

## 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*

Just two hours ago, I had the opportunity to address the General Assembly in the general debate that has brought us all together in New York. This also provided me with the opportunity to attend this meeting, which is of particular satisfaction to me. Some present here may recall that my intention to preside over the last open debate of the Security Council during Guatemala's presidency in October 2012 was thwarted by storm Sandy, and it is only now that I have the opportunity to personally take part in this forum in order to bear witness to the support of my Government to its work, which is so crucial to humanity.

We thank your Government, Madam President, for having organized this high-level meeting, as well as for having elaborated the concept note that guides our debate (S/2013/536). At the same time, I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Ms. Beerli, for their respective presentations.

The issue of small arms and light weapons has been addressed more broadly within the General Assembly, the leadership of which on the subject should be recognized. However, we believe that this should not prevent the Security Council from playing an active and complementary role in the specific areas of its competence. These have been the subject of several reports of the Secretary-General and of numerous presidential statements. That is why we commend the delegation of Australia for having taken up this initiative, and of course support the text of resolution 2117 (2013), which the Council adopted as few moments ago. This is a historic event, taking into account that the Council has never before adopted a resolution that specifically addresses small arms and light weapons.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/503) underlines the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and its potential serious consequences for international peace and security — in particular, its impact on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Despite the efforts of United Nations peacekeeping operations and mechanisms to assist States in complying with arms embargoes, the unregulated circulation of small arms continues to proliferate at an alarming rate. This phenomenon persists due to the lucrative nature of illicit trade, poor regulation and lack of controls, including poorly or unsecured Government stockpiles. It is worth noting that women and children are often those who most suffer the consequences.

In addressing this phenomenon, we agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation concerning the importance of focusing on a comprehensive policy approach, highlighting the role of international, regional and subregional organizations. In particular, we welcome the partnerships that the United Nations has built in this area. Moreover, regarding the role of the arms industry, although the report of the Secretary-General recommends considering the use of new technologies to improve stockpile management and reduce the diversion of arms to illicit use, it would not be remiss to encourage producing States to promote accountability and the full implementation of existing laws and regulations in that sector. Our common goal should be to stop the overproduction of weapons.

We must support the existing regulatory framework and formulate concrete steps to strengthen and maximize the impact of the Council's responses to threats to peace and security caused by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In particular, I would like to highlight the recognition of the responsibility of States themselves to protect their civilians — most of all women and children — and to emphasize that preventing the proliferation of small arms must be part of that commitment.

Furthermore, although the responsibility for establishing effective firearms controls and regulations lies with the State, account should be taken of the challenges that States in conflict or States emerging from conflict must face, which often reveal serious deficiencies at the institutional level and render them especially vulnerable to arms trafficking, which is often linked to drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.

Our own internal conflict was resolved 17 years ago, but we still suffer the violence, insecurity, criminality and organized crime associated, in part, with illicit weapons that are often purchased legally before being diverted to the illicit market. Our Government has striven to combat that phenomenon at the domestic, regional and international levels. At the national level, without providing an exhaustive list, I would like to mention some areas of progress, which include the renewal of the National Commission for the Prevention of Armed Violence and the creation of the Centre for Arms and Ammunitions Control within the judicial branch. We are also developing a national policy for the prevention of violence, and we have signed several cooperation agreements with civil society.

At the international level, we actively participated in the negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty, which we acceded to on 24 June, proving once again the commitment of my country to general and complete disarmament and strengthening the international security system. We are currently engaging in consultations prior to remitting the Treaty to our Congress for its approval and subsequent ratification. The Council, more than any other international forum, has witnessed the high cost in human lives that the lack of a universal instrument of that kind entails, hence the importance of ensuring its early entry into force and universality.

In conclusion, we are fully committed to the implementation of the outcomes of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.