Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates and Experts,

The United Nations system, its programmes and activities experience every day the negative consequences from the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as of their uncontrolled proliferation, excessive accumulation and misuse.

A decade ago, in recognition of this growing and multi-faceted problem, the Secretary-General established the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism, or UN CASA. It’s objective is now to coordinate and streamline UN action on small arms, the arms trade and conventional ammunition. CASA brings together 23 UN system partners, whose programmes and activities are in one way or another affected by illicit weapons. Through partnerships with Member States, regional organizations and civil society however, CASA partners are also able to contribute their comparative advantage in key areas to make an important contribution to implementing the Programme of Action.

UN CASA partners are actively engaged in activities aimed at enhancing international assistance and capacity-building related to small arms control:

For instance, UN CASA provides a framework for the UN’s Armed Violence Prevention Programme, in which UNDP, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNODA, UNODC and WHO work together on programming and sensitisation on the broader topic of how to prevent armed violence and its negative impacts on development.

Furthermore, UN CASA is in the process of developing International Small Arms Control Standards or “ISACS”, which have been mentioned a number of times this week. The primary objective of these Standards will be to enhance the effectiveness of policymaking, programming and practice across the UN system by providing clear and comprehensive guidance on a wide range of small arms control issues. Two of the most relevant modules being developed are on marking and record-keeping, and on tracing. Once completed, these standards will not only be of great use to actors working on small arms within the United Nations system, but they
will also assist States wishing to make use of them in their efforts to implement both the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

Also, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has recently developed, with the support of other UN CASA partners, a model law against the illicit manufacturing of and illicit trafficking in firearms, with the aim to help Member States translate their commitments under the Firearms Protocol, the PoA and the ITI, into domestic legislation. The model law contains relevant provisions on marking, record-keeping and tracing.

In a related endeavour, UN CASA is in the process of developing International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, which will help reduce the risk of accidental stockpile explosions; minimize the risk of diversion; facilitate international assistance; and assist the United Nations in handling stockpiles of ammunition in the context of its peacekeeping, peacebuilding and DDR activities.

The compilation of assistance proposals you have found on your desks this week is a good example of UN CASA’s practical contribution to the UN process on small arms. The compilation contains assistance requests that affected Member States have included in their respective national reports on small arms. Many of these requests for assistance focus specifically on marking, record-keeping and tracing. UN CASA has worked closely with States requesting assistance on the formulation and coordination of these proposals, in order to avoid duplication and in order to ensure that the proposals were developed in collaboration with the relevant government agencies, country offices, regional centres and regional organizations. The present compilation is an update from last year’s version, offering interested donor States the possibility of further contributing to concrete project implementation. It aspires to meet the recurring call for a better link between needs and available resources in small arms assistance.

Mr. Chairman, the purpose of UN CASA is to enable the United Nations to ‘deliver as one’ on small arms control. The United Nations will continue to do its utmost to provide coordinated advice and support to Member States as they move forward with their implementation of the UN Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.