President,

Let me express my delegations appreciation with the way you have guided the preparatory process.

Eleven years ago the world community agreed on a Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. This Programme of Action was a hard won compromise. A number of UN member states, including Norway, had far higher ambitions than what was produced in the summer of 2001. Our preference was, and still is, that the PoA and the subsequent International Instrument on Tracing and Marking should have been legally binding instruments. Yet, the PoA provided us with a framework and arena to move forward in combatting the harmful effects of illicit flows of small arms and light weapons.

There can be no doubt that the Programme of Action has produced important results. Let me mention a few: There has been a broader recognition by member states of the need to put in place and enforce much needed legislation to combat illicit SALW. The PoA has facilitated technical cooperation and fostered enhanced regional cooperation. It is encouraging that a large majority have reported to the UN Secretariat on their follow-up actions. Through the PoA we have negotiated and agreed on an international instrument on tracing and marking. It is also clear that PoA has led to enhanced awareness of the need for stockpile management and not least disarmament and stockpile destruction in countries emerging from conflicts.

At the same time it is evident that the implementation of the PoA has been, at best, uneven. There is no doubt that the quality and content of the various national reports varies. The same can be said of legislative actions and enforcement measures at national level. While we have developed an ITI, too many countries do not mark weapons at the time of manufacture or when importing. While export control measures have been improved in several member states, there remains a gap in dealing with transit. More fundamentally, far too many member states have not adopted measures to combat illicit brokering.

(Check against delivery)
While full implementation of the provisions contained in the PoA is of greatest importance, we should not shy away from asking ourselves whether the PoA has served its most fundamental humanitarian purpose. Has the PoA proven to be an adequate instrument in preventing and addressing armed violence? It is key to look at the effects of the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons. We need to understand how the use of small arms and light weapons impacts on people, across gender and age, communities and states. This is the reason why Norway supports initiatives aiming to ensure better documentation of the casualties from armed violence, and stronger monitoring, measuring and analysis of armed violence. My delegation also believes that more should be done in the area of rights of victims of armed violence. We need to continue to build on the rights-based approach to victim assistance already established by the Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

Ideally the PoA should have been a stronger and more robust instrument and it should have been implemented more efficiently. We have to conclude that the PoA has not yet reached its full potential.

From a Norwegian perspective we need to do more in the following areas:

- We need to advance on combatting illicit brokering.
- There is unfinished business in the fields of end user certificates and border controls.
- We cannot deal with the menace posed by illicit arm flows without also fully addressing the question of ammunition.
- We must strengthen the gender dimension, and include gender and age aggregated data in the evidence that is the basis of the implementation of PoA.
- We must recognise the victims of armed violence and address victims’ assistance in a rights-based manner.

My delegation recognizes that these matters need further exploration and extensive intergovernmental deliberations. It is therefore importance that the Review Conference can agree on a forward looking programme of work, which will enable us to fully implement the provisions of the PoA and also explore how we can ensure that this instrument becomes more relevant in the years to come.

It goes without saying that we must engage civil society in the process. Norway values the views and recommendation by the humanitarian NGOs, which have a strong record of and experience from field based work on SALW and armed violence and of assisting the many victims of armed violence.

To conclude, the whole purpose of the PoA is about enhancing human security. This humanitarian imperative must be in the forefront during our deliberations at this Conference.