



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Statement by Finland on behalf of the Nordic Countries
(Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) at the
UNGA72 First Committee 2017, 17th meeting
Thematic Debate on Conventional Weapons

Statement by

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(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairperson,

It gives me great pleasure to address this Committee on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Finland.

Mr. Chairperson,

Disarmament and control measures in the field of conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons and their ammunition continue to be of great urgency. These weapons, and especially their uncontrolled spread and accumulation, can undermine both peace and development and cause devastating humanitarian harm and civilian casualties. Every year a staggering half a million people die due to armed violence. It is high time that we do our utmost to curb the misuse of conventional weapons and stop their illicit and unregulated trade.

The Nordic countries have been staunch supporters of the Arms Trade Treaty from its very beginning. The ATT represents a significant milestone by the international community in its efforts to regulate global arms transfers. We welcome the substantive outcome of the Third Conference of State Parties (CSP3) that was held in Geneva in September. The CSP 3 made progress in ensuring effective implementation of the Treaty, but we still have a long way to go. We encourage all members of the international community to join this important Treaty.

The ATT exists alongside a range of previously established international instruments. The United Nations Programme of Action (UN PoA) on SALW continues to provide a valid and effective strategy to cope with the threat posed by the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons. The Nordic countries are looking forward to a substantive Third Review Conference on the UN PoA next year. We will engage actively in its preparations and render our support to France in its role as Chair of this important conference.

Our efforts in the field of small arms and light weapons and conventional weapons disarmament must also be seen as a crucial factor in the achievement of the wider goals of the United Nations, not least when it comes to conflict prevention and, ultimately, realizing sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. Let us not forget that the Sustainable Development Goals set as our objective to, by 2030, significantly reduce illicit arms flows. We believe that the ATT and the UN PoA are absolutely central instruments in achieving this goal.

We also remain strongly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols. We are very pleased that a Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems will begin its work next month under the able chairmanship of India. The Nordic countries believe that humans should always bear the ultimate responsibility when dealing with questions of life and death. We urge all States to use the GGE as an opportunity to engage in a concrete dialogue on the obligations we all face when assessing the use of new weapons, means and methods of warfare.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions has succeeded in reducing human suffering caused by this weapon. It has set a strong norm against this indiscriminate weapon. The Nordic countries remain deeply concerned about the reported use of cluster munitions, which gravely affects civilian populations.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the signature of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The promise of the Convention will be fulfilled when the norm against the use of antipersonnel mines is

universal, and when States Parties to the treaty have fully implemented their key obligations. One important theme of the last Review Conference in Maputo was that the goal of a mine-free world is possible to achieve if efforts are sustained.

Unfortunately, numerous conflicts around the world are creating new areas where mines, IEDs and other explosive hazards create havoc for civilian populations. Not least in Iraq and Syria, millions of people continue to face this deadly threat every day. The Nordic countries are strong supporters of Humanitarian Mine Action. Mine action and victim assistance is currently being funded in more than 20 countries. This work not only significantly improves the daily lives of civilians and contributes to social and economic development, but can also help stabilize entire regions. We welcome the Security Council's first ever stand-alone resolution on Mine Action, which was unanimously adopted in June.

Finally Mr. Chairperson,

The linkages between disarmament, development and gender perspectives are clear. We, the Nordic Countries, believe that equal participation of men and women in disarmament analyses, negotiations and decision-making processes would increase the legitimacy, quality and effectiveness of disarmament as a whole – as well as the UN's overall objectives of conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Improving gender aspects in disarmament is not "soft policy" – it is smart policy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.