

Respected Chairperson, Honorable members of parliament, Excellencies, friends from civil society.

It is my honor to participate in this august gathering, representing my country, Nepal. Let me first extend my heartfelt thanks to the organizer of this event government and legislative assembly of El Salvador for generous hospitality. I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak a bit about my country Nepal and the Biological Weapons Convention.

Needless to say, peace, security, are the hallmark of a vibrant democracy. An end of violence is the basic requirement for making our democracy robust and our society civilized. The society is being terrorized by terrorism and suffered a lot by serious crimes. We all know that all types of arms have claimed many innocent lives. This is high time to talk about peace and security. We all should do hard work in support of this issue in our respective parliaments. PGA is the best forum to bring us together in such matter.

A small country bordering India and China, Nepal has been passing through a post-conflict period. Now Nepal has promulgated its new constitution, with values of democracy, inclusion and non discrimination. Although we managed decade long armed conflict and promulgated new constitution still there are lot of problems. Devastating earthquake of 25th April harshly weakened the country and the recent undeclared blocked from neighbour country added the pain.

Nepal is birth place of lord Buddha, whose teachings always inspire us to maintain peace in the universe. Nepal solely follow this path so it is called peace loving country. We always respect and support the international efforts to prevent, regulate and control the arms from the beginning. Though Nepal does not export arms, it has been victim of unregulated and

dangerous arms produced by others. This fact also highlights Nepal's urgency to support the international efforts.

Nepal has signed Biological Weapons Convention in the same day when it was opened for signature (In 10 April 1972). Nepal has voted for the adoption of the ATT during the voting in the UN General Assembly.

Nepal is the sole remaining country in Asia that has not yet ratified the Biological Weapons Convention. As is the case with many treaties in many countries I do not believe that the reason for this omission is due to substantive objections on the part of the Government of this Treaty.

The truth of the matter is - as many of you are already aware - my country seems to be plagued by so many problems in recent years, armed conflict, a terrible civil, political unrest, political stalemate, very long negotiations on a new Constitution.

Having said that, domestic challenges should never become a long term excuse for inaction on matters of broader, international concern. It is important that biological weapons can be developed anywhere and we must all participate and properly implement this Treaty.

With the concern about Non-State Actors, including terrorists, now trying to develop these and other weapons of mass destruction, further delay in this process would be inexcusable.

Efforts have been initiated in Nepal for signing and ratification of the treaties. Indeed, during these last 8 years, and in spite of frequently very difficult circumstances, my colleagues and I in PGA Nepal actively advocated for ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC as well as the Arms Trade Treaty, the subject of our deliberations yesterday. As the political situation in Nepal seems destined to stabilize further over the coming months, I sincerely believe that we will see at least some substantive progress or movement forward on both these treaties.

On the ATT I have had several meetings with prominent Ministers, published articles promoting ratification in prominent national media outlets and, indeed, introduced a resolution in parliament 18 months ago. Government formed a Task Force which recommend that the Government should join the ATT. Due to our other priority it could not implemented.

Two weeks ago I had a meeting with deputy prime minister and foreign minister at which I specifically raised the fact that Nepal is now the only country in Asia that has not yet ratified the BWC (Biological Weapons Convention). They are receptive to investigating further and have provisionally indicated that there appear to be no substantive objections to this - it is only for reasons of lack of political priority that it has not taken place. I have also shared with PGA the correspondence on the BWC (Biological Weapons Convention) and ATT that I have had with the Deputy Prime Minister. I was also pleased to receive a draft Bill to move forward with BWC (Biological Weapons Convention) ratification via PGA from VERTIC which I will study closely with my colleagues in the parliament.

We PGA group of Nepal are sincerely committed to determine the appropriate strategies as regular persuasion, civil society and media mobilization, bringing parliamentarians in common understanding to go forward in the way of ratification of Biological Weapons Convention.

I am delighted to hear from Peter that PGA will be hosting a Regional Workshop in Kathmandu. This will be a wonderful opportunity to get the government to focus - and hopefully take action on our many different areas of concern.

I look forward to PGA's Workshop in Kathmandu in April next year which I hope will serve as a very useful catalyst to move the ratification process further not just for the ATT and BWC (Biological Weapons Convention), but also, hopefully, an opportunity to highlight once again why Nepal has nothing to fear -and everything to gain - from joining the Rome Statute of the ICC.

Thank you very much