

Delegation of Belarus

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**Working session III: Revitalizing, updating and modernizing conventional
arms control and confidence- and security-building measures:
challenges and opportunities**

Mr. Moderator,

I should like to thank the distinguished speakers for their informative statements, which provide some good food for thought and set the tone for today's discussions.

The title of this working session speaks for itself. Today we are talking not simply about arms control regimes and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) but also about revitalizing and updating them. Positive developments in the politico-military field last year have been underpinned by the relevant provisions of the declaration adopted at the OSCE Summit in Astana.

In the first instance this involves the Vienna Document 1999. I agree that there is a need for a gradual approach to the updating of this most important politico-military instrument of our Organization. I believe that by the time of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Vilnius we shall have been able to complete the first stage of the adaptation of the Vienna Document, the "fine-tuning", so to speak. In that connection, we should not forget about the medium- and long-term priorities in the updating of the Vienna Document, i.e., taking into account both the doctrinal and technological aspects of the development of armed forces, which are not yet covered by the pan-European regime of confidence- and security-building measures.

During the recent OSCE High-Level Seminar on Military Doctrine, we discussed the influence of doctrinal and technological changes on arms control regimes and CSBMs and also the existence of an interdependence between them. I believe that this interrelationship should be the subject of careful consideration within our Organization.

The agenda of the Forum for Security Co-operation includes a wide range of questions from the OSCE's first basket – from conventional arms and military activities to

small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which should also be examined from the point of view of possible improvement and updating. We assume that this modernization process will also concern the 1994 OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation.

Two major events will take place in New York next year – the Conference to elaborate an arms trade treaty, and the Second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. I think that the results of these conferences may also have an impact on the relevant instruments of our Organization – the OSCE Document on SALW and the Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers. We should already be taking steps now so that the OSCE is not sidelined in these global processes. The idea of holding an SALW review conference next year would be a step in the right direction.

Mr. Moderator,

The concept of interlocking and mutually reinforcing legal and political arms control commitments in the OSCE area was reflected in the Framework for Arms Control approved at the OSCE Lisbon Summit in 1996.

The draft OSCE Programme for Further Action in the field of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures is acquiring particular relevance in this context. In our view, it incorporates the development of the 1996 Framework and in the event of its adoption will be able to set the direction for further work in the politico-military sphere of the OSCE.

An integral part of the system of pan-European arms control and CSBMs is the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), which is going through a difficult time. The consultations in the 36-State format give some grounds for optimism. However, a number of well-known conflicts and disagreements continue to hinder the achievement of a framework agreement on the creation of a new basis for the start of negotiations to revive the conventional arms control regime. In this connection, we urge our partners to do all they can to find a solution so that the process does not drag on for years.

The Republic of Belarus is willing to work actively in this area with a view to concluding a legally binding agreement on European arms control that preserves all the viable elements of the existing and adapted CFE Treaty. For many years the 1990 Treaty was a key element of European security precisely because it was legally binding. In our view, there is no alternative to a legally binding document.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.