Mr. Chair,

I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this year’s Biennial Meeting of States. I assure you of the full support of my delegation. Let me also thank you for the timely and open consultations that you have conducted over the past months in preparation of this meeting.

With regard to agenda item 6, Switzerland considers the following aspects of particular importance:

First, while States gather for BMS8 this week, they will review the implementation of the Programme of Action and International Tracing Instrument at our next meeting in 2024. Therefore, BMS8 should provide guidance on how the information needed to review progress effectively at the Fourth Review Conference should be generated and utilised. In this regard, Switzerland welcomes the call on States in the draft outcome document to submit national reports to that effect. In fact, such reports are an essential instrument for measuring progress. It is also highly relevant that States request the Secretariat to prepare an analysis of progress.

Second, preventing and combating the diversion of small arms and light weapons to unauthorised recipients is paramount for the effective implementation of the PoA. In this context, Switzerland puts particular emphasis on pre-transfer risk assessments, but also on the cooperation between exporting and importing States after the delivery of transfers. Such cooperation allows to verify compliance with end-user certificates, particularly non-retransfer clauses, and effectively help prevent diversion. Therefore, we welcome the recognition of these elements in the draft outcome document.

Third, BMS7 encouraged harmonised approaches between small arms and light weapons control, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda. During the meeting of the WPS focal point network in Geneva in May, co-chaired by Switzerland and South Africa, we brought together experts from these two
communities to strengthen connections. This event underscored the need for more cooperation and sharing of good practices. For this reason, my delegation strongly welcomes that the draft outcome document pays attention to this aspect.

Finally, the long-term benefits of implementing the PoA will materialise only if it is connected to broader agendas. In this regard, States’ efforts to reduce armed violence and implement the PoA should be approached as part of broader policies and programmes related to sustaining peace, security, sustainable development, human rights and the protection of civilians. Switzerland underlines the importance for BMS8 to acknowledge the relevance and contribution of the PoA to these broader frameworks.

I thank you.