UK Statement
Fifth Biennial Meeting of States on the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in all its Aspects

Stockpile management, including physical security measures of small arms and light weapons
Mr Chairman, the UK remains fully committed to the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We stand ready to work with partners to ensure that a forward looking, action oriented outcome document can be secured. We believe the UNPoA remains as important today as it was when agreed in 2001.

The misuse of SALW, fuelled by their illicit trade, is responsible for more human rights violations and other heinous crimes than any other weapon. Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children’s lives are affected every year as a result of small arms and light weapons traded illicitly. However, little attention is devoted to small arms and light weapons despite the fact they are being used truly as ‘weapons of daily destruction.’ The detrimental effect this has on development and poverty needs to be countered and turned to positive effect towards building peaceful and stable societies. This biennial meeting of States gives us an opportunity to contribute to this end, to continue and further the excellent work here to stop the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

The UK is grateful for colleagues’ views on stockpile management, including physical security measures of small arms and light weapons. We place great priority on the work of assisting States in the removal or destruction of surplus small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. We do this by collecting and destroying small arms and light weapons during disarmament and reintegration processes, encouraging safe storage and stockpile management and encouraging the surrender of surplus SALW or illicit weapons held by civilians.
As well as assisting affected states and societies in stockpile management activity, the UK destroyed nearly 2000 of our own surplus small arms and light weapons last year. We also seized over 400 small arms and light weapons that were moving across the UK border without the required licence or authorisation.

The UK’s strict internal rules and procedures govern the management and security of stockpiles by military and police forces and I can confirm that these are fully compliant with transport, aviation, security and health and safety legislation.

One area where the UK is attempting to tackle the issue of physical security and stockpile management is in Libya, which remains not only a priority for ourselves and our Libyan colleagues, but across the wider international community as well. The vast, unsecured stockpiles of Qadhafi-era conventional arms and ammunition pose a grave threat to peace, security and stability in the region. The UK is working closely with international partners, including the UN, to provide wideranging support to Libya, including providing a senior disarmament advisor working with the Libyans and the UN. The UK is planning to commit over £20 million to assist Libya on arms and ammunition management over the next three years. We are committed to working further with our international partners to ensure our efforts match the scale of the problem and that the issue is addressed.

Finally, we have also supported the Multinational Small arms and Ammunition Group (MSAG) to deliver Train the Trainer (T3) programmes in Africa focused on physical security and stockpile management. This programme initially looked at training executive level participants in an overview of PSSM issues. It has now transitioned
into a T3 focused programme to develop a sustainable cadre of African PSSM instructors, who are able to build on established gains and deliver effective PSSM training.

The UK remains fully committed and places great priority on assisting States in the effective management of their small arms and light weapons and their ammunition and also where possible, the destruction of surplus stocks.