Mr. President,

At the outset, my delegation congratulates you and other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election.

I also thank all Member States for their support in electing Nepal to the Bureau of this Conference.

I align my statement with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. President,

Many conflicts and civil wars around the globe have been fueled by the uncontrolled and illegal spread of small arms.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) is a global threat posing serious challenges to the peace, security, and stability of many countries.

Besides, they cause serious humanitarian, social, economic and developmental consequences. These consequences underline the fact that the issue of SALW requires concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate their illicit manufacture, transfer, and circulation.

Nepal believes that sincere implementation of the Programme of Action (POA) could substantially reduce the illegal trade and proliferation of small arms.
We also believe that while national Governments have the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, cooperation and collaboration among the law enforcement authorities at regional and international level remains equally important to trace and control the illicit manufacturing, trade and smuggling of the SALW.

Nepal supports the rights of States to legally manufacture, procure and hold SALW for their self-defense and security needs.

While taking note of the progress made in the control of the illicit trade of SALW, we underline the need to strengthen cooperation to prevent abuses of SALW by criminal elements.

Similarly, the challenges posed by new and emerging technologies should be identified and opportunity offered by them should be seized to strengthen the effective control of SALW.

**Mr. President,**

The target 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development unequivocally articulates the significance of arms control in the realization of sustainable development. Likewise, the effective implementation of POA supports the timely achievement of target 16.4 which in turn helps achieve a range of other SDGs including poverty reduction, economic growth and improved health and education.

Nepal believes that financial and technical cooperation should be extended to the Member States especially the Least Developed Countries to strengthen their national capacity for the implementation of the POA at the national level. They need capacity-building for effective border management, stockpile management, and formulating regulations, among others.

Capacity building of national statistical institutions to collect and analyze the statistical information and international practices becomes equally important.
Exchange of information and best practices can contribute to the implementation of the PoA, International Tracing Instrument and target 16.4 of the SDG at the national, regional, and global levels.

An enhanced participation of women, youth, civil society and non-governmental sectors in policy-making, planning, and implementation of POA will also go a long way in this regard.

Nepal also believes that the regional and global approaches to arms control and non-proliferation complement each other and should be pursued simultaneously. Nepal welcomes the initiatives taken both at the international and regional levels and stresses on the role of regional centers to help effectively implement POA and ITI.

Mr. President,

In Nepal, we are fully committed to the implementation of POA. We have implemented POA in tandem with our efforts to control crimes, prevent smuggling, maintenance of law and order, and ensure peace and security.

We have very stringent domestic laws and regulations regarding the purchase and possession of firearms. The first legislation to control and manage arms and ammunition was enacted as back as in 1963. Ever since, the Arms and Ammunition Act has been amended seven times to accommodate the requirement of changing times and emerging situations as well as to fulfill our national and international commitments.

The Government of Nepal has designated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the coordinating agency for fulfilling Nepal’s obligations under treaties and conventions related to disarmament to which Nepal is a party. In 1997, Government constituted National Authority for Disarmament Affairs (NADA) at the Foreign Ministry, as an inter-agency body for all needful coordination.

In conclusion, Mr. President, my delegation hopes that this conference will be successful in devising an effective course of action for the future.
We strongly believe that collective efforts towards achieving this goal are vital to making the world better and safer for humanity. Nepal remains committed to the implementation of the POA and to contribute constructively to the objectives of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

I thank you, Mr. President.