Mr. Chair,

Collectively, UN Member States are working to prevent conflict by better addressing its links to human rights and development. Humanitarian, security, and development work that is gender and diversity sensitive helps rebuild societies and enable sustainable peace.

Conventional arms represent the vast majority of weapons used in armed conflicts. Proliferation and unlawful use of these weapons can:
- fuel, intensify, and prolong conflict;
- lead to regional instability;
- contribute to violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence; and
- hinder development and exacerbate structural gender inequality.

It is critical that we universalize and implement the international laws and norms relevant to conventional weapons that we have agreed upon. We must also work to restrict or ban weapon systems prone to indiscriminate effects or which are excessively injurious.

Canada will soon join the Arms Trade Treaty. Legislation to permit accession was introduced in the Canadian parliament in April. Our law will meet all requirements of ATT – and in some areas, we will exceed its requirements.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the signature of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which was the culmination of the Ottawa Process and years of civil society engagement. For Canada, mine action is essential to the success of the Sustainable Development Goals, as it underpins peace and stabilization efforts, and the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In the past year, Canada contributed $17.5 million to mine action in Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Sri Lanka and Ukraine.

The Ottawa Convention’s 162 States Parties have committed not to use these debilitating weapons. We have destroyed more than 51 million mines, and the number of new mine victims has dropped significantly. However, we cannot rest. Considerable legacy contamination remains, and new contamination continues, including from improvised anti-personnel mines. We call on all States to renew their strong support for the Convention’s goal of an anti-personnel mine free world by 2025.

As a State Party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions we call on all States to also pursue the goal of a world free of cluster munitions by 2030. The large number of States that are already party to the CCM reflects a growing awareness of the devastating humanitarian impact of these weapons.

Canada will participate in the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. A deeper understanding of the multi-faceted issues these weapons present is needed in the international community. In
order for important planned meetings, such as those on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, to take place it is imperative that the Convention’s financial situation be stabilized.

Finally, we must address the indiscriminate use of **Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas**. Civilians, including humanitarian workers and medical personnel, along with civilian infrastructure, are being indiscriminately attacked. We must continue to work to strengthen compliance with International Humanitarian Law through education, accountability, and sharing of best practices.

When discussing these issues we must also keep uppermost in our mind the disproportionate impact which many conventional weapons have on civilians. These effects linger after conflicts in the case of landmines and spread beyond conflict zones in the case of small arms and light weapons.

Thank you.