Mr. Chair,

I wish to speak today on a subject of importance to my government: the issue of gender and disarmament.

It is important for UN member states to understand more fully that arms proliferation and armed violence can affect people differently based on their gender.

Today, most conflicts are fought with small arms and light weapons, and armed state and non-state actors often use small arms to perpetrate or threaten gender-based violence. Small arms are also durable goods. They can exacerbate social and political inequalities for decades, long after a conflict has ended.

Small arms inflict most direct casualties on men and boys, and in many cultures weapon's possession is tied to narratives of masculinity. At the same time, these weapons facilitate and perpetuate violence against women and girls, including acts of sexual violence and domestic abuse. Furthermore, due to entrenched gender roles in many societies, women bear the primary responsibility of caring for survivors and indirect victims of small arms and light weapons. In such cases, the loss or incapacitation of spouses or other male family members can result in women facing persistent discrimination and hardship.

Women are not only victims of small arms and light weapons. In times of conflict, women play a variety of roles including community protectors, combatants, arms dealers, smugglers, and providers of support to armed actors. These roles should be recognized by fully including women in post conflict peace processes including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

Given these gender dimensions, and impacts on women’s human rights, we must strive to increase the meaningful inclusion of women as full partners in security, disarmament and arms control discussions, in relevant international organizations, in the tracking and analysis of illicit trafficking networks and trends, in all aspects of the destruction of small arms and light weapons, as well as in international negotiations and peace processes.

The international community has made some progress in recognising gender perspectives in relevant legal and normative frameworks including through the UN Security Council, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Arms Trade Treaty. We hope this trend will continue.

The fact that gender issues were included in the Arms Trade Treaty is a clear sign of the power of advocacy in bringing these issues to the fore. For our part, Canada will implement a particularly high standard for Article 7.4 on gender-based violence, and violence against women and children, as we will
assess the risks related to such violence for a broader set of exports than those defined within the treaty.

Together, we must work to ensure that a gender analysis is brought to all our work, and that we fully implement the legal and normative frameworks on gender-sensitive non-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament.

Thank you.