

**Statement by Mrs. Pratibha Parkar, Counsellor, PMI to UN, during the thematic debate on Conventional Weapons, at 68<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGA First Committee, New York, October 30, 2013**

Mr. Chairman,

India shares concerns about the challenges posed by conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, to international peace and security. We attach importance to measures aimed at conventional arms control to address these challenges and to make progress on the goal of general and complete disarmament. Such measures need to be taken in a fair and balanced manner so as not to hamper the legitimate defence requirements of Member States. They should specifically aim at countering the illicit trade in conventional weapons and banning their transfers to terrorists and non-State actors.

Mr. Chairman,

The United Nations has had a measure of success in dealing with the threat posed by illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. 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 that the Review Conference reaffirmed the key commitments of States under the UNPOA. It is important to maintain consensus in the UNPOA process in the coming years while making further progress on both the political and technical aspects of its implementation. In this context, we look forward to the Fifth BMS to be held next year. We support and congratulate Amb. Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan for being designated as the Chair of the meeting. It is important that the Agenda for the meeting be decided early to enable Member States to undertake thorough preparations for the meeting.

India is privileged to be a party to the entire CCW package and attaches importance to the spirit of the CCW which aims to strike a balance between addressing humanitarian concerns arising from the use of certain conventional weapons and the military necessity of such weapons. It 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 remains committed to the CCW

process in progressively strengthening the role and principles of international humanitarian law.

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 and NSAs. India participates in the Ottawa Convention meetings as an Observer.

India has shouldered various responsibilities in relation to CCW's Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, including on the development of Generic Electronic Template and national reporting. In recent months the issue of Lethal Autonomous Robots (LARs) has engaged the attention of the international community. There is a need to enhance the understanding of the international community about the possible humanitarian impact of the development and use of such weapons.

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 has regularly submitted national reports to the UN Register on the export and import of conventional arms, including the latest covering the period 2011 and 2012. India has also contributed to the three-yearly review of the Register including in 2013. India supports efforts for further improving the Register along with efforts towards universalizing 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 participated actively in the Diplomatic Conferences to negotiate an Arms Trade Treaty in the expectation that such a treaty would make a real impact on illicit trafficking in conventional arms and their illicit use especially by terrorists and other unauthorized and unlawful non-state actors. During the ATT negotiations India consistently stressed that the treaty should ensure a balance of obligations between exporting and importing States. However, the finalized treaty text did not meet our requirements on these counts. India is undertaking a full and thorough assessment of the ATT from the perspective of our defence, security and foreign policy interests.

Thank you.

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