Mr. Chair,

Georgia aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union, and in my national capacity, I would like to make a brief remark.

Georgia expresses gratitude to the European Union for its valuable financial contribution to the ongoing Demilitarization Project on disposal of 461 tones of surpluses ammunition in my country, implemented by the OSCE, which was mentioned in the EU statement we heard earlier this afternoon.

Taking our commitments to the UN Program of Action and the OSCE Document on SALW with due responsibility, we fully participate in the relevant information exchange mechanisms, and already made substantial progress in improving SALW control over the past few years.

At the same time, let me also further clarify, that "illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW)" remain an issue of concern in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali currently under illegal foreign military occupation. In fact, apart from SALW the regions are heavily militarized with various sophisticated offensive weaponry, each housing up to 6000 militaries and FSB personnel. The force structure and posture of these deployments, go beyond any defensive goals, hinder the efforts of peaceful resolution of the conflict, and are aimed at destabilizing the region.

I thank you.