

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

*Statement by Mr. Clegg, Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations*

None of us here today can fail to be concerned about the damage caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We all know the statistics. For every minute of our debate, a man, woman or child will die as a result of armed violence. We also know the facts. The only way we can tackle the issue seriously is by working together as an international community.

First, let me be clear. Tougher regulation is not about restricting the legitimate trade and use of small arms, such as in peacekeeping operations around the world. We do, however, have a duty to uphold human rights. Without tough global rules in place to govern the sale and availability of those weapons, too often they end up in the hands of criminals, terrorists and insurgents who use them to destabilize societies, fuel conflicts, prop up rogue regimes and commit atrocious acts.

As we saw during the tragic events in Kenya recently, those people did not confine their bullets to the battlefield. They use them across the world to terrorize and harm ordinary people.

Resolution 2117 (2013) gives us the chance to strengthen our joint efforts to tackle the issue and help secure peace and stability. A key part of that work, as the resolution recognizes, is the Arms Trade Treaty. The Treaty sets out, for the first time in history, a global set of legally binding rules to stop small arms and light weapons being sold, without concern for their ultimate use. Just yesterday, another 18 countries committed to the Treaty. We need just 50 States in total to ratify the Treaty so that it may enter into force. The United Kingdom is committed to ratifying it before the end of the year, because unless we put it into practice and start making it work on the ground, it will remain no more than a paper commitment. So I call on all of those States that have not yet done so to make the commitment to act as soon as possible.

The resolution is also a reminder that when it comes to arms embargoes, words are not enough. It is our collective responsibility to actively enforce them. That means we need to empower countries that need extra support to enforce embargoes. We need to turn up the pressure on countries that willfully allow or support their violation and bring such cases to the attention of the Council. We should not hesitate to prosecute those individuals and organizations breaking export controls within their own borders.

Finally, we cannot forget that those weapons are often used to intimidate women, children and men caught up in conflict through rape and other acts of sexual violence. Preventing the proliferation of small weapons is one important way that we can help to stop such horrendous acts. Over 115 States have endorsed the Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. I would encourage all other States yet to do so, to join us in pledging their commitment to that initiative, in order to strengthen United Nations efforts and help organizations on the ground to support victims and their families.

In conclusion, I wish to thank you again, Madam President, for raising the issue and giving us the opportunity to renew our efforts to tackle the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons.