President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

The United Nations system, its programmes and activities witness on a daily basis the negative consequences of the illicit trade in, and uncontrolled proliferation of, small arms and light weapons. Illicit small arms and light weapons seriously hamper UN efforts to promote peace and security, foster sustainable development, protect human rights and engage in humanitarian action. The threats are multifaceted and thus require a coordinated response from the various actors concerned.

To address the need for a collaborative and coordinated approach, the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism, or CASA, was established in 1998. CASA now brings together 23 UN system partners, whose programmes and activities are affected by illicit weapons, one way or another.

Over the past decade, CASA partners have actively supported governments in establishing and revising national legislative frameworks and integrating small arms action plans into national development strategies. CASA partners have provided technical assistance for small arms control programmes, including weapons collection and destruction programmes, as well as for improvement of stockpile management and security. And they have provided technical assistance to ensure small arms control is complemented with a range of other development efforts at national and local levels to improve citizen security and reduce armed violence.
The International Small Arms Control Standards, or ISACS, will be launched at a lunch-time side event this Wednesday. ISACS are a set of voluntary standards that will provide consistent guidance and support to States and other actors in putting in place effective controls over the full life-cycle of small arms and light weapons — from manufacture, marking and recordkeeping; through storage, transport and international transfer; to tracing, collection and destruction of illicit weapons – while promoting the full engagement and coordination of all stakeholders in these processes, including of government, civil society, and communities. In addition, other tools and instruments on small arms have been developed under CASA auspices, such as the Programme of Action Implementation Support System (PoA-ISS); tools for matching needs and resources; and analyses of national reports. All of these tools are housed on the PoA-ISS website, and are available for immediate use by all those interested.

CASA also works on the risks posed by the accumulation of conventional ammunition surpluses, particularly the risks of explosions at munitions sites. Exploding depots, sometimes placed in densely populated areas, have caused thousands of casualties, displacement of people from their homes, and have serious socio-economic and environmental consequences. CASA partners have been engaged in the development of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, which was welcomed by the General Assembly last fall.

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Small arms and light weapons are highly relevant in diverse policy fields such as international security, human rights, rule of law, public health, development, border controls and transnational organized crime.

From our integrated perspective within the United Nations, it is clear that the Review Conference represents an important opportunity to not only review the implementation of the Programme of Action, but also to explore ways to strengthen
its implementation by taking into account developments and lessons learned over the past decade.

The purpose of CASA is to enable the United Nations to ‘deliver as one’ on the issue of small arms and light weapons. The 23 participating UN entities stand ready 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.