Mr. Chairman,

Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union on clusters I to IV. In our national capacity, I would like to stress the following remarks.

Mr. Chairman,

Conventional arms including small arms and light weapons affect significantly contemporary security environment. We face numerous conventional weapons challenges posed by state and non-state actors all across the globe. Illicit arms trafficking, international terrorism, proliferation of arms and ammunition, and uncontrolled flows of SALW hinder the rule of law principles, prevent successful conflict resolution, and impede social and economic development.

Lithuania supports the development and implementation of international rules to ensure responsible arms trade and emphasizes the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty in the context of global arms control. We call for all countries, especially major arms producers and exporters to become State Parties of the ATT.

We are looking forward to the upcoming 6th Review Conference of the Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its successful outcome. Lithuania supports efforts to universalize and strengthen the CCW and stresses the importance of compliance with all of its provisions and annexed Protocols. We are convinced that discussions on respective new and disruptive technologies, including LAWS, shall remain within the CCW framework, which brings together major stakeholders and relevant technical, military, legal and preferably ethical expertise.

Mr. Chairman,

We reiterate significance of existing regional conventional arms control arrangements that contributes to European security and stability by increasing transparency, predictability and risk reduction. However, having these agreements is not an aim in itself; they should be implemented by all participating states faithfully and in full.

Yet this year’s major military exercises, carried out by Russia and Belarus – Zapad 2021, once again lacked transparency from both countries. Notified number of participants did not correspond to reality, while military observers were not invited in accordance to the Vienna Document. We call on Russia and Belarus to act in a predictable and transparent way, in line with their international commitments.
We strongly support an initiative to launch negotiations on the Vienna Document modernization. It would be a significant positive step to restoring trust and predictability in Europe.

Mr. Chairman,

The inflow of weaponry to the parts of Ukraine controlled by Russia continues. The militarization of the Crimean Peninsula, transfers of weapon systems, including nuclear-capable aircraft and missiles, weapons, ammunition, is one of our greatest concerns. The presence of Russian troops and military equipment in Crimea is contrary to the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and undermines the security and stability of neighboring countries and the region.

We call upon the Russian Federation to implement its international commitments, to halt its support for the illegal armed groups in eastern Ukraine, and to stop the inflow of weaponry and equipment into the sovereign territory of Ukraine. Full implementation of the Minsk agreements remains of utmost importance for the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

In addition, Russian military presence in Georgia continues together with increased military exercises and infrastructure reinforcements. The ongoing violations of the freedom of movement, including through the actively pursued so-called “borderization” process, the protracted closure of crossing points of Administrative Boundary Lines (ABL) for over a year, continue to severely impact the security, safety and well-being of the local population. All these steps violate sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, run contrary to the principles of international law and commitments undertaken by Russia, including in the EU-mediated 2008 ceasefire agreement and its implementing measures, and must be reversed. An on-going aggression against both Ukraine and Georgia must remain high on the agenda of the international community.

Mr. Chairman,

The lack of trust, transparency and predictability of military activities can pose a serious challenge to regional and global security. Indeed, arms control might serve as a handful tool for confidence building, if only all parties would live up to their obligations and commitments, principles of the UN Charter and international law.