Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time Latvia takes the floor we would like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the First Committee and assure you of the full cooperation of the Latvian delegation. Latvia fully subscribes to the statement by the European Union. I would like to make the following remarks in a national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

Latvia remains firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols. We regard CCW as an important forum to increase awareness of the existing challenges and to address emerging issues by gathering competent diplomatic, legal and military expertise. In this regard, we appreciate continued discussions on improvised explosive devices and lethal autonomous weapons systems. We hope that at The Fifth Review Conference in December this year we will be able to agree on the next steps to effectively take these discussions further.

Latvia supports efforts aimed at the universalization of the CCW and the annexed Protocols. In particular, Latvia, as President of several Annual Conferences of the Amended Protocol II, has urged the states which have not yet done so, to join the Amended Protocol II. We also call on full implementation of the all provisions of the Convention and its Protocols. Latvia shares the concerns of the international community regarding the alleged use of air-dropped incendiary weapons in civilian areas in Syria.

Mr. Chairman,

Latvia supports the universalization and full implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance of war pose a significant threat to civilians long after an armed conflict has ended. In the field of unexploded ordnance Latvia continues to share expertise and provide assistance to a number of countries. In 2002, with the support of Norway, Latvia established the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Training Center for disposal of unexploded ordnance within the National Armed Forces of Latvia. Since its opening, high level training and capacity building has been provided to multiple experts from various countries, especially focusing on countries in our neighbourhood region, such as Ukraine and Georgia. Latvian experts have participated in operations in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan with the aim of protecting civilians from post-
conflict suffering caused by unexploded and abandoned ordnance. Latvia is planning to continue these efforts also in the future.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community is showing increasing awareness of the widespread serious threats posed by the illicit and uncontrolled trade of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. In particular, Latvia would like to highlight the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty as it promotes transparency and accountability of conventional arms trade thus serving as an effective instrument for achieving responsible trade in arms. Latvia commends the successful outcome of the Second Conference of the States Parties to the ATT and welcomes the significant decisions adopted which include, inter alia the establishment of working groups on transparency and reporting, implementation and universalization. Adoption of these essential decisions as well as their thorough implementation by all states parties will further promote the aims of the ATT.

Latvia also reiterates its full support to the United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the International Tracing Instrument and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Mr. Chairman,

Latvia has a robust national export control system in force and it participates in the activities of international conventional arms export control regimes. We would like to note that Latvia continuously stands ready to provide assistance, mostly, through the EU outreach programs and by sharing its expertise and know-how in conventional arms export control.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Latvia’s full support and commitment among others to the aforementioned conventional weapons treaties and instruments given their role in contributing to stability and security at a regional and global level.

Thank you.