



**BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA**  
**Permanent Mission to the United Nations**

**On behalf of the Union of South American Nations  
(UNASUR)**

**Thematic Debate on**  
*Conventional Weapons*

**Fist Committee of the General Assembly**

*Please check upon delivery*

*October 19th 2016*

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).
2. Member States of UNASUR recognize the contribution and qualitative difference made by the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to providing a comprehensive and multidimensional response to the problems arising from such illicit activities. Nevertheless, we remain concerned about the effects of the illicit production, transfer and circulation of firearms and ammunition, and their uncontrolled spread in the hands of civilians, which, in many regions, have various consequences and pose a challenge to the sustainable development of our societies. We also reiterate our concern at the close link that exists between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and organized crime.
3. The effective implementation of the Programme of Action is a matter of high and urgent priority for UNASUR.
4. We consider it important to continue promoting the consolidation of international cooperation and assistance and national capacity-building, as their cross-cutting and multidimensional nature makes them essential tools for the effective implementation of the measures recommended in the Programme of Action. While we recognize the contribution made by the Programme of Action, UNASUR States wish to reiterate the position stated on previous occasions regarding the POA, namely that by referring to the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons "in all its aspects", it must necessarily include ammunition and explosives. We therefore consider that one of the remaining challenges for the implementation of the Programme of Action is the comprehensive consideration of the issue. UNASUR States consider ammunition to be an integral part of small arms and light weapons, which also include

explosives. We have also reiterated that the non-legally binding nature of the Programme of Action is an obstacle to its effective implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Member States of UNASUR believe that the central role of the Programme of Action in the field of small arms and light weapons makes it necessary to have a close and continued follow-up of its implementation by the international community.
6. In that regard, UNASUR member States welcome the outcome of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (BMS6 UNPoA), which took place last June in New York, and look forward to further address the issues related to munitions, marking, tracing and excessive production of arms in the next Review Conference in 2018..
7. UNASUR would also like to stress the necessity to grant an equal and major access to new technologies in the developing world, in order to fully address the complex and multidimensional issues related to prevention, combat and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.
8. Taking into account the primary responsibility of States in the prevention, combat and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects across borders, in the framework of MERCOSUR, a Working Group on Fire Arms and Ammunition of Member and Associated States of MERCOSUR was established in 2001 with the aim of sharing national experiences, working on the harmonization of national legislation to control firearms and ammunitions, and coordinating policies in this area. This forum of exchange has become a useful

tool for the coordination of the positions of member and associated States. In this regard, UNASUR Member States would like to welcome the outcomes of the meetings of the Working Group held in Asunción, Paraguay (November, 2015) and, Montevideo, Uruguay (May, 2016)

9. Further to this agenda item, Member States of UNASUR would like to express its support to Argentina for its biennial initiative to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Information on Confidence Building Measures in the field of conventional weapons". Its implementation creates favorable conditions for the progress in the field of disarmament and contributes in mutual understanding and confidence among Member States. Member States of UNASUR also acknowledge the draft on "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", presented by Colombia, South Africa and Japan.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Along the same lines, member States of UNASUR underscore the need to address the issues related to the unregulated trade in conventional arms and its diversion to the illicit market, and the necessity to explore the synergies that exist between international instruments related to arms control, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, the United Nations Programme of Action and the Firearms Protocol. This will allow coordinated and concerted international responses, which is the only way to address a transnational phenomenon.

11. In December 2014, the Arms Trade Treaty entered into force. UNASUR expects that that first legally binding instrument on the arms trade can contribute to providing an effective response to the serious consequences that the illicit and unregulated trade and trafficking in arms pose for many people and States, in particular through the diversion of arms to unauthorized non-State actors or users, often linked to transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. It is expected that this Treaty will contribute to the prevention of armed conflict,

armed violence and violations of international law, including international human rights instruments and international humanitarian law. At the same time, UNASUR calls for the Treaty to be implemented in a balanced, transparent and objective manner that respects the sovereign right of all States to guarantee their self-defense, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

12. We would also like to take note of the Second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, which took place last August in Geneva, as well as the decisions adopted regarding the implementation of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

13. Member States of UNASUR reiterate their support for the efforts of the international community to regulate cluster munitions, with the purpose of significantly reducing the humanitarian, social and economic consequences of the use of such weapons on civilians, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

14. In this regard, UNASUR Member States take note of the outcome of the Review Conference of the Cluster Munitions Convention, which took place in Dubrovnik, Croatia, and stress the necessity of banning the use of all types of cluster munitions, under any circumstances and by any actor.

15. Likewise, UNASUR Member States reaffirm the need to eliminate anti-personnel mines. In that regard, they highlight the efforts, as well as the results, in the field of demining and victims assistance of anti-personnel mines in the region, which have been possible because of the existing cooperation among our countries, as in the case of joint demining of Peru and Ecuador, by Peru and Chile, and Argentina with Chile. We also highlight the international assistance for demining given by countries of the region, such as the assistance given by Brazil in South and Central America, and the capacity building activities undertaken in Argentina.

UNASUR would also like to highlight the work undertaken by Colombia in order to face the actual challenges regarding demining in its territory, as well as the support of various UNASUR countries that contribute through the "Global Demining Initiative for Colombia", among others.

16. Member States of UNASUR attach utmost importance to the consideration of international cooperation and assistance in the framework of the Ottawa Convention. In that regard, they look forward to the outcome of the Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transference of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction to be held in Santiago, Chile, from November 28th to December 2nd.
17. Member States of UNASUR reiterate the importance of continuing to promote an enabling environment for arms control and limitation of conventional weapons, which allow each Member State to devote more resources to their economic and social development, taking into consideration the compliance with the international commitments and their legitimate defense and security needs.
18. UNASUR Member States reiterate the importance of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects – CCW, and its Protocols. In this regard, UNASUR looks forward to the outcome of the Fifth CCW Review Conference (Geneva, 12 to 16 December 2016).

Mr. Chairman,

19. In the Special Meeting of Heads of State and Government of UNASUR in Bariloche, Argentina, on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2009, the Heads of State and Government decided to strengthen South America as a zone of peace, committing to the establishment of a mechanism of mutual confidence in the field of security and

defense, upholding their decision to refrain from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity of another State of UNASUR.

20. Likewise, they reaffirmed the commitment to strengthening the fight and the cooperation against terrorism and transnational organized crime and their related crimes: drug trafficking, the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, as well as the rejection of the presence or action of illegal armed groups. In addition, they reaffirmed that the presence of foreign military forces could not, with its means and resources related to its own objectives, threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any South American nation and consequently, the peace and security of the region.

21. As a follow-up of that decision, the South American Defense Council decided to establish the Mechanism to Implement Confidence and Security Building Measures, including the development and improvement of national systems for marking and tracing of weapons as well as active cooperation among Member States of UNASUR in the solution of cases of diversion, smuggling and illegal use of weapons under their custody or from their territory.

22. Likewise, with the purpose of promoting transparency in military expenditures, UNASUR launched in May 2012 the South-American Register on Defense Expenditures, compiling for the first time official information by the 12 UNASUR Member States, based on a common agreed methodology developed for that effect.

23. In this context, it is worthy to highlight the recent opening in Quito, Ecuador, of the South American Defense College, which will constitute a center of higher learning and articulation of networks between national initiatives of the Member States of UNASUR, for training of civil and military in the field of defense and regional security. The creation of the South American Defense College will contribute to the construction of a shared vision in the field of defense at the

regional level, and will join the work of the Center of Strategic Defense Studies (CEED) of the South American Defense Council.

24. Finally, by their declaration in December 2012 of South America as a zone of peace, the Heads of State and Government of UNASUR affirmed their resolve to undertake actions with a view to establishing South America as a zone free of anti-personnel landmines and to continue to negotiate a protocol on peace, security and cooperation within the framework of the South American Defence Council.

Thank you