will briefly address several separate issues in my remarks – the Arms Trade Treaty, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, conventional weapons destruction, small arms and light weapons, and man-portable air defense systems. The full U.S. statement will be posted to the Secretariat’s QuickFirst website.

Let me start with the Arms Trade Treaty. I am pleased to note that the Treaty has crossed the fifty State Party threshold and will enter into force on December 24. The United States calls on those countries that have not signed it to consider doing so as soon as possible. The United States applauds Mexico’s offer to host the First Conference of States Parties (CSP1). The Conference will take decisions on rules of procedure, financial rules, and establishing the Secretariat that will help determine the future of the Treaty. The Treaty needs to operate in an open, transparent, and inclusive manner. The more States Parties and Signatories the Treaty has, the stronger it will be. We need to recognize that States are at different stages in developing the national control systems required by the Treaty and in being able to sign and/or ratify the Treaty. Interested States and members of Civil Society need to be able to observe the process. States that have committed to the Treaty need to be able to participate in the operation of the Treaty to the maximum extent possible. For our part, the United States will support Mexico and other interested States in pursuit of a successful CSP1 that will lay the groundwork for a Treaty that lives up to all of our expectations.

Mr. Chairman, the United States is a High Contracting Party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and all of its Protocols. We view the CCW as an important instrument that has been able to bring together states with diverse national security concerns. We look forward to the meetings of High Contracting
Parties in November and to establishing a program of work for 2015 to support the universalization of the CCW and the implementation of all its Protocols.

Mr. Chairman, in 2014 the United States announced several important changes to its anti-personnel landmine (APL) policy. In June, the United States announced that it will not produce or otherwise acquire any anti-personnel munitions that are not compliant with the Ottawa Convention in the future, including to replace such munitions as they expire in the coming years. On September 23, the United States announced that we are aligning our APL policy outside the Korean Peninsula with the key requirements of the Convention. This means that the United States will not use APL outside the Korean Peninsula, not assist, encourage, or induce anyone outside the Korean Peninsula to engage in activity prohibited by the Ottawa Convention, and undertake to destroy APL stockpiles not required for the defense of the Republic of Korea.

These measures represent a further step to advance the humanitarian aims of the Ottawa Convention. Although we are not currently changing our landmine policy with respect to the Korean Peninsula, where are our actions are governed by the unique circumstances there, we will continue to work to find ways that would ultimately allow us to accede to the Convention.

The United States has also been the world’s single largest financial supporter of humanitarian mine action and remains committed to eliminating loosely-secured or otherwise at-risk conventional weapons and munitions. Since 1993, we have provided more than $2.3 billion to over 90 countries for conventional weapons destruction, including clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnance, and disposal of small arms, light weapons, and munitions.

Mr. Chairman, the United States continues to urge fellow Member States to fully implement the UN Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Tracing Instrument. As delegations noted at the June 2014 Fifth Biennial Meeting of States, more needs to be done. We look forward in June 2015 to discussions between technical experts on emerging technology in the areas of marking, tracing, and record-keeping.

Mr. Chairman, due to instability in the Middle East and Africa, terrorists have gained unprecedented access to Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS), which pose a serious threat to civil and military aviation around the world. The United States is cooperating with partners around the globe to secure these missiles and protect the targets that terrorists seek to attack. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.