

## Security Council High-Level Meeting on Small Arms, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Security Council Chamber

*Statement by Mrs. Perceval, Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations*

We are pleased to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia presiding over this debate on small arms. The importance and significance of this discussion are highlighted by the presence of dignitaries, foreign ministers and other high-level individuals here today. We also note the participation of the Secretary-General and welcome his report (S/2013/503). We thank the Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross for her statement.

Argentina welcomes the adoption of the first resolution on small arms (resolution 2117 (2013)), which crystalizes the objectives promoted by my country during its former presidency of the Security Council, in March 2006, as you so generously mentioned, Madam President. The fact that Australia has undertaken this initiative speaks to the shared convictions and the fact that there is no room in this Organization for monopolized agendas or privileged positions for anyone. It is obvious that the essence of true multilateralism is working together. It is a shared responsibility, one that has to do with solidarity, that is strategic: to build, for everyone, a more just, secure and peaceful world.

It is the duty and responsibility of the international community to intensify and multiply the efforts to eradicate the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as they pose a challenge to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is important that the measures taken are aimed at more control and transparency in the stockpiling and transfer of weapons, an improvement of international cooperation, including the exchange of information and confidence-building measures, and capacity-building assistance to States in order to establish effective arms control and regulatory measures and to enable them to implement their commitments under the relevant instruments, both regionally and internationally, including the arms embargoes established by the Security Council.

The stockpiling and uncontrolled spread of small arms and ammunition have severe implications for human development, sustainable economic growth and peace. As mentioned previously, armed violence erodes the fabric of society; diverts investments in infrastructure, health and education; promotes political insecurity; increases crime; and foments political instability and a climate of impunity.

We know that throughout the world violence in conflict and post-conflict situations is carried out mostly with conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, which are available because of the very lucrative business of smuggling, as well as regulations and controls that are really insufficient or nonexistent. It should be clear that the uncontrolled proliferation of these weapons has a devastating impact on civilians, especially women and children. That is why Argentina believes it a priority to strengthen existing mechanisms to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Argentina approaches the problems arising from small arms in the context of a comprehensive strategy that includes elements related to international security, defence, non-proliferation and domestic security. This strategy includes both domestic and foreign policy actions through our participation in efforts at the international and regional level. The premise on which we base ourselves is that the fight against the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms depends largely on the policies that countries are willing to adopt in the domestic arena, such as periodic reviews of control measures for arms exports. However, efforts to prevent and combat the illicit trafficking in and irresponsible transfers of arms will be effective only if appropriate regulation and controls exist at the regional and international level.

In that conviction, Argentina participated actively alongside other countries in the negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty, in the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and in the meetings of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, among others. The Southern Common Market has been working to the same end.

It is estimated that the worldwide traffic in small arms and light weapons amounts to more than 650 million, that 1,500 people die every day as a result of armed violence, and that 60 per cent of all human rights violations are committed with small arms. In Syria, to cite but one instance, the horror of chemical weapons, whose use is a war crime and a crime against humanity, should not overshadow the need to remember that 99 per cent of victims have been claimed by conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons.

We emphasize that resolution 2117 (2013), which we have just adopted, recognizes the link between the unregulated circulation of small arms, on the one hand, and sexual violence and violence against children, on the other, in situations of armed conflict, although examples of this link also abound in peacetime. Various studies show that in any region of the world the possession of a small arm in the family space increases by 41 per cent the risk of a family member being murdered, while for women this risk increases threefold. The danger is only heightened in situations of armed conflict.

We note that, in the context of measures to prevent the proliferation of weapons, the effective implementation without double standards of the sanctions imposed by the Security Council is essential. Sanctions are not an end in themselves, but strict compliance with them— on the part not only of those against whom they are addressed, but also the rest of the membership, especially the producers and exporters of weapons— is a significant factor in reducing the availability of weapons and conflict. At the same time, it is necessary to prevent targeted transfers to a country in conflict or where they can be used to commit violations of international humanitarian law and human rights and disrupt communal security.

Through you, Madam President, we commend the focused and committed work of the Australian Mission, led by Ambassador Gary Quinlan. As is emphasized in the concept note drawn up for this meeting (S/2013/536), armed violence is not only a cause of endemic poverty but also a consequence thereof. We hope that the resolution which the Security Council has adopted today, based on the broad agreement that the international community achieved in adopting the Arms Trade Treaty, will open a new phase in which, to paraphrase the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the merchants of death will be displaced by the peacemakers.