Statement by Finland at the
Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation
of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate
the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

Statement by

Mr. Klaus Korhonen
Ambassador for Arms Control
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

New York, 7 June 2016

(check against delivery)
Mr Chair,

As this is the first time I take the floor during this Biennial Meeting of States, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairperson and extend my delegation’s appreciation for the way you have conducted the preparations for this important meeting.

Finland aligns itself with the statements of the European Union and fully supports the positions expressed in the Working Paper submitted by the EU. I would like to make some additional national remarks to highlight themes which are of particular importance to my delegation. We would wish to see them appropriately reflected in the Outcome Document to be adopted at the end of this meeting.

Mr. Chair,

Small arms and light weapons continue to pose a significant threat to both international peace and security and to human security all over the world. This is well underlined by the fact that SALW on a global level accounts for more deaths annually than any other weapon category. The diversion and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons fuels terrorism and transnational crime and the piling up of SALW in specific regions is linked to regional conflicts and human rights violations.

Reducing violence caused by the diversion and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is an issue of high priority for Finland.

We engage to reduce the negative impact of SALW through many fora, such as the EU’s strategy on small arms and light weapons, the OSCE, the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN’s Program of Action (UNPoA). This forum has a special role as it in addition to providing a valid and effective strategy also remains the global forum to share and develop further action on different levels. This meeting will give guidance to further implementation of the PoA in view of the next Review Conference in two years’ time.

First, my delegation would like to stress the added value that the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty and its implementation brings also to the implementation of the PoA.

Finland continues to be actively engaged in the Arms Trade Treaty process and we consider the implementation of the PoA and the ATT to be mutually reinforcing. We have certainly found this to be the case in our national implementation of both instruments.

The ATT shares many common goals with the UN PoA and has added a new dimension, complementing and reinforcing the various existing conventional arms control agreements and arrangements. For the ATT to tangibly bring results on the ground, it needs to be effectively implemented by the State Parties and to be as universal as possible. Regulating international arms transfer is by definition a global ambition.

Mr. Chair, in our view this potential of synergies between the implementation of the PoA and the ATT, which is a natural fact for many delegations, should be appropriately reflected in the outcome document.
Mr. Chair,

The second point, which I would like to highlight, is that a gender perspective should be continued to be taken into account in the implementation of the PoA, including when planning assistance. The Majority of those suffering under the threat created by the diversion and illicit trade in SALW are civilians. There are strong links between small arms violence, gender based violence and organized crime. Women and other potentially vulnerable groups are particularly affected. We, as an international community, need to do more in order to protect all potentially vulnerable groups and to tackle the problem in a comprehensive manner.

Women are also key actors in fighting illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In line with UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 2242, women should be better represented in the planning, creation and implementation of national and international SALW policies. I hope that our deliberations during this week will result in concrete steps forward also in this regard.

Finally, one important dimension of PoA implementation is the contribution of the civil society and the private sector. We have excellent results from projects Finland has supported which have been implemented by civil society actors. The UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) continues to be a valuable instrument in this regard and its donor base should be further expanded. We also highly value the excellent work of UNIDIR. A good example is our support to the UNIDIR led project on arms and ammunition management in Somalia. A side event presenting the project and its results will be arranged here at the UN tomorrow, on Wednesday, at 13:15 Conference Room 4.

I thank you.