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**STATEMENT BY H.E. OTTO PÉREZ MOLINA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
GUATEMALA IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL HIGH-LEVEL MEETING  
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS**

**(New York, 26 September 2013)**

Madame President,

Just two hours ago, I had the opportunity to address the General Assembly, as part of the general debate that has brought us all together in New York. This also provided me with the opportunity to be with you during this meeting, which is of particular satisfaction to me. Some of you may recall that my intention to preside over the last open debate of the Security Council during our own presidency in October of last year was thwarted by the Storm Sandy, and it is only now that I have the opportunity to personally take part in this forum to bear witness to the support of my Government to its work which is so crucial to humanity.

We thank your Government, Madame President, for having organized this High-level Meeting, as well as for having elaborated the Concept Note that guides our debate. At the same time, I extend my gratitude to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon and Vice-President of the ICRC, Mrs. Beerli, for their respective presentations.

The issue of small arms and light weapons has been addressed more broadly within the General Assembly, and its leadership on the subject should be recognized. However, we think that this does not prevent the Security Council from playing an active and complementary role in the specific areas of its competence. These have been the subject of several reports of the Secretary General and numerous Presidential statements. That is why we commend the delegation of Australia for having taken up this initiative, and of course support the text of the resolution that the Council has recently adopted. This is a historic event, taking into account that the Council has never before adopted a resolution that specifically addresses small arms and light weapons.

Madame President,

The report of the Secretary-General underlines the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and the potential serious consequences it could impact on international peace and security; in particular, its impact on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Despite the efforts of UN peacekeeping operations and mechanisms to assist States to comply with arms embargoes, the unregulated circulation of small arms continues to proliferate at an alarming rate. This phenomenon persists due to the lucrative nature of illicit trade, poor regulation and lack of controls, including poorly or unsecured government stockpiles. It is worth noting that women and children are often those who most suffer the consequences.

In addressing this phenomenon, we agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation on the importance of focusing on an integrated policy approach, highlighting the role of international, regional and subregional organizations. In particular, we welcome the partnerships that the UN has built in this area. Moreover, regarding the role of the arms industry, although the report of the Secretary-General recommends considering the use of new technologies to improve stockpile management and reduce the diversion of arms to illicit use, it would not be remiss to encourage producing States to promote accountability and full implementation of existing laws and regulations in that sector. Our common goal

should be to stop the overproduction of weapons. We must support the existing regulatory framework, and formulate concrete steps to strengthen and maximize the impact of the Council's responses to threats to peace and security caused by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In particular, I would like to highlight the recognition of the responsibility that States themselves have to protect their civilians – most of all women and children - and to emphasize that preventing the proliferation of small arms must be part of that commitment.

Furthermore, although the responsibility for establishing effective firearms controls and regulations lies with the State, account should be taken of the challenges that States in conflict or emerging from conflict must face, that often reveal serious deficiencies at the institutional level, which renders them especially vulnerable to arms trafficking, often linked to drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.

Madame President,

Our own internal conflict was resolved seventeen years ago, but we still suffer the violence, insecurity, crime and organized crime associated with, in part, illicit weapons that are often purchased legally, before being diverted to the illicit market. Our Government has striven to combat this phenomenon, at domestic, regional and international levels. At the national level, without providing an exhaustive list, I would like to mention some areas of progress, which include the renovation of the National Commission for the Prevention of Armed Violence, and the creation of the Centre of Arms and Ammunitions Control within the Judicial Branch. We are also developing a national policy for the prevention of violence, and have signed several cooperation agreements between civil society and the Government. At the international level, we actively participated in the negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which we adhered to on June 24, proving once again the commitment of my country with general and complete disarmament and strengthening the international security system. We are currently engaging in consultations prior to remitting the Agreement to Congress for its approval and subsequent ratification. This Council, more than any other international forum, has witnessed the high cost in human lives that the lack of a universal instrument of this kind entails. Hence the importance of ensuring its early entry into force and universality.

To conclude, we are committed to the implementation of the outcomes of the 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.

Thank you.