

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

Statement by Mr. Yun Byung-se, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

Let me begin by thanking you, Madam President, for convening today's important discussion. My appreciation also goes to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Vice-President Christine Beerli for their informative briefings. I am also grateful to the Secretary-General for the valuable recommendations presented in his biennial report (S/2013/503).

Today's discussion and the adoption of resolution 2117 (2013) reflect the unswerving commitment of the international community to addressing the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. I believe that this meeting offers an excellent opportunity for us to work together in strengthening the Security Council's role on the issue, given the lengthy absence of a relevant high-level discussion in the Council.

The cross-cutting and adverse consequences of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons are well documented in numerous Security Council resolutions and presidential statements. It clearly demonstrates that no one country or institution can solve the problem alone. It requires continued commitment on the part of all sides, including by the Security Council.

First of all, each and every State is primarily responsible for preventing the proliferation and diversion of illicit small arms. Therefore, each State should ensure the highest degree of accountability in order to prevent its weapons from flowing into regions or countries of concern and falling into the wrong hands. In that regard, I believe that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which was adopted in April, marked an important milestone in our efforts to prevent the illicit transfer and diversion of conventional arms. We appreciate the leadership of Australia and Argentina in bringing the ATT negotiations to fruition. The Republic of Korea, one of the original signatory States to the Treaty, will play its part in bringing the Treaty into force at an early date. I would also like to welcome the United States as a new signatory to that important treaty.

In addition, the Republic of Korea will also continue to lead efforts, along with Australia, in advancing the biennial General Assembly resolution on illicit brokering. I have every confidence that the resolution will be instrumental in creating yet another international norm against the merchants of death who profit from the world's deadliest conflicts and destroy fragile peace in recovering States.

Along with the efforts of each Member State, the Security Council must play a vital and increased role, given the multifaceted impact of small arms on its country-specific and thematic agendas. Let me share a couple of ideas in that regard.

First, the Security Council's arms embargoes have acted as an effective line of defense against the illicit transfer of small arms. The Security Council therefore needs to exert greater efforts to ensure that the arms embargoes are more workable and to further assist Member States in their implementation. As rightly recommended by the Secretary-General, it will be a step in the right direction for the Council to mandate peacekeeping operations and political missions to assist in monitoring and implementing arms embargoes, including the collection of prohibited arms and the management of Government stockpiles, as appropriate.

Furthermore, it is equally important that the Council provide practical support to Member States in the implementation of arms embargoes. As the recent case of Panama's interdiction of the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea vessel Chong Chon Gang clearly demonstrates, strict arms embargo measures imposed by Member States can make a real difference in combating arms proliferation. With effective and timely support from the Panel of Experts of the Sanctions Committees, for example, Member States will be able to implement arms embargoes with increased confidence.

Secondly, in order to better protect civilians, particularly women and children, in armed conflicts, the Council's post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, such as programmes for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform, require further improvement. Peacekeeping, peacebuilding missions and special political missions should be given effective mandates and sufficient resources to enable them to fully support their host Governments. As the Secretary-General points out in his report, support actions for arms control and regulation should be considered in the planning of integrated peace missions. Reinforced border controls can also contribute to making disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes more sustainable.

Thirdly, enhanced coordination and information sharing across the United Nations system would create synergy in better combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In that vein, we support the enhanced role of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms, which is the United Nations inter-agency task force on small arms.

Finally, the Security Council needs to establish a follow-up mechanism to the Secretary-General's biennial reports. To maintain that momentum and move a step forward, we need to continually assess where we are and where we are heading through such an established process

Many conflicts and much post-conflict violence throughout the world are fuelled and exacerbated by small arms and light weapons. The scale of the associated human suffering is immense; women and children are particularly vulnerable. Inaction and procrastination today will result in a high cost tomorrow.

As the Korean Government pursues the goal of well-being for all global citizens, it will continue to exert its sincere efforts in combating the illicit use and trade in small arms and light weapons, while providing effective assistance for ongoing global peacebuilding efforts, in particular in the development of fragile States.

The Security Council must take the lead in restoring peace and stability and ensure that the security and well-being of civilians are key elements of its considerations. We must work together to maintain the valuable and long-awaited momentum created by the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty and today's high-level meeting