Mr. Chair, thank you for providing us the opportunity to share Canada’s views on agenda item 8.

We are very pleased that international cooperation is an integral part of the outcome document, given its relevance to the effective fight against illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons at the global level. In particular, Canada welcomes the references to sustainable international cooperation and the strong national ownership that states must ensure to accelerate the goals of the Programme of Action. Sustainability is a key component of Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy and we believe that women and girls, especially, have the ability to achieve real change in terms of sustainable development and peace, even though they are frequently the most vulnerable to violence.

Canada reiterates its commitment to the fight against illicit trafficking, diversion and proliferation of small arms and light weapons through international assistance. At BMS7, we announced a financial contribution of $300,000 over three-years, for UNIDIR’s Gender and Disarmament Program. We are pleased to report that Canada’s support for UNIDIR’s Gender and Disarmament Program is helping member states and multilateral stakeholders incorporate gender considerations into conventional arms control and disarmament by conducting research on women’s involvement and developing guidance for member states on integrating gender-equality frameworks into conventional arms control. For example - in September of last year, UNIDIR organized a virtual workshop for diplomats, military officers, policymakers, activists, civil society practitioners and academics from 11 countries in South and South East Asia, as well as representatives of regional and international organizations. Discussions focussed on participants’ regional experiences, and examined how weapons proliferation and misuse affect different groups of society, how gender norms impact how weapons are seen and used, and how the community of practice can help ensure that arms control and disarmament process address these gender perspectives and become more effective in responding to gender-based threats. We believe that this will improve gender diversity and enhance gender-sensitive efforts in the area of conventional arms control.

Canada has also initiated a new partnership with the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We are providing $620,000 over two years to the Parliamentary Forum to help strengthen parliamentary action on legislation, oversight and awareness raising, in order to support the shaping of national legislative policies related to national obligations under the ATT. Earlier in June, the Parliamentary Forum conducted an in-person workshop in Jakarta with the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly that focussed on enhancing parliamentary knowledge of the ATT, including challenges to its universalization and implementation at the regional and national level, as well as linkages to the WPS Agenda and other relevant frameworks such as the Programme of Action, SDG 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda, and the Firearms Protocol. Similar workshops are planned in the months ahead for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East.

Finally, Canada recently announced the allocation of $1.8 million dollars over the next three years to UNOCT to increase the capacity of Central Asian States to counter the risk of illicit firearms trafficking in
the region, prevent their illegal access by terrorists, and contain the potential outbreaks of the newly emerging crisis in Afghanistan. By increasing the capacity of recipient countries to monitor, prevent and counter the potential risks of illicit flows of firearms in the region, in particular from neighboring Afghanistan, and foster more effective international and regional cooperation, the project will help reduce the risks of diversion of these arms into the hands of terrorist and other criminal groups.

We believe that cooperation and effective communication among states regarding the diversion of small arms and light weapons is of the utmost importance for preventing and combatting illicit activities. Canada wishes to highlight the importance we attach to submitting our national reporting to the UNPOA and other instruments in a timely manner; and we call on other states to do the same, in the interest of transparency and cooperation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair