

**Statement by the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
at the First Committee's Thematic Discussion on  
"Conventional Weapons"**

**21 October 2016**

*In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful*

**Mr. Chairman,**

I associate myself with the statement by Indonesia on behalf of NAM.

The Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms the sovereign inherent right of any State to acquire, manufacture, import and retain conventional arms for its self-defense and security needs.

Sharing the concerns over increasing global military expenditure, Iran is of the view that in our world which "is over-armed and peace is underfunded", as rightly put by the Secretary-General, redoubling international efforts directed at "the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources", as stated in Article 26 of the UN Charter, is more relevant than ever before.

Such efforts are of utmost importance in a region like the Middle East, where the already complicated security situation - as a result of the possession of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, and a large arsenal of offensive conventional weapons by the Israeli regime, and its expansionist policy - is exacerbated in recent years by the large flow of foreign terrorist fighters, aggression to Yemen, and huge arms imports by certain oil-rich countries, as well as manifold increase in their military budgets.

Despite being surrounded and affected by such a situation, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to have one of the lowest levels of military expenditure in a region where only a surge in weapons purchases by a certain oil-rich Persian Gulf State helped to push global arms sales up by more than 10 per cent in 2015, and placed that country at the top of the list of biggest arms-importing countries in the world.

Such weapons, mostly imported from western countries, in particular the U.S. and the U.K., are used by the U.S.-backed Saudi-led coalition in its 20-month aggression to Yemen, the latest atrocity of which was the deliberate bombing of a funeral gathering, killing at least 150 civilians and wounding over 500 others.

U.S.-backed Israeli regime and Saudi Arabia use such arms to destroy houses, hospitals, schools, markets and mosques; to kill civilians; and to keep peoples of Yemen and Gaza under a brutal siege; and in short, to commit all of four core international crimes, i.e. genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. Irresponsible arms exports facilitates the commission of those crimes.

It was exactly for the sake of preventing the occurrence of such crimes that, during the ATT's negotiations, Iran had been insisting on the inclusion in the Treaty of prohibiting the export of arms to aggressors and foreign occupiers. It was however rejected by certain States, who claimed to be *responsible* arms exporters, and now are making the largest ever arms deals with those who disregard international humanitarian law and are engaged in shedding the blood of innocent Yemeni children.

We strongly call for ceasing such irresponsible arms exports, as we do for intensifying efforts to prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

As a country actively engaged in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons linked also to terrorism and drug trafficking, Iran underlines the importance of the full implementation of the ITI and PoA, which remains the main international framework in this regard.

***Mr. Chairman,***

Iran closely follows the ongoing debates on the humanitarian concerns about the military applications of certain new and emerging technologies. Given the sophisticated technical nature of such technologies and the lack of reliable common knowledge about their definitions, scope and different aspects, we believe that, at this stage, these discussions need to focus only on such aspects of the issue.

At the same time, due to dual nature of most of such technologies, maximum effort is needed for building a common understanding about the role and implications of such technologies in sustainable development of societies.

Needless to say that, to be result-oriented and broad-based, such discussions must take place based on a clear UNGA mandate, within the competent United Nations bodies, open to equal participation of all States - not just a group of States that are parties to a certain convention - and be conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner, and more importantly, based on consensus.

The fact that these are issues closely linked to the security rights, concerns and interest of States and therefore cannot be defined and decided upon in their absence, shows that how important the observance of these principles is.

In this context, it is also worth noting that, at this early stage of these discussions, neither issuing joint declarations and innovating self-defined principles is helpful, nor conducting discussions within a closed circle of States, whether inside or outside the United Nation.

In terms of process and approach, in our view, such discussions should, be pursued progressively, adopt the most possible comprehensive approach, and take into account the concerns and interests of all States in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner.

Above all, the cardinal principle governing such discussions must be the strict observance of the inherent right of any State to security and self-defense and the inalienable right of every nation to development, so as to ensure that the defense and security rights and the development requirements of any State are not compromised.

I would like to conclude by hoping that our deliberations under this cluster would contribute to improving international peace and security.

***I thank you Mr. Chairman.***