Chairperson,

Pakistan aligns itself with the NAM statement made under this cluster.

The destabilizing effects of conventional weapons on regional and sub-regional stability and their catastrophic humanitarian toll underscore the need for continued action aimed at controlling these weapons.

The history and politics of arms regulation dictate a comprehensive approach which takes into account priorities and security interests of all Member States. It is essential that the pursuit of elimination of nuclear weapons does not give way to the unworkable conventional imbalance that spawned the two World Wars.

The final document of SSOD-I provides clear direction in this regard: “Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out on the balanced reduction of forces and of conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the need of all states to protect their security”.

Chairperson,

There are several worrying trends on the conventional weapons horizon are emerging. The level and scale of global military expenditures tops the list.

The present expenditure on international trade in conventional arms has crossed the massive amount of US$ 1.7 trillion. Ironically, while the total budget of the United Nations is around 3 % of world’s military expenditure, around 33 times more is being spent on fueling and exacerbating conflicts than preventing it.
The reflection of the same troubling trend is mirrored at the regional level. South Asia is a sensitive region where one state’s military spending grossly and vastly out-shadows all others. It has every potential of fueling instability and jeopardizing the delicate regional balance.

We remain concerned over the growing transfers of conventional armaments especially in volatile regions that are inconsistent with the imperatives of maintaining peace, security and stability. The policy of dual standards towards South Asia, based on narrow strategic, political and commercial considerations, must be eschewed.

Pakistan, for its part, is committed to the establishment of strategic stability in South Asia, which includes an element of conventional force balance. It neither wants, nor is it engaged in an arms race in the region. Let me quote from my Prime Minister’s statement delivered at the General Assembly last month, “we cannot ignore our neighbor’s unprecedented arms build-up and will take whatever measures are necessary to maintain credible deterrence.”

Chairperson,

Without addressing the issue of conventional weapons in a comprehensive manner, the results of our efforts will be few and far between. The utility of a partial approach that separates motivations for arms production from the controls of their trade and transfers will be limited at best. As a result, these weapons will continue to fuel conflicts, destabilize states and societies, inflicting enormous pain and suffering to humanity.

Chairperson,

Pakistan has developed the necessary legislative, regulatory, enforcement and institutional mechanisms to address the range of issues relating to conventional arms including small arms and light weapons. An Inter-Ministerial Group addresses these issues in an integrated manner. Policy guidelines on the export of conventional arms are in place as also a national evaluation mechanism to
regulate trade in these arms. We are taking additional measures to strengthen the enforcement regime, which covers imports and licensing.

Pakistan welcomes the successful outcome of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action (BMS6) held earlier this year and looks forwards to the 3rd Review Conference (RevCon3) in 2018.

Pakistan voted in favour of the General Assembly resolution that adopted the Arms Trade Treaty. We consider the ATT as a first step towards regulating trade and transfer of conventional weapons and note its entry into force. Even as we continue our national review of the treaty, we believe that ATT’s success, effectiveness and universality will be assessed on its non-discriminatory implementation in particular its criteria and strict adherence by its State Parties to the treaty principles.

Chairperson,

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) has become an indispensible element of contemporary humanitarian, disarmament and arms control machinery, as well as a forum to consider how best to protect both civilians and soldiers from the effect of such weapons.

The success of this instrument lies in the delicate balance it seeks to maintain by minimizing human suffering without sacrificing the legitimate security interests of states.

CCW provides an ideal platform to deal with the subject of cluster munitions since it harmonizes the genuine humanitarian concerns with the security imperatives of states.

Moreover, for addressing the issue of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in a comprehensive and balanced manner, CCW provides the most appropriate forum.
Pakistan has been honored to preside over the Fifth Review Conference of the CCW scheduled for December 2016. We look to constructive engagement in the process by all States Parties, including through timely contributions.

I thank you, Chairperson.