

UN General Assembly 74th Session, First Committee: thematic debate on conventional weapons

The United Kingdom aligns with the statement made by the European Union. I will now add some remarks in a national capacity.

Madam Chair

The UK welcomes the positive progress we have made in international conventional arms control, which is crucial in tackling threats to life and security as part of the rules based international system.

It is in our collective interest that all relevant instruments function. This can only happen when they are fully funded, implemented effectively and include all relevant stakeholders.

The UK remains strongly committed to the Arms Trade Treaty, and its aim of effectively regulating the international trade in conventional arms and preventing their illicit trade and diversion. It is essential to consolidate the provisions of the Treaty and implement them fully to achieve these objectives. It is also crucial that major exporting and importing states accede to the Treaty. In this regard, we welcome China's announcement of its intention to begin the accession process. We welcome the outcome of the Fifth Conference of States Parties, and congratulate the outgoing Chair on his work.

Madam Chair

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which is celebrating its twentieth anniversary, has delivered significant humanitarian impact. But we need to do more. November's Review Conference in Oslo gives us the opportunity to review progress, reaffirm our commitment to our core obligations, and renew our determination to achieve a mine-free world by 2025. The UK continues to make steady progress in meeting our obligation to clear the Falkland Islands.

The UK also remains deeply concerned by reports of the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions. We encourage all States to accede to the Cluster Munitions Convention, and to support draft Resolution L.46 on the CCM.

Madam Chair

The UK considers the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to be a vital arms control instrument. We welcome the progress made this year by the CCW GGE on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. We look forward to the formal endorsement of the Guiding Principles affirmed by the GGE at this year's Meeting of High Contracting Parties, and welcome the continuation of the GGE's mandate to the 2021 Review Conference.

Madam Chair

The UK has consistently been at the forefront of global efforts to counter the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. This is a transnational problem and we continue to work with individual states, regional organisations, industry and civil society to strengthen cooperation and reduce the supply of illicit weapons.

The UK looks forward to the GGE meetings on the 'Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus' and to supporting the recommendations of the Group.

Thank you Madam Chair.