I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Mr. Chairman,

All UNASUR States are parties to the main international disarmament instruments, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We constitute, therefore, a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

Since August 2009, in a Special Meeting held in Bariloche, Argentina, the Heads of State and Government of UNASUR decided to strengthen South America as a zone of peace, committing to the establishment of a mechanism of mutual confidence in the field of security and defense, upholding their decision to refrain from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity of another State of UNASUR.

Following the decision of Bariloche, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Defense of UNASUR established the mechanism of Confidence and Security Building Measures that includes concrete measures of implementation and assurances. The Heads of State of the South American continent emphasized this determination at their Seventh Meeting, held in Paramaribo on August 30th of 2013, while noting that the South American Defense Council, created in 2008, is the ideal place for moving forward in the development of strategic thinking.

Mr. Chairman,

Since its creation in December 2008, the South American Defense Council has adopted its Statute and biennial Plans of Action, which underline actions on defense policies, military cooperation, humanitarian actions and peace operations, defense industry and technology, and education and training.

The decision was also taken in 2013 to establish the Centre for Strategic Studies on Defense, as an institution for generating knowledge and disseminating a South American strategic thinking on defense and security matters which is composed of, inter alia, the following measures:
1. Exchange of information and transparency related to the Defense Systems and Military Expenditures. In this context, UNASUR launched in May 2012 the South American Register on Defense Expenditures, compiling for the first time official information by the twelve UNASUR member states, based on a common agreed methodology developed to that effect.

2. Early notifications of military deployment or exercises in border areas; invitations for observers to participate in international exercises; and establishment of communication mechanisms in the field of Regional and extra-regional military activities.

3. Measures in the field of security regarding borders surveillance, prevention and deterrence of illegally armed groups, acts of terrorism, and strengthening of democracy and human rights.

4. Measures in the field of assurances — like the proscription of use or threat of use of force; South America as a nuclear weapons free zone in the framework of the Treaty of Tlatelolco; and respect for principles of International Law in cooperation treaties for defense purposes.

5. Measures in the field of compliance and verifiability.

Mr. Chairman,

Every year, the General Assembly reiterates its strong support for the role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) in the promotion of United Nations activities at the regional and sub-regional levels to strengthen peace, disarmament, stability, security and development among its Member States.

UNASUR highlights that UNLIREC has succeeded in implementing programs of work that are characterized by their interdisciplinary approach and the level of coordination with different actors in the region, including other United Nations bodies, national governments, provincial and municipal authorities and civil society representatives.

We stress the importance that the Centre’s programme of activities be devised and implemented in accordance with the priorities of the States of the region.

In this context, I wish to draw particular attention to the initiatives undertaken by UNLIREC in response to requests by States in Latin America and the Caribbean to provide assistance for the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). In this regard, UNASUR refers to the Practical Training Course on ATT Implementation, which complements resources provided by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).

Finally, Mr. Chairman, UNASUR States thank Governments, within and outside the region, for the financial support they have offered with a view to develop and implement the Regional Centre’s activities. In this regard, we encourage the international community to continue providing support to the Centre’s activities.

Thank you.