Madame Chairperson,

1. Let me begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the chair of the Second Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. I am confident that your leadership with your experience in the field of disarmament, will lead our discussion to success. In particular, my delegation would like to thank you for your ‘zero-draft’ papers. We believe that these papers are overall balanced and indicative, and will serve as a good basis for our negotiations.

2. The illicit trade and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons poses a great threat to international peace and security. It is the main cause of death and poverty in many places around the globe, and its lingering effects on socio-economic development and reconstruction are undeniable. At the third and fourth Biennial Meeting of States and at the first Meeting of Governmental Experts last year, we committed ourselves to continue fighting the scourge caused by the illicit trade of SALWs. Today, my delegation views this Second Review Conference as a fresh opportunity to assess past achievements, strengthening implementation and enhance effectiveness to this end. The Republic of Korea is committed to strengthen implementation of the Programme and looks forward to working closely with you and all Member States to make this Conference a success.

3. Since the adoption of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, multifaceted efforts and tangible progress to combat, prevent and eradicate the illicit trade of SALWs have been made. Many governments, including ours, have made efforts to take concrete measures to fulfill the mandate enshrined in the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels. International, regional and non-governmental organizations have also been actively involved, and their numerous noteworthy contributions to enhancing implementation cannot be ignored.
4. However, despite remarkable progress in our efforts to curb the illicit trade of SALWs, we should not disregard the reality that such arms still cause heavy casualties and suffering worldwide. More alarmingly, damage assessment in terms of death tolls is only the tip of the iceberg in calculating the broader and long-term socio-economic consequences of illicit arms in affected countries. In light of this disheartening reality, we should not be complacent about what has been achieved so far, but rather reaffirm our determination to step up our efforts to fight the plague that is the illicit trade of SALWs.

Madame Chairperson,

5. In this regard, I would like to highlight some points to which we attach particular importance. We will reserve our detailed positions on specific issues for a later stage in our deliberations.

6. First, recognizing the vital importance of international cooperation in effectively implementing the PoA and the ITI, my delegation believes that States bear the primary responsibility to address and solve the problems associated with the illicit trade of SALWs. As the producers, exporters and importers of such arms, States should make their best efforts to ensure that all aspects involved in the management of their conventional arms, namely marking, tracing and record-keeping, are in strict adherence to the provisions set out in the PoA and the ITI.

7. Second, we note the importance of the ongoing discussions on the Arms Trade Treaty, a legal instrument to regulate the international transfers of conventional arms. Although our negotiations last month failed to bear fruit, our discussions have led to constructive ideas on tackling the problems caused by the unhindered proliferation of arms. We believe that in this Conference, as well as in other related fora, the international community should explore the possible synergies and linkages between the ATT and PoA.

8. Third, adequate attention is needed to address the issue of illicit brokering activities, in relation to tackling the illicit trade of arms. Illicit brokering is an important contributory factor to the proliferation of SALWs, as it facilitates and aggravates the illicit trade of conventional arms, by linking illegitimate suppliers to potential buyers. To raise awareness of the threat posed by illicit brokering and to contribute to the international efforts to address this issue, the Republic of Korea co-authored with Australia the biennial General Assembly resolution on “Preventing and Combating Illicit Brokering Activities” at the 63rd UNGA and the 65th UNGA. My delegation would like to expect the continued support of all Member States for this resolution, which is planned to be presented at the 67th General Assembly.

Madame Chairperson,

9. In conclusion, in order to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade of SALWs, nothing is more important than the faithful and effective implementation of the PoA and the ITI by Member States. States, as producers, exporters, and importers of SALWs, bear the primary responsibility for strengthening control over the transfers of such arms. Pledging again our strong commitment to the concerted efforts of the international community, I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and active participation in this Conference.

Thank you.