Mr. Chairman,

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

A comprehensive and equitable approach is required. It is essential that the pursuit of nuclear disarmament does not give way to a destabilizing conventional imbalance.

The final document of SSOD-I provides clear direction in this regard, I quote, “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”, unquote.

Mr. Chairman,

Several worrying trends are emerging on the conventional weapons horizon. The level and scale of global military expenditures tops the list. The reflection of this troubling trend is mirrored at the regional level, in particular in South Asia, where one State’s military spending grossly outnumbers that of others, 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 double standards towards South Asia, based on strategic and commercial considerations, must be eschewed.

Pakistan is committed to the establishment of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia, which includes an element of conventional force balance. Pakistan neither wants, nor is engaged in an arms race in the region.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan is a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and all of its five Protocols. Pakistan presided over the 5th CCW Review Conference in 2016 which took important decisions for dealing with several contemporary issues falling under the Convention’s purview.
Pakistan is again serving as Chair of the 2019 Annual Meeting of CCW Parties and hopes to facilitate substantive outcomes that strengthen the implementation and improve the financial sustainability of the Convention.

We are proud of our active contribution to de-mining and ERW clearance efforts world over, particularly under UN peace-keeping operations, to which Pakistan remains one of the largest troop contributors.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan is fully cognizant of the need to address the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of cluster munitions. India, which is a State Party to the CCW, recently used cluster munitions in populated areas resulting in deaths and injuries to civilians including women and children and damage to civilian infrastructure. This action was undertaken across the Line of Control in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, in violation of the most fundamental principles of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law.

In the same vein, the use of pellet guns against unarmed protesters in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K) is against the spirit of the CCW, which places the civilian population at all times under the protection and authority of the principles of international law. The use of pellet guns against civilians is inconsistent with the basic tenets of international law including the most fundamental humanitarian principles.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan has developed the necessary legislative, regulatory, enforcement and institutional mechanisms to address the wide ranging issues relating to conventional arms’ regulation.

We remain committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the outcomes agreed at its review conferences. We are keeping under review our potential accession to ATT.

Pakistan voted in favour of the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the UNGA. As we continue to review our potential accession to the treaty, we believe that the ATT’s success, effectiveness and universality will depend on its non-discriminatory implementation in particular the strict adherence by its State Parties to the Treaty’s principles.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.