Mr President,

I thank you for this opportunity to outline some of Sweden’s thoughts on the outcomes under agenda item 6.

The Statement yesterday by the representative of the European Union expressed the collective views of all 28 EU Member States including Sweden, so I will confine myself to highlighting some issues.

The UN Program of Action is the only truly universal instrument in the area of SALW control, and it has grown in importance as armed conflicts have grown in number and severity, paralleled by a similar growth of armed violence in non-conflict situations.

We think it is important that the Biannual Meeting of States Parties reflects in its outcomes both the serious challenges that many UN Member States face today and the actions that they are taking to counter the destructive effects of illicit small arms proliferation.

Because of the role that small arms play in undermining stability and economic development, in exacerbating the effects of armed conflict and in underpinning the unprecedented growth of armed violence in many parts of the world, Sweden feels it is important for the PoA to reflect that ammunition is a key component of the challenge that many Member States are facing.

A first line of defence is better stockpile management and record-keeping. This holds the promise of significantly lessening diversion of small arms and ammunition to illicit markets, but it also addresses the issue of physical security, where ammunition once again plays a major role. The fact that much remains to be done in this area should be reflected in the outcomes of this meeting, along with the need for continued funding to effectively move forward on this task.

Pursuing a feminist foreign policy, Sweden would also like this Biannual Meeting to clearly reflect a gender perspective in the implementation of PoA. Women continue to be a vast untapped resource, in the PoA as in other areas of human endeavour. They remain underrepresented in the planning, creation and implementation of national and international measures to control SALW, and encouragement should be given to improving this state of affairs. Recognition of the gendered nature of armed violence and conflict is also important.
Our outcomes should reflect the need to intensify efforts to prevent small arms from being used to commit acts of sexual and gender based violence. Priority should be given to funding projects and programmes that explicitly take gender-related aspects into account. In particular, we should stress the need for the collection of gender-disaggregated data, and research on the different impact of armed violence on women and men, girls and boys.

Finally, Mr President, Sweden feels it is important for this meeting to acknowledge that the PoA is not the only instrument or process in this area. There are a number of other international and regional instruments or processes that all, in their own way, address the problem of unregulated flows of SALW and their negative effects. The fact that the PoA and other efforts can be mutually reinforcing should be recognized by this meeting. This does not represent an endorsement of other processes or imply any obligation to engage in them. It is a statement of fact. And each UN Member State remains free to draw its own conclusions as to whether it is in its national interest to engage in these other processes or not.

Mr President,

As we stated already yesterday, BMS6 is not about opening up, or renegotiating the UN PoA. That is the task of the planned RevCon in two years time. Our task is to reflect - without prejudice to the shape of the PoA itself - developments in the PoA field over the past few years and the efforts different UN Member States are undertaking within the ambit of this instrument, including in new directions made possible by developments in the international arena. That is our contribution to ensuring that the UN Programme of Action lives up to its full potential and becomes an even more effective instrument in preventing the human suffering caused by armed violence worldwide.

In addition to these points, Sweden would like to support the points made just now by the distinguished representative of Finland on the importance of civil society and industry as partners in this area, and the role of UNSCAR as a source of funding for PoA-related activities.

Thank You