Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address this open debate of the Security Council today to introduce the Report of the Secretary-General on small arms. The importance of the Security Council's consideration of the question of small arms cannot be overstated, for these are the weapons of choice in most recent conflicts, particularly those under Security Council consideration. The illicit sale or excessive stockpiling of such weapons pose complex and multifaceted challenges to international peace and stability. Failure of the world community to rise to these challenges would jeopardize many of the most fundamental goals of the Charter - in particular those relating to security, humanitarian affairs and development.

While it is true that small arms per se do not provoke conflicts, it is also undeniable that the unrestrained supply of such weapons renders conflicts much more protracted and deadly, and promotes a culture of violence and impunity. There is growing evidence of close links between illicit small arms and light weapons and both terrorism and drug trafficking. The latest estimates...
of human casualties resulting from the misuse of small arms are staggering: at least 300,000 deaths every year are caused by armed conflicts in the developing world, 200,000 deaths are linked to homicide and suicide in the industrialized world, while millions more suffer non-fatal injuries and crippling disabilities.

There are other costs, however, that are difficult to quantify. As we have witnessed over the past decade, civil conflicts have caused the economic and social devastation of many societies. Even in non-conflict situations where small arms proliferate, human security stands threatened to a degree that compromises public safety and social stability.

Over the last few years, the United Nations has played a critical role in placing the issue of small arms and light weapons on the international agenda, initiating the preparatory process for the July 2001 Small Arms Conference, which adopted the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. The Security Council has contributed significantly to this effort by addressing the small arms issue in situations under its consideration, and by promoting global efforts to combat illicit small arms and light weapons, within the framework provided by the Programme of Action.

The report of the Secretary-General provides a brief overview of the Council's initiatives regarding small arms and light weapons in situations under its consideration. Rather than giving an exhaustive description of all actions, the report outlines the latest developments, and presents twelve recommendations that are considered to be relevant to expand and consolidate the work of the Security Council in this area. The recommendations cover the following main topics:

- Implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the UN Small Arms Conference (recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4);
- Security Council mandated sanctions and arms embargoes (recommendations 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11);
- Conflict prevention, peace-building and DDR (recommendations 7 and 8); and
- Confidence building measures (recommendation 12).

Three overriding considerations have guided these recommendations: first, the importance of sustained implementation of the Programme of Action adopted unanimously by the UN Small Arms Conference of July 2001; second, the acknowledgement of the distinct mandates of the Security Council and the General Assembly vis-à-vis the small arms issue; and third, the need to take into account the views of Member States on this matter. Let me now turn to a few key points arising from the Secretary-General's report.

Over the last year, Member States have engaged in the implementation of the Programme of Action with great enthusiasm. Initiatives such as national and regional conferences; the design and implementation of national action plans; the establishment and strengthening of national structures; capacity building in relevant areas; and collaboration between governments...
and NGOs, among others, have yielded encouraging results. They have also placed added pressure on the UN's limited resources.

In this regard, the Secretariat intends to establish a Small Arms Advisory Service (SAAS) within the Department of Disarmament Affairs, on the basis of extra-budgetary resources. The main purpose of this unit is to enhance the effectiveness of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism, and thereby to enhance the UN's ability to assist Member States in the implementation of the Programme of Action. Operating as a permanent secretariat of CASA, the SAAS will optimise the mechanism's performance as both an interagency coordinating body and a service provider to Member States and the general public. I hope that the Council will find it appropriate to offer its political support to this initiative.

The role of arms embargoes in controlling the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in conflicts situations under its consideration has been enhanced by the Council's decisions to establish specific monitoring mechanisms. Further improvements in this regard would require the imposition of arms embargoes to countries and regions both emerging from and threatened by armed conflict. In addition, it is important for Member States to enforce the implementation of arms embargoes and bring their own relevant legislation into compliance with the UN Charter. Coercive measures should be considered against those States that deliberately violate arms embargoes decided by the UN Security Council.

While arms embargoes reduce and prevent arms flows to the targeted regions and entities, they do little to control weapons already existing in conflict areas. For that reason, post-conflict activities such as DDR ought to be carried out as thoroughly as possible, and consideration should be given to restricting the supply of ammunition.

Consistent with the Secretary-General's report on "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), we have attempted to produce a short, sharp and concise document with realistic and achievable recommendations. In this connection, the views of Member States on ways and means in which the Council can contribute to dealing with the question of small arms and light weapons in situations under its consideration were not attached to the report. However, the secretariat will make copies of such documents available to Member States upon request.

I am sure that today's discussion will assist the Council in defining the most appropriate ways in which to address the various recommendations contained in this report.

Thank you.