Mr. President,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as President of Third Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action. Warm congratulations also to the members of the Bureau. Please be assured of Bulgaria’s full support in your efforts to lead us to a successful outcome. I would also like to thank you and commend you for the inclusive and transparent manner in which you have conducted the preparatory process for this Conference. Due to these efforts we have in front of us a draft outcome document that, in our view, serves as a very good basis for negotiations.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the European Union. I would like to highlight a few aspects of priority to my country.

17 years into existence, the UNPoA has not lost its relevance and remains the only universal instrument aimed at combatting the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. The new realities and emerging threats necessitate, however, that we ensure that the Programme of Action is able to adequately respond to those challenges. This Review Conference offers an opportunity to take action and equip ourselves with the tools needed for achieving ‘disarmament that saves lives’ as the Secretary-General called for on 24 May at the launch of the United Nations agenda for disarmament “Securing our Common Future”.

The case for the need to control ammunition has been made on various occasions by a number of countries, and it remains valid. We cannot have truly effective measures against the illicit trade in SALW without controlling ammunition - both the supply as well as the stockpiles. If such control is put in place and is vigorously exercised, there will be fewer cases of diversion.
We also need to ensure that robust export control systems are put in place wherever they do not exist and that they are strictly implemented. So far, the strict export control implementation has proven to be the most effective measure in preventing diversion.

Mr. President,

Let me reiterate that the most significant achievement within the UN context since the Second Review Conference is the adoption of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. The objectives of the PoA and ITI are directly in line with Goal 16, target 16.4, so we need to ensure that this link is explicitly made in the outcome document.

During the PrepCom my delegation expressed its position on the need for synergies with other instruments. This position remains valid.

Mr. President, while we have a variety of pressing issues before us, I take this opportunity to reiterate that the production of small arms and light weapons without licenses or expired licenses is not and should not be subject to discussion within the scope of the UNPoA. Those issues are subject to intellectual property law and should be dealt with bilaterally between the parties concerned.

Finally, Mr. President, my delegation looks forward to fruitful and constructive negotiations that will allow us to achieve ambitious outcome that will make a positive difference on the ground and will contribute to saving lives.

Thank you!