

Security Council High-Level Meeting on Small Arms, September 26th, 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Asselborn, Permanent Mission of Luxembourg to the United Nations

I would like to thank the Australian presidency for having taken the initiative of convening this high-level meeting on the issue of small arms. I also wish the President every success in her new functions.

The impact of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons on international peace and security can be felt in a number of the geographic situations and thematic issues of which the Security Council is seized. I strongly welcome resolution 2117 (2013), which we have just adopted, the first of its kind, in order to counter the phenomenon.

I thank the Secretary-General for his presentation and his report (S/2013/503). We support his recommendations. My thanks also go to the Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross for her very enlightening briefing about a sad reality. It is estimated that, each year, small arms claim the lives of more than 500,000 people. The majority of the victims — 300,000 persons — die in situations of armed conflict. The uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons undermines peace and security, particularly in Africa, and it has a devastating impact on civilians in armed conflict. Women and children often bear the brunt of that impact. The President of Nigeria recalled that fact last Tuesday, 24 September, during his address to the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.5) : for Africa, those small arms are the weapons of mass destruction.

Over the course of the past year, several countries in the Sahel have become more vulnerable as a result of the proliferation of weapons from within and outside the region, a lack of governmental control over army and police stockpiles, terrorist activities and related organized crime. To counter that threat in Mali, the Security Council established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). On 25 April we gave MINUSMA the mandate to assist the Malian authorities in weapons and ammunition management, notably through training.

At the regional level, we have high expectations for the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which has to be carried out in close coordination with the relevant regional organizations.

For its part, Luxembourg is committed to working alongside its African partners, notably by supporting the activities of the African Francophone Network on Small Arms, a non-governmental organization and think-tank network whose objective is to improve shared knowledge on small arms proliferation, security and disarmament with a view to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

The illicit transfer and destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons are often done in violation of embargoes imposed by Security Council resolutions. It is therefore the responsibility of our Council, through the various Sanctions Committees and with the assistance of the associated panels of experts as well as the United Nations missions deployed on the ground, to ensure the effective implementation of sanctions decided by the Council. All the States Members of the United Nations need to lend their support to the task. Our credibility is at stake.

On 2 April, the General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty, which more than 100 Member States, including Luxembourg, have already signed. The majority of the members of the Security Council, including now the majority of its permanent members, have signed it. My country resolutely supports that historic instrument and will continue to work towards its rapid entry into force and its full implementation. By setting norms for the responsible transfer of all conventional arms, the

Treaty will have a positive impact on international law, international humanitarian law and human rights. By prohibiting arms transfers in certain cases and by imposing the obligation on exporting States to assess whether the arms could be used to commit or facilitate serious acts of violence against women or children, the Treaty will contribute in a concrete manner to reducing human suffering and ensuring peace, security and stability.

With the growing number of signatures and ratifications of the Arms Trade Treaty, the commitment by the whole international community and the momentum generated by today's meeting at the level of the Security Council, I trust that we will be able to decisively stem the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms.