Statement by Mr. Ye Gyaw Mra, Minister Counsellor of the
Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the
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Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor, I would like to join other delegates in congratulating you for your election as the Chairman of this important Committee. I would like to assure you of our full support and cooperation. Our tributes also go to the other members of the Bureau.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation shares the concern that Conventional Weapons continue to pose serious threats and challenges to humanity. Therefore, it is of utmost important that production and trading of conventional arms, their parts and components be carefully maintained between Governments or entities duly authorized by the Governments for legitimate use. We wish to emphasize that every sovereign State has the right to import or export or even manufacture conventional arms, their parts and components for its own security needs. However, if we are pursuing these activities, we also have the responsibility to prevent these conventional arms from fallen into the wrong hands. In this regard, developing countries like Myanmar needs to strengthen its capacity to systematically control conventional arms.

In view of this, I am pleased to inform the Committee of recent national efforts made by the Government of Myanmar to build capacity in small arms control in close cooperation with the United Nations Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD). A two-day workshop relating to small arms control was held in Nay Pyi Taw from 15 to 16 May this year. A total of 50 Myanmar Government officials from various security sectors participated in the workshop to discuss policy and technical issues on the implementation of the UN Program of Action (PoA) as well as various topics ranging from relevant international and regional instruments to the safe management of stockpiles of weapons and ammunitions.

The hosting of such a workshop related to disarmament for the first time by the Ministry of Defense is a true reflection of Myanmar’s growing interest in strengthening of its capacity to safe management and control conventional weapons and ammunitions.
Despite its brevity of the workshop, we had had the valuable opportunity to exchange information on international instruments, domestic concerns, and best practices on small arms and light weapons not only with the local participants but also with the participating international experts. Technical issues such as stockpile management and marking, record-keeping and tracing were also discussed during the meeting. The participants also benefitted from the deliberations that examined the domestic border controls and international cooperation.

The Ministry of Defense of Myanmar has put in place its own proper system on marking, tracing and storage and transfer of all weapons in its hand. The system was inherited from our colonial past and it was modified to meet today’s needs. The Workshop has provided an opportunity for better exchange of information and best practices among all participants.

Although this may have been the first workshop that the Ministry of Defense of Myanmar had hosted after the democratic changes in the country, Myanmar authorities has already maintained regular contacts with the neighboring countries as well as with relevant regional and international institutions like the INTERPOL and ASEANAPOL on information sharing on arms smuggling.

My delegation views the Program of Action as a significant multilateral framework which can help States to prevent illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe that adequate and sustainable international cooperation and assistance, particularly in the areas of capacity building, is of paramount importance for developing countries to fulfill their commitments to full and effective implementation of the Program of Action.

In concluding, we wish to express our sincere thanks to the Governments of Germany and Switzerland for their support and assistance provided for the successful conclusion of the workshop that benefitted us in the areas of small and light weapons.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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