



**Statement by Pakistan at the UN Security Council Open Debate
“Addressing the threat posed by diversion, illicit trafficking
and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their
ammunition to peace and security”,
(Friday, 15 December 2023)**

Mr. President,

We congratulate Ecuador on assuming the Presidency for this month and organizing today's debate.

The illicit flow, excessive accumulation and the misuse of small and light weapons aggravate conflicts, hinder sustainable development, bolster terrorism and threaten international peace and development.

The devastating consequences of easy access to both small arms and heavy weapons by criminals and terrorists is too well known to be recounted at length. Suffice it to say that hundreds of thousands of human lives lost each year, decimation of economies and societies and the terrible suffering inflicted on the vulnerable segments of the population make it incumbent on the international community to adopt all practicable measures to eliminate the scourge of illicit weapons proliferation.

The UN Programme of Action, the International Tracing Instrument and the Firearms Protocol provide solid normative frameworks to address the regulation of these arms. All States need to intensify efforts to fully implement these mechanisms. For developing countries, the role of international assistance and cooperation is critical. It is the principal enabler of efforts to regulate these arms. We therefore call for stronger commitment from the international community to mobilize resources to this end.

Mr. President,

Pakistan is deeply concerned at the possession and use of modern and sophisticated arms and weapons such as guns with laser, night-vision devices, and thermal sighting systems by the terrorist group Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) - a UN listed terrorist organization.

This week, we have witnessed the havoc wreaked by the TTP in a heinous and cowardly terrorist attack against our security forces, killing more than 23 personnel. While we successfully neutralised all of those involved, the possession of sophisticated weaponry by these

terrorists, none of which they have the capability to manufacture, indicates a bigger problem today.

Terrorists and criminals do not manufacture these arms. They acquire them from illicit arms markets or receive them from entities that want to destabilize a particular region or country. It is therefore the responsibility of all States, this Council and the UN to take measures to prevent illicit trade, transfer and diversion of these arms. We demand an investigation into how the TTP acquired such sophisticated weapons being used against Pakistan's border and other posts.

We must take immediate action in opposing the criminals who use such arms and effectively dismantle the networks that supply these killing machines to them. Pakistan will continue to work closely with the international community towards exposing those who are responsible for supporting, financing and externally sponsoring such operations.

Mr. President,

Arms control must extend beyond small arms and light weapons to cover conventional weapons. The huge accumulation of conventional and related capabilities in cyber space, outer space, and other domains is creating dangerous imbalances, which can trigger conflicts.

The Final Document of SSOD-I provided a robust roadmap for the limitation and gradual reduction of conventional weapons within the framework of general and complete disarmament. Regrettably, this agreed vision has not been realized. Instead, we find ourselves amidst a persistent increase in global military expenditures.

Many destabilizing developments are evident in South Asia where one State's military spending vastly outnumbers that of all others. The generous supply of conventional weaponry to this state, together with its strategic capabilities, is fueling instability, jeopardizing the delicate regional balance, hindering resolution of longstanding disputes, reinforcing its sense of impunity and hegemonic designs and impeding the realization of durable peace and sustainable development in the region. This conventional imbalance

can also lead to outbreak of conflict between nuclear-armed states due to the inherent danger of escalation.

Therefore, the policy of double standards towards South Asia, based on narrow strategic, political and commercial considerations, must be eschewed. Pakistan, for its part, is committed to the establishment of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia, which includes an element of conventional force balance. Pakistan neither wants, nor is engaged in an arms race in the region.

Lastly, Mr. President, it is our firm view that peace and stability in South Asia can only be achieved through; (i) the resolution of disputes in accordance with Security Council resolutions; and (ii) the maintenance of a balance of conventional and strategic military forces.

I thank you.