The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons remains a major challenge to security and development in many regions of the world. Easy access to small arms makes violence more lethal and conflict more protracted. The Millennium Development goals are unattainable in such an environment. We are pleased that the Summit Outcome Document reflects this understanding.

The UN Programme of Action remains the main international framework for dealing with the challenge of small arms and light weapons. The recent Biennial Meeting of States reflect a slow, but steady progress in its implementation. We welcome the agreement on a politically binding instrument on marking and tracing in June this year. We would, however, have preferred a legally binding instrument. The General Assembly must now adopt the proposed instrument and should also give directions on how to deal with the question of ammunition.

The next step in implementing the Programme of Action is to enhance international co-operation on brokering. Norway has, together with the Netherlands, supported a number of regional and international activities to promote better understanding of the brokering issue.

We believe there is already a large degree of international consensus on the need for brokering controls, and on the means to be employed. Since 2001 six regional and multilateral agreements concerning arms brokering covering some 120 states, have been developed.

The time is ripe to build on this consensus. We urge all Member States to agree at this General Assembly on the mandate for a Governmental Group of Experts, to look into ways of enhancing international co-operation on combating illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons. The mandate should state that The Group of Experts should look into the feasibility of a legally binding instrument on brokering. We believe the Group of Experts should start its work as early as possible in 2006.

The next milestone is the conference to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action in 2006. It would be appropriate for
this General Assembly to give some direction to the preparations for the Review Conference, by agreeing on some priorities for the next five-year phase.

We should look for ways to increase the security environment for the individual. A key motivation for acquiring small arms and light weapons is a sense of insecurity. Governments, law enforcement agencies and civil society have all crucial roles to play to enhance security at the level of the individual.

We must address problems related to misuse of small arms and light weapons by state agencies and non-state actors alike.

Civilian ownership remains a vital issue. Most illegal weapons originate from legally acquired weapons, which are later diverted.

The issue of brokering – already on the table - is central in this regard. It needs to be accompanied by progress on developing end-user certificates for the trade in small arms and light weapons.

Another relevant issue is the gender dimension, and in particular the way women are effected by the misuse of small arms. Assistance to victims and their families is also important in this regard.

At the same time we must avoid overloading the agenda for the Review Conference, and focus on those issues we consider the most important, and where we believe real progress can be made.

We support efforts to secure agreement on a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty covering all trade in conventional weapons. This effort should be seen as complementary to and not alternative to the efforts to agree on a legally binding instrument on illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway welcomes all ongoing efforts to prevent the illicit production, transfer and unauthorized access to Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADs), their components and related use instructions materials. Recognizing that this poses a threat to civil aviation, peacekeeping, crisis management and global security, Norway encourages the development of effective controls in this area, including the safe and effective
management of stockpiles of such weapons. We fully support the Australian draft resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

Norway welcomes the efforts by Sweden to obtain support by the General Assembly for the work done in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). This convention is a crucial instrument in mitigating the humanitarian impact of certain weapons.

Over the past years there has indeed been progress within the CCW. We have agreed on a legally binding protocol on the Explosive Remnants of War. We hope that this protocol will enter into force as soon as possible.

Our next task is to agree on preventive measures in order to mitigate human sufferings caused by the use of sub-munitions. Our efforts should be guided by our obligations to International Humanitarian Law. We hope to make substantial progress later on this fall.

We are, however, still struggling to move forward on reaching agreement on a mandate to negotiate a new protocol dealing with the adverse humanitarian consequences of anti-vehicle mines.

We also need to come to agreement on measures to ensure full compliance with CCW-obligations. We have been deliberating this subject for years. Now, it is time to make the necessary compromises in order to reach a credible mechanism.

Mr. Chairman,

The Mine Ban Treaty illustrates that governments and civil society can work successfully together to overcome a severe humanitarian challenge.

The Treaty has set a norm against the use of anti-personnel mines. The Treaty has contributed in saving thousands of lives. The Treaty has paved the way for more resources and co-operation for mine-clearance and assistance to mine victims.

The Mine Ban Treaty has achieved impressive results, but much remains to be done. We must maintain our political and financial commitment to this Treaty.