UK Statement
Preparatory Committee for the Third UN Conference to Review Progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action UNPoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in all its Aspects

Implementation, international co-operation and assistance
Mr Chair, the United Kingdom remains fully committed to the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (UNPoA).

We believe that regional and sub-regional organisations have a vital role to play in encouraging and assisting their participating states to improve national controls and coordination mechanisms, facilitating exchange of information on cross-border illicit trafficking across the region and in promoting crosscutting issues such as strengthening the meaningful participation of women in disarmament activities.

Mr Chair, the UK has continued its cooperation and assistance with international partners to strengthen controls on transfer, stockpiling, possession and disposal of small arms and light weapons. Since 2016, we have worked with EU Member States to tighten controls on deactivated weapons and improve the exchange of information amongst law enforcement agencies. We have also supported OSCE and NATO assistance projects in the EU’s neighbourhood, aimed at strengthening the security and management of small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, as well as funding surplus destruction projects in Serbia, Bosnia and Montenegro. We have also established a capacity-building programme in the Western Balkans aimed at improving the use of firearms intelligence in investigations.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office funds projects through the Counter Proliferation Programme (CPP), which aims to support and strengthen the international system of counter proliferation treaties, regimes and organisations and work towards their effective implementation. Last year, we provided weapons and
ammunition management capacity building training and equipment in East Africa and contributed over USD 434,000 to the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund. We also launched the Commonwealth conventional arms control initiative, which is aimed at providing a platform for sharing experience and best practice, including on the implementation of the UNPOA. Strengthened security through effective arms control will make a meaningful contribution to the Commonwealth’s ambition for a more secure, sustainable and prosperous future. Last month, we hosted a law enforcement conference involving national and regional experts from East, West and Southern Africa to discuss approaches to civilian disarmament and ways to increase weapons detection and seizures.

Finally, Mr Chair, we recognise that our efforts to control the flow of weapons will not be entirely successful unless we also reduce the drivers of instability that fuel the demand for illicit weapons. For 2017-18, the UK Government has committed over £1.2 billion through the cross-government Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF), to provide development and security support to countries at risk of conflict or instability. This supports counterterrorism and counter-trafficking capacity building, security and defence sector reform, multilateral peacekeeping, including disarmament, and conflict transformation priorities to help governments prepare and implement post-peace agreement plans. In addition, the UK will continue to honour its commitment to spend 0.7% of our Gross National Income on development, building on the achievements we have already made to reduce poverty and instability and increase global prosperity.

Thank you, Mr. Chair