STATEMENT

by

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -
Madam Chair,

As this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, please allow me to congratulate you on your appointment and assure you that you will find Sweden a constructive partner as you guide us through this important process. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Madam Angela Kane on her appointment as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Madam Chair,

Sweden aligns itself fully with the statements already made by the European Union both in the thematic debate and also pertaining to how we view the mandate of the Review Conference. We believe that assessing progress made in the implementation of the PoA necessarily also entails discussing how to strengthen it and addressing identified shortcomings.

In addition to the European Union statements, Sweden wishes to highlight some specific aspects pertaining to the topics of implementation, international assistance and cooperation and on follow-up mechanisms.

Firstly, we would like to highlight the issue of stockpile management and surplus disposal.

Poor stockpile management and security remains a serious threat to peace and security. The risk of diversion to illicit markets and the danger of stockpiles becoming sources of supply for criminal elements is very real.

Several recent examples of accidents involving stockpiles of ammunition as well as weapons serve as reminders of the immediate threat to physical security posed by inadequate stockpile management.

Mindful of the linkage between stockpile management, proliferation, national and regional conflicts as well as the related detrimental effect on development, Sweden has devoted substantial financial and technical resources to assisting countries in stockpile and ammunition destruction. Supporting stockpile projects in Ukraine constitutes one of many such activities.

Sweden would very much welcome an inclusion of stockpiling as an area of focus for the Review Conference as well as for future follow-up mechanisms.

On a related note, let me stress that although we are aware of the different views among member states on the topic of ammunition, we believe the great risks posed by illicit handling of ammunition necessitates its inclusion in the discussions on the future implementation of the UN PoA.

A second specific point I would like to make is that Sweden would support the addition of a SALW-category to the UN-registry on Conventional arms.

Comprehensive reporting on SALW among member states is not only of importance as regards transfer controls but also serves a more general confidence-building purpose. With that in mind, Sweden wishes to support the comments made by Germany expressing a preference for including SALW as a standard category of the UN Register on Conventional arms and would welcome further discussions on this during the Review Conference.
Lastly, let me offer a few reflections on implementation, international cooperation and assistance

As a substantial contributor of assistance in the field of SALW, Sweden welcomes the comprehensive exchange on these issues proposed by the Non-Aligned Movement as well as by others. In order to ensure effective assistance implementation, substantial commitments from both donor and recipient countries are of course imperative.

We are convinced that an essential component of assistance towards implementing the PoA is to enable meetings of governmental experts and facilitate substantial exchanges of best practises and benchmarking. With all due respect to us diplomats, it is when experts meet that improvements on the ground are best discussed. In this context, Sweden would support the proposal in the Japanese working paper of a structure of meetings over the next six year cycle with the primary focus of working sessions with governmental experts on a biannual basis.

Sweden has provided substantial support for numerous projects aiming to fulfil the goals of the UN PoA: small arms control and reduction projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina, several SALW-related projects in Rwanda, Sudan and Central Africa together with stockpile and ammunition destruction activities in Eastern Europe, constitute a few examples.

On specific areas that could be discussed in greater depth when it comes to international cooperation and assistance, I return to the question of stockpile management in post-conflict and conflict areas, as part of the support of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes envisaged in the UN PoA. Another area where such cooperation could be of significant value is tackling the complex challenge of illicit brokering.

While looking forward to a more extensive use of the existing mechanisms for matching assistance needs and resources, the member states might perhaps also benefit from focusing more on avoiding duplication of assistance by improving coordination among donor countries and organisations.

Thank you.