Thank you, Madame President. Congratulations on your appointment; you and your team have Canada’s full support. Your leadership, transparency and dedication have been instrumental to this very successful Review Conference.

I would also like to congratulate you on your appointment as First Committee Chair. Your commitment to these issues is unwavering and we are very pleased to see you take on this important role.

Madame President, Conventional weapons – including small arms and light weapons – remain the weapon of choice for most conflicts globally and inflict a significant number of casualties every year. Canada has been a supporter of the implementation of the Programme of Action since its origins.

We recognize the contribution of this important instrument in addressing, preventing, combating, and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We remain active at all levels and in many fora to address this problem, including in the Arms Trade Treaty, among others. And we are committed to addressing it at home, as well.

Bill C-21 became law in Canada in December of last year and represents the most significant changes to Canadian gun control legislation in more than 40 years. The Bill imposes tougher penalties for firearms trafficking, smuggling, illegal manufacturing, and related offences. It also created new tools and strengthened existing ones available to law enforcement to investigate firearms-related offences.

Comme beaucoup d’entre vous, nous sommes témoins des défis posés par la fabrication artisanale d’armes à feu. Avec le projet de loi C-21, le Canada a adopté une série de mesures concrètes pour aider à résoudre ce problème, y compris la criminalisation de la fabrication non autorisée d’armes à feu. Nous nous réjouissons de la création d’un groupe d’experts techniques à composition non limitée chargé d’examiner l’évolution de la fabrication, de la technologie et de la conception des armes légères et de petit calibre. Il y a beaucoup de travail à faire dans ce
domaine; vous pouvez compter sur notre volonté de partager nos propres expériences et d'apprendre des vôtres.

Le Canada a aussi établi un partenariat solide avec les États-Unis, notre voisin, afin d'identifier les sources et de perturber le trafic de pièces d'armes à feu utilisées pour fabriquer des armes à feu de fabrication privée. Nos organismes d'application de la loi échangent volontiers de l'information sur les armes à feu de fabrication artisanale qui ont été retrouvées dans nos collectivités et signalent les plans de fabrication qui sont disponibles en ligne avec des partenaires internationaux, notamment INTERPOL.

Le Canada réitère son engagement à lutter contre le trafic illicite, le détournement et la prolifération des armes légères et de petit calibre par l'entremise de ses programmes d'aide internationale. Nous avons déboursé plus de 11 millions de dollars depuis 2015 pour des projets liés au trafic d'armes à feu, par l'entremise du Programme d'aide au renforcement des capacités de lutte contre la criminalité. Ces investissements ont contribué à renforcer la capacité des États bénéficiaires à lutter contre le trafic d'armes à feu. À titre d'exemple, notre soutien au Centre régional des Nations Unies pour la paix, le désarmement et le développement en Amérique latine et dans les Caraïbes augmentera les possibilités de formation pour les femmes des Caraïbes et d'Amérique centrale afin de lutter contre le trafic illicite d'armes légères dans la région.

Madame President, if I may add, in Haiti, where heavily armed gangs control 80% of Port-au-Prince with significant impacts for the Haitian population, we are working with UNODC and UNLIREC to build the capacity of Haitian authorities to stem the flow of SALW and ammunition to the gangs as well as to secure stockpiles. I might also add that in our meeting today of the Children in Armed Conflict, we have to recognize that civilians, women and children are the most vulnerable to SALW trade.

Madame President,

Being attuned to gender considerations will strengthen decision-making processes related to arms control. This is why we promote the integration of gender perspectives into every disarmament forum, including this one. To this end, we are pleased to have co-sponsored a gender working paper written by UNIDIR and the Small Arms Survey, along with Chile, the
United Kingdom, Thailand, Germany, and Ireland. This working paper illustrates Canada’s commitment to aligning the priority of gender equality with the goal of reducing arms. This commitment is enhanced by consulting with civil society, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and members of the LGBTQI+ community, and advocating for a feminist and intersectional approach to disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control that leaves no one behind. I want to make clear this is not some kind of politically correct or woke enterprise on anyone’s part. It stems from a realization that unless we include everyone in this process of dealing with the expansion of small arms, we will not succeed.

We reiterate the recommendations from the working paper to: improve data collection on all forms of violence disaggregated by gender, sex, and whether or not a small arm was used and if so, how it was acquired; identify synergies between other agendas and conventions, such as the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda; and, prioritize the meaningful inclusion, participation, and engagement of marginalized groups in decision-making and implementation of the PoA. Canada is committed to also adopting this approach for the Outcome Document of this Review Conference.

Canada is ready to engage and collaborate with other delegations to achieve a meaningful consensus-based outcome this week, this week. We must achieve critical success on this issue – human lives depend on it.

Thank you.