Mr. Chairman,

At the outset let me congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your elections to steer the work of this important Committee. I want to assure you of my delegation’s full support in the conduct of our business.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statements made by the distinguished representative of Indonesia and the distinguished representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned movement and Africa Group respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

Eritrea firmly believes that international peace and security could only be guaranteed through stable and inclusive global economic and social development as well as the full respect for the UN Charter, International Law and Treaty obligations. Peace and security is a shared global responsibility, and no country alone can secure its borders from all forms of threats. Stronger multilaterally negotiated, transparent, comprehensive and non-discriminatory instruments and international cooperation are crucial to the effective and long term results in the Regional and International security and disarmament objectives. In this regard, Eritrea reiterates its
commitment to the work of Disarmament and International Security, as disarmament can only be achieved on a multilateral basis.

Mr. Chairman,

Nearly many of the tribulations facing our world today are directly or indirectly linked to the widespread availability of illicit small arms and light weapons and their ammunition across all countries and regions. Correspondingly, the negative impact on people living under conflict or areas experiencing pervasive crimes cannot be overemphasized. The major impact of illicit small arms and light weapons proliferation is felt in the developing countries, particularly in countries where state control is weak or non-existent. And we continue to note with serious concern that terrorist groups and criminal networks taking advantage of these security gaps. In this connection, we must stand against steps or actions that undermine the security and stability of countries. Our actions must be guided by the respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of states as well as state's right to self defense. These are principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

Mr. Chairman,

Eritrea wishes to reiterate that the main challenge regarding SALWs is not related to illicit use of arms by civilians or non-state actors but rather with the existence of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) from several decades of wars in Eritrea, including World War II. Local studies estimate that over 1.5 million mines were laid throughout the country during these periods. Only during the ten year period that followed Eritrea's official independence in 1993, a total of 700 tons of explosive remnants of war were disposed and destroyed. Eritrea as a nation that has recently emerged from more than thirty years of war for independence as well as for the respect of Sovereign National Territory is among several countries that experienced the horrors of war and in this regard, it attaches great importance to the Mine Ban Treaty and to its full implementation.
Mr. Chairman,

The proliferation and misuse of small arms is complex and multifaceted phenomenon that transcends political boundaries, and requires regional and international solution. As such, the Government of the State of Eritrea is carrying out its obligations consistent with its commitments under the Nairobi Declaration (2000) and Nairobi Protocol (2004). These instruments are based on the principles enshrined in the UN Program of Action and other relevant international mechanisms. Currently, the Government of the State of Eritrea is working on a National Action Plan on Small Arms and Light Weapons which takes into account the Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 of the Regional Center on Small Arms (RECSA).

Mr. Chairman,

Eritrea is deeply concerned by the lack of meaningful progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. Recently we have been reminded how dangerous nuclear weapons could be. They continue to pose the greatest danger to humankind and to the survival of civilization. Eritrea believes the only guarantee humanity has against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, is through the total and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons. Eritrea firmly believes that legally binding negative assurance, establishment of nuclear free zones as well as the universalization and early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) are critical steps towards general and complete nuclear disarmament. Eritrea attaches high importance to the role played by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in maintaining international peace and security and reiterates its support for all the three pillars of the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me seize this opportunity to stress that weapons only fuel insecurity and disarmament is the only viable tool for a secure planet that is home to all humankind.