Check against Delivery

Statement by Ms. Zebib Gebrekidan, Advisor
Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations
On Cluster 4: Conventional Weapons
First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to express my delegation’s satisfaction with the excellent manner in which you are steering the activities of this important committee.

Eritrea fully aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

Excessive accumulation and unregulated proliferation of small arms and light weapons continue to perpetuate conflicts in many parts of Africa. It has perpetuated conflicts and rendered insecurity intractable. Their social, economic and political consequence for African citizens is disproportionate, pervasive and long-lasting. They are responsible for death, displacement, sexual violence and abuse against women and children.

Eritrea, as a country that emerged from decades of war for independence, is fully cognizant of and is deeply concerned with the negative social, economic, political and security consequences of the proliferation of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in its neighborhood. Eritrea fervently believes that strengthening regional cooperation in the eradication of illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons will have a positive contribution. While hailing the achievements made since the creation of Regional Center on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States and the international support of such mechanisms could meaningfully enhance international peace and security.

Eritrea reiterates its full support to the 2010 UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in this regard my delegation welcomes the outcome document from the fifth biennial meeting of states in June 2014 and looks forward to the second meeting of governmental experts in New York, June of 2015.
Eritrea would like to reiterate the need to maintain the fundamental elements of the Program of Action including states’ primary responsibility to implement the PoA, respect for national ownership, priorities and capacities.

As signatory to the Mine Ban Treaty, Eritrea attaches great importance to international instrument to ban landmines. Eritrea neither import landmines nor does it possesses any stockpile. Eritrea had been infested by land mines during the war of independence as a result of unregulated use of mines during the colonial times. Despite the successful efforts to clean contaminated areas, the humanitarian impact of mines still persists; in this regard Eritrea’s request for an extension to declare all areas mine free has been granted with a deadline of 1st February 2020.

Eritrea reiterates that the ATT could have been a more balanced treaty that includes the interests and concerns of all States. As it enters in to force, Eritrea calls on State Parties to address the short comings of the treaty to ensure it’s universality.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me stress in conclusion that effect of conventional arms in regional and international security cannot be seen without the broader political, economic and social dynamics that ignite and perpetuate conflicts. Peaceful coexistent remains the only true solution. In this regard, we must go beyond regulation and disarmament to address factors that contribute to and exacerbate conflict such us: underdevelopment, weak states and external intervention and occupation.

I thank you Mr. Chairman