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**Fiji Statement in First Committee Debate on
Conventional Weapons
71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly
24 October, 2016**

Mr. Chairman,

Fiji aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non -Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the most challenging goals in international relations is to have a general and complete disarmament. We need not only to get rid of nuclear warheads and other weapons of mass destruction but also reducing and controlling conventional weapons too. Fiji believes that we cannot have one kind of disarmament without the other.

The 1945 founding charter of the United Nations calls for the international regulation of armaments “in order to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.” When we adopted the 2030 Agenda we pledged to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development by targeting to reduce all forms of violence. Fiji is concerned when conventional weapons land in the wrong hands, those weapons can kill hundreds of thousands, destroy cities, collapse societies, and spur mass migrations that can cause suffering and disruption. The threat and risk posed by conventional weapons are also high and similar to nuclear weapons and it is our duty to see the reduction of these threats and risks.

Conventional weapons are in relatively wide use, are more easy to procure and can cause comparatively more human suffering than other weapon known to us, including weapons of mass destruction. These weapons, if and when procured illegally and used illegally against civilians, can kill thousands of innocent civilians and displace tens of thousands more.

Fiji firmly believes that conventional arms control is about making people feel safe and secure by helping to reduce tensions and threats while building confidence

and trust. In this connection Fiji firmly believes that the same level of attention given to biological, chemical and nuclear weapons must also be applied to conventional weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Fiji attaches high priority to curbing the proliferation, collection and stockpiling of conventional weapons. Recently Fiji submitted its National Report on the Implementation Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Fiji understands the need for enhanced regional and international cooperation and proper and effective border control, customs and legal measures to ensure that these weapons are not smuggled into the country. Fiji like other Small Island Developing States is vulnerable to the challenges of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We don't have the resources to combat these activities. Only through global partnership can we secure a sustainable and peaceful future.

We need concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. Their uncontrolled circulation has humanitarian and socio economic consequences. At the same time, they pose a serious threat

to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at all levels.

Mr. Chairman,

The successful implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, is our responsibility. In this regard, we encourage Member States to further strengthen implementation of the Programme of Action and volunteer to submit national reports on the implementation of the Program of Action.

In addition, we encourage Member States to adopt the transparent measures in respect to stockpiling and amassing conventional weapons.

Fiji is committed to the Mine Ban Treaty and to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and plead with Members States to join the conventions and treaties in relation to conventional weapons for the purpose of achieving sustainable peace and inclusive societies.

I thank you.