Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time Finland takes the floor, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair. You and your bureau can rely on our cooperation and support.

Finland fully associates itself with the statement made by France on behalf of the European Union.

Finland considers the outcome document of the third biennial meeting of states (BMS) as a successful step forward in aiming at more effective implementation of the UN programme of action on small arms and light weapons in order to combat uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of SALW. We recognize the excellent manner in which Ambassador Cekuolis conducted the work in July in the spirit of co-operation. The outcome document gives us many concrete ways to enhance co-operation and to take our work forward. We consider it important that the work continues also in between the BMS-meetings. The recommendations by the 2007 Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering should also now be implemented on all levels including national as well as regional levels.

As we believe that cooperation at regional level is crucially important, we have set small arms issues as one of the priority areas of our ongoing Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Emphasis is placed both on normative as well as project work.

We have also been pleased of the ratifications of the ECOWAS Convention on small arms which demonstrates a strong regional commitment to small arms issues. As a member of the ECOWAS advisory board on small arms, we continue to support the efforts by the ECOWAS on small arms issues and hope that the Convention will soon enter into force.

Finland welcomes the efforts of the international community to address the humanitarian concerns of the use of cluster munitions. The new Convention negotiated in Dublin is a remarkable milestone in developing international humanitarian law and it will constitute an important tool for addressing the challenges of victim assistance and clearance of cluster munition remnants in affected areas. We regard it important now that the (Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons) CCW will also achieve results that will further contribute to the humanitarian cause on the ground.

Mr. Chairman,

Finland has from the very beginning been a strong supporter of a legally binding comprehensive arms trade treaty. The overwhelming support for the ATT resolution in 2006 convinced us that there is political will for taking the issue forward. The Group of Governmental Experts was able to finish its work with a consensus report. We would also like to take this occasion to thank Ambassador Moritan for his professional work as
a chair of the GGE. Having been member of the GGE we consider the report as a promising step forward. However, further steps are needed.

A new ATT resolution that sets the framework for the future work is now necessary. Faced by the intolerable consequences of irresponsible arms transfer we need to make sure that the work on the ATT makes substantial progress. Finland is strongly engaged in the ATT process which should proceed effectively within the UN framework.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.