



**77th Session of UNGA - First Committee**  
**Thematic Debate: Cluster 4: Conventional Weapons**  
**General Assembly**  
**Statement by Sri Lanka**  
**New York, October 2022**

Mr. Chairman

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and wish to make the following observations in our national capacity.

Today, the world is threatened by multiple crises which have wider security concerns with social, economic and humanitarian repercussions. In a large majority of conflicts, the illicit manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons continue to play a leading role in perpetuating and exacerbating these conflicts. In this regard, Sri Lanka wishes to reiterate the need for a balanced and full implementation of the Program of Action to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We wish to underline at this juncture the need for the full and effective implementation of the Program of Action and the International Tracing Instrument which provides a framework for weapons tracing and forms a vital tool in the implementation of the Program of Action.

Mr. Chairman

We welcome the consensus achieved during BMS8 in July this year. We welcome any measures aimed at strengthening coordination with national focal points for the implementation of the PoA. We also underscore the need for building the national capacity for weapons marking, identification and tracing, which can facilitate regional and international bodies to enhance measures to identify cross-border trafficking, strengthen concerted initiatives to regulate international trade and ensure effective control of illicit small arms and light weapons. In this context, Sri Lanka supports

the proposal to establish an Open-Ended Technical Expert Group focusing on realizing international cooperation and ensure full implementation of the International Tracing Instrument and the Program of Action, with a special focus on the recent technological developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing and design, modular and polymer weapons and 3D printing.

Sri Lanka also welcomes the decision to establish a standing, dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons particularly for developing countries.

Mr. Chairman

Sri Lanka also recognizes the need to fill the global gaps in through-life ammunition management and to also provide the necessary support and capacity building to states to enable effective global action to address these challenges. We welcome the deliberations at the OEWG on Conventional Ammunition in this regard.

Mr. Chairman

Sri Lanka values the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) framework and became a state party in 2004 and is party to the Convention's protocols except Protocol V. We recognize the unique structure of the CCW and the flexibility it provides which allows it to adapt to the changing sophistication of conventional weapon technologies and evolving nature of conflicts. We look forward to the 6<sup>th</sup> Review Conference scheduled later this year as an opportunity to review its implementation and contribute to its further development.

My delegation also wishes to highlight the impact of the rapid development of new technologies, particularly in relation to cyberspace and artificial intelligence (AI), and note the unique challenges posed by technology such as increasing autonomy in weapon systems and underscore the need to take urgent action for internationally agreed regulations and limitations.

Mr. Chairman

Sri Lanka became a state party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction in 2017. On 24<sup>th</sup> August

2021, Sri Lanka destroyed its last remaining stock of 11, 840 landmines, almost a year earlier than the deadline set by the Convention. Sri Lanka also joined the Committee on Article V implementation for the period 2021 and 2022 and will work alongside other countries in the Committee to support state parties in their implementation efforts.

We hope that the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the State Parties will derive tangible outcomes to strengthen the architecture of the Convention by promoting universal observance, promote constructive dialogue with mine affected areas and strengthen international cooperation to meet the obligations of the Convention, compliance and develop methods to clear or destroy mines and explore alternatives as well as foster regulatory frameworks to guarantee the rights of mine victims.

Finally Mr.Chairman, my delegation would like to underline that Sri Lanka affirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and relevant components, including ammunition for national security purposes. The inherent problem with conventional weapons is not the regular trade but the illicit flow of conventional arms to non-state actors, especially terrorist groups and militias, which continue to cause much harm and devastation in conflicts around the world. It is to inhibit and stop this illicit trade that we must work together concertedly as a community of nations.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.