Mr. Chairman,

My country aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. Allow me to add few remarks in my national capacity.

Serbia is Party to most major international instruments in the conventional weapons domain and has taken extensive legislative, regulatory and practical measures at the national level for the implementation of the obligations it has assumed.

Serbia ratified the ATT in October 2014 and actively participated at the First Conference of States Parties to the ATT in Cancun in August this year. We think the Conference succeeded in creating the needed framework for reaching the objectives established under the ATT and we welcome its important substantial and operational decisions.

We continue to attach great importance to the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in All Its Aspects (PoA) and remains strongly committed to its full implementation as a matter of high priority.

A strategy on the SALW control, adopted by the Government of Serbia as a major accomplishment of its efforts to formulate a holistic approach towards SALW control on the basis of the best international practices, provides the framework for the activities of relevant governmental and non-governmental actors to prevent and combat unlawful production, possession and trade in SALW. Its overall goal is to establish a national system of effective control of SALW ensuring the reduction of weapons in illegal possession, as well as the number of abuses of legal weapons.

As for the arms export control, all the criteria of the EU Code of Conduct are incorporated in Serbia's new Law on the Export and Import of Arms and Military Equipment. Adopted by the Serbian National Assembly in October 2014, it is fully correspondent with the relevant EU and OSCE standards and, together with enhanced border and customs control measures, plays a pivotal role in strengthening surveillance and combating illicit arms trade. It is also an indispensable instrument for preventing a destabilizing accumulation of SALW and reducing the ability of unauthorized non-State actors to acquire exported arms in an illegal way. Another Draft law on the implementation of international restrictive measures is
currently undergoing the procedure in our National Parliament and we expect it will be adopted very soon.

In February of this year, the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted a new Law on Arms and Ammunition which shortly after entered into force and contributed to legalization of significant number of arms and ammunition in Serbia.

Mr. Chairman,

Serbia recognizes the important role of the international cooperation and assistance in the area of capacity building. There is no doubt that sharing relevant information, national experiences and lessons learned, as well as appropriate international financial, expert and technical assistance can vitally contribute to consolidating and strengthening institutional capacities and practices for the suppression and eradication of illicit trade in SALW.

Regional and sub-regional organizations and civil society can make a significant contribution in this regard as well, for example through developing model legislation, practical guidelines and coherent regional implementation standards, assisting States in the process of assessing their needs or conducting trainings, regional meetings and similar activities. In that context, let me mention that the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of the Small Arms and Light Weapons, the regional organization mandated by the United Nations Development Programme and the Regional Cooperation Council, has its headquarters in Belgrade. Its Western Balkans Arms Transfers Control Programme has contributed to a significant increase of transparency in arms transfers, as well as regional confidence building, knowledge transfer and information sharing between the states of our region.

Mr. Chairman,

Although we have witnessed some important and welcomed developments in the conventional arms control, much remains to be done if we are to address the challenges we face in a comprehensive and effective way. Serbia continues to support all the activities that the UN conducts in this field and also uses its current OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office to address these issues.

Thank you very much.