Prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects at the national, regional, and international levels.

Intervention by Chile

(Monday, February 12)

Madam President,

Chile congratulates you and the members of the Bureau for your appointment. With the professionalism that characterizes you, we are sure that we will have excellent results in this Preparatory Committee. Our recognition is also extended to the Secretariat and the team that accompanies you.

In general terms, we are concerned about the increase in the illicit trafficking of this type of arms in our region, which is having effects not yet noticed in the continuity of the States and presenting problems differentiated by gender, with a real political detriment on women, since the increase in armed violence against them produces an exit of women from public spaces and decision making, undermining their political participation.

The masculinization of politics leads to the regression of various policies and the construction of others without a gender perspective. The removal of women from public spaces as representatives reduces civic space for all women, consolidating the tasks assigned to private spaces due to gender stereotypes.
The UNODC points out that the countries vulnerable to arms trafficking are not the manufacturing States but the States where these weapons circulate. According to the institution's 2020 data, North America is the region from which most seized firearms originate, followed by Europe and Western Asia.

Unlike the regions mentioned above, each sub-region of the world has its own arms trafficking flows, where a significant part enters the illegal market, mainly in Latin America, North and West Africa, and West Asia.

Arms trafficking between countries generally occurs within the same continent. According to the UNODC, North America, Europe and Asia have been identified as the main sources of arms trafficking networks, while Central and South America and West Asia are the regions that account for 80% of the total destinations of illicit arms trafficking in the world.

The areas affected by illicit trafficking networks of firearms and related materials are characterized by high levels of violence, crime and internal conflicts, which are also reflected in the levels of violent deaths caused by the use of firearms that are not legal.

As noted by the Secretary-General (S/2023/823), trafficking in small arms and light weapons is often a common element in the commission of other serious crimes.

In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, the trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their criminal use are closely related to
various forms of transnational organized crime and other illicit activities, in particular drug trafficking, gang crime and illegal mining.

The United Nations Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2001) and the International Tracing Instrument (2005) - both non-binding political frameworks, circumscribed within the general disarmament and non-proliferation system of the United Nations - have proven to be practical guides for measures to facilitate the fight against illicit trafficking, but their application has been dissonant among States and regions, without yet having a harmonized application at the international level, which not only hinders their full and effective implementation, but also makes their evaluation more complex.

Regarding compliance with the measures aimed at preventing, combating, and eliminating illicit trafficking present in the PoA at the national level, it should be noted that Chile has implemented and is implementing the set of actions established in Chapter 2 (paragraphs 2 to 23).

To this end, my country has updated its legislation and has established specific regulations and registries for the possession of weapons, importation and sale by intermediaries, training for police personnel, and a technical registry of all licit weapons at the national level, making it possible to trace legal weapons and facilitating the identification of persons or entities involved in diversion and trafficking.

Every weapon that enters the country or is produced domestically is technically tested, ensuring that it is duly marked and complies with specific requirements, submitting and registering its ballistic fingerprint
to facilitate its traceability and generating its own ID for the national system.

It should be noted that during the past year, more than 20,000 weapons parts (small arms and light weapons and their components) were destroyed in Chile, both seized illicit weapons and disused weapons, through a public-private partnership that provides a free service to the State for the melting down of these weapons.

At the regional level, the United Nations Regional Center for Peace, Disarmament, and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) continues to be a powerful ally in training public officials, dissemination, and education regarding the danger posed by weapons. In recent years, the Center has developed a special program for the detection of weapons components for Customs officials, which has led to the detection of fraudulent imports of disassembled weapons for subsequent assembly within the country. It also conducted extensive training for public officials involved in arms trade control, enabling them to learn about international legislation by disseminating the rules of the Arms Trade Treaty, the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisition, and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.

The common view of the major international instruments facilitates working as a bloc and their harmonious implementation. However, certain differences in the criminalization of offenses, in permits for the use of arms, ammunition, and other dissimilar components in the region, and, finally, non-harmonized customs records present a danger and an open window for transnational organized crime.
Only strict control over the licit trade in small arms and light weapons, including ammunition, at the national and international levels can curb the growing illicit arms trade. In this regard, at the regional and international levels, it is essential to advance in a technical and political dialogue between the different arms control instruments. This could facilitate the submission of reports requested, for example, by the ATT or UNROCA, improve them, provide information to civil society and decision-makers, encourage transparency, and promote the reduction of military spending and disarmament, elements that are in the founding spirit of the United Nations.

New and emerging technologies are presenting a major challenge in preventing, combating, and eliminating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, particularly in three specific areas: first, the unregulated manufacture of parts, components, and even complete weapons; second, the difficulties associated with these weapons for proper marking, registration, and tracing. Finally, the deep internet has become a space for the sale of weaponry outside the eyes of States.

Regarding the first point, the spread of handmade weapons presents problems due to the difficulties in regulating them at the national and international levels since technologies are advancing much faster than local legislation is able to advance.

Likewise, handmade weapons produced by means of new technologies pose a serious problem for effective arms control due to their limited traceability. In this regard, the creation of an open-ended group of technical experts to study how to take advantage of the opportunities and challenges related to recent advances in manufacturing, technology, and design should be the main outcome of the Fourth Conference.
Finally, we emphasize that women and men are affected differently by gun violence. At the regional level, organized crime has shown the fastest growth in criminal dynamics related to transnational crime, increasing since 1990 due to several factors that have created an environment conducive to the entry of organized crime. The opening of the economy, the prevailing institutional instability, poverty, and inequality have created a space for the formation of arms trafficking networks, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and the strengthening of drug trafficking gangs. The problems faced by the rule of law to be effective in the region feed and facilitate the growth of these criminal organizations, increasing the vulnerability of women.