Thankyou Mr Chair.

I am honoured to have been entrusted with the task of assisting you on the cross-cutting issue of international cooperation and assistance. As we are all aware addressing cooperation and assistance is critical to the implementation of the BMS.

Australia’s consultations in New York and Geneva have demonstrated the truly universal support for discussions on this issue, and the commitment of all delegations to ensure we continue to address effectively the challenges of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the importance of implementation to the Programme of Action.

I would like to thank all delegations for their constructive and cooperative approach to this issue and to underscore that I look forward to undertaking further discussions in the coming days.

As delegations are aware, I prepared a non-paper, document A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/WP.2, to provide background information to delegations as well as to explore possible ways forward for our meeting this week.

The first part of the paper sets out some distinctions between cooperation and assistance as well as providing information on the institutional framework which already exists on this issue.
The paper also attempts to highlight some of the priority issues regularly identified by states, on both substantive and procedural matters.

And, finally, the paper sets out measures which could be adopted by this year’s session, including re-emphasising many of the needs and priorities identified during the third Biennial Meeting of States, as well as some new areas for action.

I am pleased by the reaction I have received from states up to now on the paper, and its proposed steps forward. My consultations with states, regional and international organisations and civil society, together with the national reports of states, have demonstrated a number of key themes which continue to emerge. These include:

- The need for an increased focus on practical cooperation and assistance, including joint or coordinated action;
- The need to better identify needs and improve the matching of these needs with the resources available (including consideration of additional tools to do so);
- The need for public awareness programs; and
- The need to consider the effectiveness of existing cooperation and assistance efforts in order to ensure implementation of the POA.

I look forward to hearing from delegations today, and in the days to come, on what areas they wish to see highlighted in our outcome document this year and I reiterate that I would welcome comments from states both this morning and in the margins of our discussions.