

Statement by Ambassador Asoke K. Mukerji, Permanent Representative , at the United Nations Security Council Open Debate on “The Human Cost of Illicit Transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons” on May 13, 2015

Madam President,

Thank you for organizing this debate. We compliment your delegation for the useful concept note circulated earlier. We also thank the briefers.

We note that the Security Council had an occasion to discuss this issue in depth in 2013 while adopting UNSC resolution 2117. Given its cross cutting nature, this issue has also figured in numerous other resolutions and presidential statements of the Council.

We must bear in mind that there is consensus in the international community, as expressed in various General Assembly resolutions, on the UN Programme of Action as the main framework for measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Nothing must be done to detract from this process, which is inclusive, universal and consensus based.

Madam President,

India has supported the full implementation of the UN Programme of Action. We have contributed to the success of the Second UN Conference to review the implementation of the Programme of Action held in 2012 and subsequent biennial meetings. We look forward to the Third Review Conference in 2018.

India shares the concerns of the international community on the adverse security, political, socio economic and humanitarian impact in states affected by illicit transfers and their diversion of small arms and light weapons to terrorists, illegal armed groups and unauthorised recipients. Insecurity and instability spawned by cross border terrorism impacts on innocent civilians, in particular on women and children, and causes large scale displacement. India has been a victim of cross border terrorism for decades. In addition, there is a huge cost to the development agenda within affected states and across regions.

The easy availability of such weapons in large numbers and the easy access often provided by some states as deliberate policy has been one of the main reasons for the growth of terrorism in various parts of the world. Of late, we note with concern the use of such weapons against UN peacekeepers by armed groups and terrorists. Diversion of such arms has also been a major problem. The scourge of international terrorism cannot be defeated if this trend continues. The strict implementation of the arms embargo covered under the UN Security Council Sanctions regime like the 1267 Al-Qaida Sanctions regime is important in this context.

Madam President,

The focus for international cooperation should continue to be on the supply side of the equation, while encouraging effective measures on the demand side which are under national jurisdictions.

Various events have sharpened the focus on some of deficiencies in the ATT which India had highlighted during the negotiations- in particular whether the treaty could make any meaningful impact on illicit trafficking in conventional arms and their illicit use by terrorists and unlawful non-state actors. In our view, these gaps in the treaty weaken our ability to address a major source of international instability.

Madam President,

India follows a policy of responsibility and restraint in the export of conventional arms including small arms and light weapons. We have put in place an export control system which is at par with international standards. India implements all the obligations arising out of extant UNSC resolutions on arms embargoes.

Madam President,

In conclusion, let me reiterate India's firm commitment in preventing the misuse of small arms and light weapons and thereby continue to contribute in the global fight against terrorism.

I thank you, Madam President.