Let me on behalf of the Liberian delegation congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as Chair of this all-important meeting, and to also recognize the efforts of the bureau and friends of the Chair for the series of pre-conference consultations which have led to the successful convening of this meeting.

Let me also assure you Mr. Chairman, that Liberia is and remains committed to the implementation of the U.N. Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. We have been firmly engaged with the ECOWAS Framework for Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Peace Consolidation and have continued to demonstrate our support for this framework by fully implementing key provisions of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials.

Liberia appreciates and is encouraged by the technical and financial assistance it has received from ECOWAS over the period in support of efforts aimed at strengthening border management through the training of relevant border security personnel as well as confidence building workshops among border communities and border security agents.

Mr. Chairman, in the spirit of the UNPoA normative framework which encourages member states to promulgate and enact national legislation that will, among other things, regulate civilian possession of arms, I am pleased to inform you that Liberia has made progress towards the revision of the obsolete 1956 Firearms Traffic Act. Following series of stakeholders’ consultations, the new draft Firearms and Ammunition Control Act has been finalized and submitted to the Office of the President for onward submission to the National Legislature for its passage. We are exerting every effort to ensure the passage of the law during the current sitting of the parliament. When passed into law, the firearms legislation will provide adequate judicial regulations pertaining to the trafficking and possession of firearms.

Enhancing stockpile management and control
As you may be aware, Mr. Chairman, all arms in the country are under the UNMIL’s supervision, including arms approved by the UN Security Council Sanction Committee for use of the military and national security agencies. As part of our effort and commitment towards the implementation of the UNPoA, the Government of Liberia through its National SALW Commission was able to secure support from a number of partners including ECOWAS, UNREC, UNODA, UNMAS and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in enhancing the capacity of Liberian government security agencies in stockpile management and control, mainly facilitating the training of relevant security officers in charge of armories of national security agencies. We have just concluded in the last 3 weeks a three-day in-country training on Ammunition Stockpile Management using the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) with the aim to introduce personnel of the Military and national security agencies to the specific requirements of the IATG for the safe, effective and efficient storage and handling of ammunitions and explosives.

Towards the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument (ITI)
Liberia subscribes to conditions of marking and tracing of weapons in line with the ITI and the ECOWAS Convention. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to report that pursuant to the implementation of the ITI, the Government of Liberia through its National SALW Commission during the period secured two modern Count MC2000 electronic arms marking machines from the Regional Center on Small Arms (RECSA). The machines were donated as part of the AU/EU Small Arms Project for Africa managed by RECSA. Due to the urgency for applying markings on state-owned arms in line with internationally accepted standards, the National SALW Commission is currently in discussion with the UNMIL, the military and national security agencies to begin the standard marking of state-owned small arms and light weapons. Under the same project, Liberia is expected to receive a consignment of security scanners along with exit trays for explosives, weapons and contrabands, and metal detectors for use at the various border points.

International Cooperation and Assistance
Mr. Chairman, our national efforts in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects would not have yielded any result without the cooperation of a range of international actors and partners. In addition to direct technical and financial support we received from a number of regional and international partners, we have also been part of bilateral and multi-lateral meetings on small arms and light weapons within and outside our sub-region. We would like to use this occasion to extend our gratitude to ECOWAS, UNREC, the UNDP and other partners whose support mainly to the National SALW Commission has contributed in a meaningful way to the fight against the proliferation of illicit SALW in Liberia.

We would also like to encourage these partners to continue to do more especially as Liberia transitions from UN Peacekeeping to taking full responsibility of its own security, and we call on others to consider providing support towards efforts in keeping Liberia on a stable path.

To conclude Mr. Chairman, Liberia remains committed to the National reporting obligation on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument which we have demonstrated over the years by submitting national reports on a regular basis in line with the reporting period.