Mr. President,

Our delegation supports the statement made by the distinguished delegation of Brazil, on behalf of Mercosur and Associated States.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is one of the issues that, in recent years, has generated particular attention in the international community, given the negative impact that this illegal activity has on States, especially in those affected by internal conflict.

Hence the need for concerted efforts based on international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate this illicit activity, bearing in mind the respect for the rules and principles of international law and the primary responsibility of the State in implementing the respective measures to counter these crimes, based on the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in 2001.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its support for the Programme of Action (POA) as a political instrument of first order to channel the efforts of international cooperation and assistance needed against this illegal activity.

It was with a spirit of commitment that our delegation attended the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the Implementation of UNPOA, held last June. There the importance of international cooperation was once again emphasized, in order to effectively address this illegal activity, and in support of the public policies being implemented the respective governments.

We are convinced that strengthening the Programme of Action requires the support of the international community, to continue the efforts towards strengthening the cooperation between states, as complementary mechanisms
of national efforts. However, we reiterate our demand for the aforementioned cooperation to be granted without political conditions, and respecting the sovereign right of states to determine their own priorities and needs.

Also, our delegation highlights the importance that all States implement the International Instrument that enables States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons.

The negotiation and adoption of this instrument, as a legally binding commitment, will facilitate the identification of sources of production of illicit weapons and to determine, therefore, the source of these weapons, as well as the route and impact of illicit trafficking.

It is necessary to have marking controls of weapons, not only in the import systems but from the moment that these weapons are manufactured, through the establishment of automated records systems and promoting cooperation in the tracing of weapons in their illicit transfer.

In this sense, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela emphasizes that for the treatment of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the responsibility lies with the States where there are public and private manufacturers of these weapons. These states should establish strict controls to prevent these weapons from being diverted into the illicit trade.

The responsibility of the States where there are plants producing these weapons cannot be the same as those who are not producers. Therefore, in the treatment of this matter this difference should be taken into account, so as to not adopt unfair and unnecessary international measures to remedy the situation of trafficking.

Our country wishes to emphasize that munitions are an inseparable part of the problem of stockpiling, transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons and, therefore, the measures taken to control the use of these weapons are not enough if they do not also include ammunitions.

Mr. President,

Let me now refer to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade treaty.

Venezuela reaffirms its conviction that this process must necessarily be developed in a gradual, transparent, balanced and non-discriminatory manner. This issue must be examined in depth - and not in a hurry - as it has a direct impact on the security of States.

The spirit within which this instrument is to be developed cannot and should not prejudice the sovereign right of States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and retain conventional arms necessary to meet the needs of internal and external security, depending on the right to security and defense that protects each state.
Mr. President,

Finally, our Delegation wishes to reaffirm its full commitment to promoting a safer and more peaceful world, and affirms its respect for the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Thank you very much.