The UK aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to make some remarks in a national capacity.

The United Kingdom remains committed to international conventional arms control. We will continue to play a leading role in the current instruments and arrangements. And we will encourage others to support them too, politically, practically and financially. Without this support – especially funding – they will not be able to function effectively.

Full and equal participation of all relevant actors and stakeholders is also vital for success. Women must be properly represented in disarmament and arms control discussions, negotiations and processes – their involvement is key to developing and delivering sustainable action. This should be recognised in relevant UNGA resolutions.

Mr Chair, let me speak about the individual instruments.

The UK is a strong supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty. It is the means to achieving a globally well-regulated, legal trade in arms, whilst preventing the trade in illicit arms and the diversion of legitimate arms to the illicit market. Its obligations on States Parties to assess the risk of serious gender-based violence or serious violence against women and children before authorising the export of conventional arms is a cornerstone of our commitment to the women, peace and security agenda. The treaty has made much progress but there is still much more to do. Universalisation must remain a priority, and we
must focus in particular on persuading those states to join whose accession would have the greatest impact on the aims and objectives of the Treaty.

We therefore welcome the Treaty’s focus on outreach. Successful engagement must include regional organisations, civil society groups, industry and academia if it is to reach a diverse range of potential states parties, adherents and allies.

In the meantime, existing States Parties must fully and effectively implement their current commitments. The Voluntary Trust Fund is essential to support this process and the UK will continue to be an active member of the Selection Committee.

Mr Chair,

The UK is proud of the humanitarian successes of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We are deeply concerned by reports of the continued use of these indiscriminate weapons, even as we collectively continue to clear them. We call on all states to abide by International Humanitarian Law.

We are implementing our own obligations through clearance of anti-personnel mines in the Falkland Islands. The UK is also providing approximately £100m to global mine action between 2017 and 2020.

The UK remains fully committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Under the UK’s chairmanship in 2017, High Contracting Parties agreed essential financial reforms. But the Convention will only become
financially stable if all High Contracting Parties pay their contributions and arrears promptly.

The UK welcomes the progress made this year by the CCW Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. We support continuing the GGE’s current mandate into 2019. We continue to oppose a legal instrument or ban that would prejudice legitimate technological advances. We look forward to further work through the GGE on Guiding Principles and the role of existing processes, structures, industry standards and national and international legal frameworks.

Mr Chair,

The UK is at the forefront of global efforts to counter the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition.

The transnational nature of illicit trafficking means that no one country can eradicate the problem alone. The UK will continue to strengthen cooperation with partners to reduce the supply of and demand for illicit weapons. Since 2017, we have supported national and regional projects on arms regulation, law enforcement cooperation, disarmament, counter terrorism and promotion of conflict resolution.

We welcome the outcome of the Third Review Conference on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

Mr Chair,
International co-operation and the effective operation of a rules based international system are our best hope of tackling threats to life and security, and are essential to building a safer world.