Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to wish you success in your work and to ratify our willingness to constructively collaborate in the discussions that we will have in the coming days.

The Cuban delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate that it is becoming increasingly necessary to preserve multilateralism in international affairs, based on a strict observance of the principles of International Law and the Charter of the United Nations.

In today's unipolar world, military expenses continue to increase and hegemony, unilateralism, -direct or covered- interventionism, insecurity for the weakest countries, the attempt to validate the doctrine of preemptive use of force and even the use of war as an instrument of foreign policy become more evident.

Despite the severe economic crisis affecting the world, and whose worse effects are suffered in the developing countries, the figures of globally military expenses are of serious concern. In 2013 they amounted to 1.75 trillion dollars, of which a single country accounts for almost half of.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba gives a high priority to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, due to the major contribution to the development of the rules of International Humanitarian Law, at the same time that the legitimate security interests of its States Parties are preserved. This balance has been a basic pillar for the proper functioning of the Convention and the attention to the concerns of the international community in the field of certain conventional weapons.

Our country actively participates in the work of the Convention and ensures a strict compliance with the commitments made under this international legal regime, including those annexed Protocols of which we are part.
Cuba is a State Party to all the Additional Protocols to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, with the single exception of the Amended Protocol II, which shows the strong commitment of our country to multilateralism and international treaties on disarmament and arms control that have been multilaterally negotiated.

Mr. Chairman,

Much remains to be done to achieve truly effective solutions for peace and international security. The Non-Aligned Movement has warned on several occasions about the imbalance between industrialized countries and developing countries in terms of production, possession and trade of conventional weapons. It is important, as it has been highlighted, that industrialized countries significantly reduce the production and trade of such weapons looking to promote peace and international and regional security.

On the other hand, the noticeable imbalance in the priority given in international fora to certain categories of conventional weapons it is worrisome. We do not support the selective and double standard position of some countries advocating for limiting certain types of weapons, such as small arms and light weapons, while they manufacture and use increasingly sophisticated new conventional weaponry of significantly more devastating effects.

Cuba condemns targeting Palestinian civilians with these deadly weapons. Reports from human rights organizations and from physicians on the ground strongly suggest that Israel occupation forces deployed unconventional and internationally prohibited weapons which are designed to cause maximum damage to civilian population. In 2009 Israel massively used whit phosphor in targeting civilians and in the last aggression it used DIME (Dense Inert Metal Explosives) weapons in violation of the first protocol of the CCW.

Cuba fully acknowledges the importance of disarmament and arms control in the field of conventional weapons, particularly in terms of the aforementioned weapons of high destructive power. At the same time, we emphasize that nuclear disarmament is, and must remain as the top priority in the field of disarmament. There will be no peace and security in the world until the total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons be reached.

Mr. Chairman,

As a State Party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Cuba fully shares the legitimate humanitarian concerns associated with the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of Mines other than Anti-Personnel Mines. At the same time, any measure to solve this concern should take into account the legitimate right of peoples to defend themselves and protect their territories from aggression. In this regard, Cuba has maintained a constructive attitude throughout the debates in this Convention and has submitted specific proposals aiming at providing another approach to the debates so that the interests of all States Parties be taken into account.
It is well known that Cuba has been subjected for five decades to a policy of continuous hostility and aggression by the military superpower. Consequently, it not possible for our country to renounce the use of Anti-Personnel Mines for the preservation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with the right to legitimate self-defense recognized in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the topics most followed by the members of this Convention is that of autonomous weapons. In this regard, Cuba has serious doubts about the compliance and observance of the rules and principles of International Law with the use of lethal autonomous weapon systems. The use of this weaponry could not guarantee the distinction between civilians and combatants, or assessing the proportionality and precautions set by International Humanitarian Law as it could neither guarantee an effective assessment of the responsibility of States for illegal international acts, nor being accountable to violations of International Law.

Cuba believes we should work towards achieving a legally binding agreement under the framework of the United Nations and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons referring to the banning of autonomous weapon.

Without denying the importance of the freedom of scientific research, we emphasize the need to ban autonomous weapons before they began to be used. Now is the best time to address these concerns, as there is a collective opportunity to pause and proactively address the risks arising from the use of lethal autonomous robots.

The substantial human and financial resources devoted to the research and development of autonomous weapons cannot be overlooked. These resources should be used to the benefit of humanity and its struggle for the eradication of poverty and the achievement of a sustainable development. Due to the high cost of this modern technology only developed countries can afford it. With the use of autonomous lethal weapons, the asymmetry between rich and poor countries would be increasingly marked. The tactical benefits arising from the use of autonomous lethal weapons can help the NWS to stop considering the armed conflict as a last resort measure. This would increase in international conflicts and, hence, the victims.

Moreover, Cuba is concerned about the use of semi-autonomous military technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicles, which cause a huge number of civilian casualties, so the use of drones should not be excluded from the analysis.

Another side of this topic is the fact that even when these weapons are used for peaceful and humanitarian purposes such as rescue operations, the recipient State must give its previous consent, so that under any circumstances, by their use, the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of States will not be violated.
Cuba believes that work must be done in multilateral organizations in order to achieve a legally binding instrument in the framework of the United Nations or as an additional protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, in relation to drones for military purposes.

It is important that the international fora continue paying attention to these issues, given the humanitarian harm and devastating effects on the environment and for all humanity that the use of autonomous weapon systems and drones can cause.

Mr. Chairman,

We must work hard at the meeting that begins today. Cuba considers that it is the responsibility of all States Parties to ensure that any decision made in relation to the implementation of the Convention and its annexed Protocols, be within the mechanism we have already established in this context and that be flexible enough to give an opportunity to all Parties to meet their concerns, in the broadest spirit of transparency and multilateralism.

On the other hand, it is essential that the meetings held under the Convention and its Protocols have adequate funding as well as the necessary documentation and enough call time to engage developing countries.

We will punctually state other considerations on the rest of the points to be discussed at the Conference during the work of the coming days.

I reaffirm that our delegation will continue to work towards the achievement of a successful meeting, in order to continue the implementation of the Convention and its annexed Protocols and to find common ways to achieve concrete results and the necessary consensus.

Thank you very much.