Thank you, Mr Chair.

I am Rebecca Peters, a member of the leadership team of the International Action Network on Small Arms. I also work on support for survivors of gun violence.

Civil society from more than 30 countries is represented at RevCon3. We are very grateful to the UNSCAR Trust Fund, and also to UNODA and to the Government of Ireland, for their support in bringing some civil society members to the conference.

We congratulate member states which have incorporated civil society in their national delegations to RevCon3, in the spirit of partnership which is often mentioned but not always implemented. These states include Kenya, Ghana, Guatemala, Australia, El Salvador, Nigeria and Germany.

IANSA’s presentations today are framed by our assessment of six key issues:

- the illicit trade in ammunition;
- destruction of surplus and excessive accumulations of arms and ammunition;
- measures to address armed violence in crime as well as conflict;
- gender-based action to curb arms proliferation and violence;
- links with the Sustainable Development Goals; and
- synergies in implementing the PoA and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

We have produced a briefing paper on these six key issues for RevCon3. Please let us know if you haven’t seen it.

IANSA is a global movement of hundreds of NGOs and individuals working to stop gun violence. We’ve been coordinating civil society in the UN small arms process since it began. This morning, you will hear from colleagues from Senegal, Fiji, the MENA region, Guatemala and a special guest from the United States.

In 2001, when they agreed on the POA, all States were “Gravely concerned about the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread.” These words about excessive circulation seem to have disappeared from the proceedings, yet they still reflect current realities.

The Secretary-General in his new Agenda for Disarmament has also emphasised the dangers posed by “over accumulation” of weapons. He stressed that “the arms trade is seeking ever-expanding markets. Countries are building up massive stockpiles of conventional arms, especially in the most conflict-prone regions of the world...[and] the widespread availability of SALW and their ammunition is a key enabler of armed violence and conflict.”

Earlier this week the Ambassador of Mexico put it even more clearly when he questioned the legitimacy of weapons producers who put their own profits above the wellbeing of humanity.
We need to destroy surplus small arms and ammunition, but it’s also time to discuss reducing production. Just as, to save the environment, we must recycle our waste but also produce less in the first place – to save lives we must produce fewer guns.

And it’s time to discuss regulating civilian possession of guns – the Small Arms Survey just informed us this week that the global arsenal has passed 1 billion weapons, and over 85% are in the hands of civilians.

The Secretary-General’s new Disarmament Agenda addresses some of our other key issues, including:

- the importance of gender equality and gender perspectives
- the link to sustainable development
- links to transnational crime, counter-terrorism and humanitarian action.

We welcome his promise to dedicate resources in the Peacebuilding Fund for action on small arms and light weapons.

But let’s not forget that all States must abide by their existing obligations under international law. This includes the duty to fully implement UN arms embargoes, and obligations under the treaties they have ratified.

Fulfilling the charge of the PoA is a complex task. It requires concerted, integrated work across instruments. We have the opportunity to take advantage of synergies among instruments – in fact we must do so. For example, many countries could strengthen their arms export control systems by taking advantage of the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty.

IANSA also urges all States to implement the Sustainable Development Goals - especially SDG 16, but several other SDGs are highly relevant to this work. These include SDG 4 on education, SDG 5 on gender equality and empowering women and girls, and SDG 11, dealing with safe cities. Full and effective implementation of the PoA will help us achieve each of these SDGs.

IANSA calls on States to support education and public awareness programs to promote respect for the rule of law and the eradication of all forms of armed violence and violent extremism.

My colleagues on the panel here will address these issues in the context of their experiences.

Mr Chair, in closing I’d like to invite all delegations to join IANSA in marking the event known as Wear Orange this Friday, June 22nd. Please wear an orange item of clothing to honour the lives lost to gunshots, and to demand an end to gun violence.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our views.