Chair,

Firstly let me congratulate you for being elected to chair this Preparatory Committee. My delegation appreciates the inclusive and transparent way you have guided our preparatory consultations so far. Let me also thank the Ambassador of New Zealand for the constructive way he chaired the Open-ended meeting of Governmental Experts last week. My delegation also welcomes the new High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Combating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) is essential in order to prevent and address the severe human misery that is caused by such trade. Illicit trade and use of small arms and light weapons represent a serious obstacle of reaching our common goal of reducing armed violence, which is causing approximately 2000 deaths globally on a daily basis. Besides the dramatic humanitarian costs, there can be no doubt that illicit trade in SALW fuels organized crime, represents a threat to international peace and security and hamper long term development. The UN General Assembly has indeed recognized the detrimental effect to social and economic progress by adopting unanimously the resolution on armed violence and development.

The UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (PoA) has been instrument to mobilize awareness and not least actions to deal with the harmful effects of illicit trade of SALW. The PoA has served as a useful forum to seek more effective ways to combat illegal flow of arms, such as the development and adoption of the International Tracing Instrument (ITI). In this respect, it has been very useful that like-minded countries - across traditional regionale groupings - have sought to work together in partnership. Norway, furthermore, values the essential and constructive role played by civil society. Indeed we need to further strengthen our cooperation with the NGO community.

Despite the positive actions derived from the PoA, there can be no doubt that the overall picture of the achievements of the PoA is mixed. From a Norwegian perspective the ITI should have been legally binding. Norway remains of the view that the scope of the PoA is too narrow. It does not make sense to exclude the issue of ammunitions when we are talking about the very serious effects of illicit trade of small arms. We are also disappointed that it has not proven possible to elaborate an effective instrument to combat illicit brokering. More needs to be done in the fields of border control and end user certificates.

The Review Conference provides us an opportunity to take stock on where we stand in relation to the implementation of the PoA, and to explore what could be done further strengthen implementation at national, regional and global level as stipulated by the UN General Assembly resolution. In this respect the EU has raised important points in relation to more effective implementation at these three levels, to which my delegation agrees. In particular we need to address the consequences of illicit trade on children and promote increased participation of women at all decision making level.

Norway has in place a number of legislative measures which has been reported to the UNODA and which can be found on the web page. We need to explore ways to further enhance international cooperation and assistance. Since the adoption of the PoA, Norway has made available financial resources in the field of small arms. We need also to look into where we stand on ITI and the report from the Open Ended meeting last provides an excellent point of departure.
Yet, at the Review Conference, we should not shy away from the opportunity to also deliberate on the shortcomings of the PoA and to consider on what measures we ought to taking. After all, the PoA is not a legally binding document.

Lastly, let me reiterate that when we are entering the final phase of the Review Process of the PoA, we need to involve all relevant stakeholders, including the NGO community.