

REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

DURING THE
FIRST COMMITTEE'S
THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON
"CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS"

20TH OCTOBER 2017, NEW YORK

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Mr. Chairman,

1. My delegation aligns itself with statements delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement and Egypt on behalf of the African Group. However I wish to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

2. We live in a world where the peace is elusive, while armed conflict and other forms of violent activities are rampant. This situation has led to an adverse bearing on security and development, which we believe are essential prerequisite for the attainment of Agenda 2030.
3. My country remains deeply concerned about the use of conventional weapons in fuelling conflicts and violence around the world. It is regrettable that an estimated 500, 000 people die annually due to armed violence.
4. While we recognise the legal trade in conventional arms and the sovereign right of States to develop, transfer and possess arms for their self defence, we underline the responsibility by all stakeholders to enforce control measures aimed at denying the possession of weapons by illegitimate entities in our societies. The illegal accumulation of arms and dangerous weapons has catastrophic humanitarian, security and socio-economic consequences.
5. Explosive weapons and munitions cause indiscriminate harm to innocent civilians, especially women and children. This problem is further compounded by the conduct of modern warfare in highly populated and built-up areas.
6. We urge all parties to armed conflicts to strike a balance between military operational necessity and the respect for international humanitarian law. It is disheartening that unarmed civilians, women and children are the greatest casualties often merely regarded as collateral damage, while ignoring the full humanitarian consequences of such actions.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Botswana reiterates its support for the work of the 5th Review Conference to the "*Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons*" (CCW). We welcome with appreciation, the appointment of a Group of Governmental Expert who will amongst others examine challenges related to emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). We also welcome the adoption of the "Declaration on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)" which we believe will go a long way in raising awareness about the danger posed by IEDs.

8. Botswana is strongly committed to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti- Personnel Mines. We remain committed to its ideal to eliminate anti- personnel landmines around the world. In this regard, we are further guided by the Maputo Action Plan, that has set critical milestones towards the implementation of this Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is another development that requires our collective attention. On the African continent, the devastation attributed to SALW is quite evident, resulting in thousands of displaced people. Botswana fully supports the UN Plan of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and its international tracing instruments. We also acknowledge the numerous challenges that affect this programme to include the technology which has complicated marking and identification of illicit weapons. In this connection, we welcome the Review Conference due in 2018 and sincerely hope that the Conference will arrive at practical steps that will fully address all issues affecting the PoA and ITI.
10. Finally, Botswana reaffirms her commitment and responsibility to work with like minded nations to ensure peace and security around the world. To this end, we have in the past few years embarked on a process to review, promulgate legislation and create new entities in areas such as arms control, money laundering, anti-terrorism to name just a few. The key objective is to align our statutes with international instruments and ensure that they are relevant and enhance our contribution to addressing contemporary and emerging international peace and security challenges.

I thank you for your attention.