Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am honored on behalf of my country to address this UN Conference on this very important subject.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first congratulate you for your election as the Chairman of this important conference. It is a prestige for you and your country Colombia.

In the same vein congratulations go to His Excellency Ambassador Dos Santos, the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations in his capacity as the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for his good organizational ability that have made this conference a success.

Mr. Chairman,
This Conference being the first to be organized by the United Nations on the issue of Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons throughout the world makes it a landmark in the World History. We must strive to make it achieve the desired goals and objectives.

This issue of Illicit Trade of Small Arms and light Weapons is of great concern to our country.

The Genocide which took place in our country in 1,994 was made possible by the easy availability of small arms to a Section of the population particularly the traditional ones like pangas, spears, and axes. The small automatic weapons were easily available to the militia and local Defense units.

Our Country shares a boarder with some countries where they are several armed groups that have easy access to small arms. It is easy to cross to Rwanda through uncontrollable boarder points with these arms. They are cheap and affordable by many people yet they can cause devastating consequences to the population.

Our Government takes great cognisance of this scourge to our people and the entire sub-region of the Great Lakes.

We have joined hands with the countries of the Sub-Region and the African region to fight this problem.

Rwanda has participated and contributed to all meetings and Conferences that have been organized in the region.

We are signatory to the Nairobi Declaration of 15Ü' March 2000 on Small Arms anu Light Weapons.

We are also a party to the once Ministerial meeting held at Bamako in Maf. This Conference outlined the current African Common position on the issue of small arms and light weapons.

We fully support this position and our brothers in Kenya will outline this as our common position.
Mr. Chairman,

At the National level, our Government has set up a National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons as agreed upon in the Nairobi Declaration of 15th March 2001.

This is a National Commission composed of several Ministries and civil non-Governmental organizations.

The Functions of this Focal Point is to implement the regional Agenda for Action, Coordination and interaction with other National Focal points and with the Nairobi Secretariat, Interaction with relevant regional and International Agencies, Coordination and interaction with civil society, assisting with the exchange and dissemination of information, conducting and facilitating research and finally building a national capacity for a sustainable approach to the problem of Small Arms and Light Weapons. At the moment the National Focal point is seriously studying the National Legislation on small arms and light weapons in liaison with the Nairobi Secretariat hopes to harmonize it with those of the region and International Standards.

Mr. Chairman,

Rwanda will continue to tirelessly work with our region and the United Nations in search for a meaningful solution to this problem with a hope that one day it will be contained to bring peace.

This conference should finally make viable recommendation and a sustainable common approach on the small arms and light weapons issue.

Thank you.