Thank you Mr Chair,

This month marks the tenth anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the cornerstone of international mandates with regard to the full and equal participation of women in peace and security initiatives.

We choose to speak about this theme in this forum because, in our view, it is a matter for the First Committee. Resolution 1325 is a UN Security Council Resolution and the Security Council has primary responsibility, under the UN Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security. This means that the Resolution itself is firmly located within the realm of First Committee.

We take the word ‘security’ as it is used in Resolution 1325 to apply to safety and wellbeing in conflict and peace. We include peace because the Resolution refers to ‘durable peace’, the ‘maintenance and promotion of peace and security’, and ‘conflict prevention’ in addition to active armed conflict.

Unsurprisingly small arms play a central role in armed conflict. Despite this obvious fact, discussions and action to deal with the presence and use of small arms often remain absent in discussions around peace and security or explicit links are never made. It is as if their presence is inevitable, somehow unavoidable and this prevents them from being recognised as facilitators of human rights violations, tools of intimidation, dominance and violence.

Although there is no specific reference to small arms in the text, small arms proliferation is an underlying threat to the successful implementation of the Resolution.

The goals of Resolution 1325 and small arms control are inherently connected. Both have the ultimate aim to reduce violence and ensure that a state does not return to conflict.

So even though Resolution 1325 does not explicitly mention small arms in the way for instance that it mentions landmines, this should not preclude us from addressing small arms control within all our thinking and actions under the Resolution.
The gendered nature of armed conflict and the use of small arms make it logical, and indeed imperative, that danger from guns must be included in any consideration of women’s security, and likewise any action to control small arms proliferation and use must consider and involve women.

Resolution 1325 urges UN Member States to implement actions to prevent violence against women in armed conflict. In accordance with this mandate, practical actions and policies on small arms should be developed to effectively minimise violence against women and allow women equal opportunities in post conflict settings.

Gender relations, as interactions of power underpinned by violence, are necessarily and unavoidably (re)shaped by weapons. There is no avoiding the fact that the pursuit of policies and actions on ‘women, peace and security’ has to address the politics of small arms.

We can put it very simply: the removal of small arms is a first step towards reducing and ultimately preventing violence against women. Further small arms control measures enable the maintenance and promotion of a sustainable peace. Controls for legal and illicit weapons are an essential element of armed violence prevention and reduce the risk of a return to conflict.

As the Resolution provides a framework for a comprehensive approach for conflict management and violence prevention, there is increasing demand for specific policies and plans of action. At least 22 countries have created National Action Plans which contain guidelines and strategies for the inclusion of women’s concerns in policies and programmes related to peace and security.

Some of these countries have taken a lead in recognising small arms within their Plans, as a matter that needs to be addressed if women’s security is to be improved.

- The Plan of The Philippines contains a specific ‘action point’ on small arms which clearly recognises how significantly guns affect women’s lives and how seriously this theme needs to be researched, and subject to regulation and legislation.

- Belgium addresses the danger that the illicit arms trade represents for women and calls for responsibility to be taken at the international level to curb the flow of illegal weapons. It advocates a binding ‘international arms trade treaty’ and cooperation between states to reduce armed violence and promote human rights.

- Denmark gives useful input on the urgency of training women about small arms in the context of DDR programmes.
Liberia appreciates the contribution of local women's organisations towards monitoring illicit cross-border small arms flows.

Norway raises the need for a gender perspective in policies for managing the military, police and other security sector institutions, and for controlling the availability and use of small arms.

Uganda, the current President of the Security Council, recognises that small arms proliferation is a significant promoter of armed conflict and encourages regional mechanisms to combat it. This is useful in clarifying that the availability of weapons is not a mere accessory to violence, but plays a causal role.

Of course much more needs to be done but further progress to harmonise and synergise work on Resolution 1325 and small arms control is definitely within reach.

We call upon States and civil society alike to consolidate this limited progress through making clearer links between the Resolution and the next phase of the UN small arms control process, particularly the Review Conference on the Programme of Action in 2012, and work towards an Arms Trade Treaty.

We also call upon the Security Council to consider, and make reference to, small arms control during tomorrow's Open Debate on women, peace and security, and subsequent Resolutions.