

**Statement by the United States of America on
Implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace,
in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons**

Delivered by Steven R. Costner

U.S. Department of State

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*UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and
Light Weapons in All its Aspects*

Mr. Chairman,

I thank the Friend of the Chair for preparing the working paper on marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons (A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/WP.4) to facilitate discussions today.

The United States is mindful that the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) has not enjoyed robust progress and participation by Member States. There appear to be several reasons for implementation of the ITI lagging behind, including the lack of technical capacity or training, the lack of appropriate laws and regulations to ensure mandating of the tracing of illicit weapons, as well as insufficient cooperation among the elements of our governments that conduct tracing. I would like to review what has been working and sketch out perhaps what practical steps might be taken to meet the challenge of full implementation of the ITI.

I will begin with the good news. The United States has worked bilaterally with nearly thirty nations across the globe to cooperate in the tracing of illicit firearms. Through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the federal agency authorized to trace firearms and to regulate the firearms industry in the United States, we have developed a web-based tracing program called eTrace that can be used to trace firearms wherever law enforcement has recovered illicit weapons and has access to the Internet.

To date, ATF has concluded agreements to trace U.S.-sourced weapons with 29 states, including Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom, the Member States of the Central American Integration System (SICA), and many Caribbean states. We are looking for additional partners and have recently invited all the members of the OAS and the EU to consider partnering to trace illicit weapons.

eTrace is available 24 hours per day/seven days per week and is provided free of charge to the more than 2,800 authorized law enforcement agencies throughout the world. The application is offered in English and Spanish. ATF processed more than 340,000 trace requests in fiscal year 2009.

Although this bilateral work will continue as an effective means to implement the ITI, there are many roads to full compliance that remain untraveled. As has previously mentioned, the absence of a Point of Contact or the lack of technical capacity are substantial obstacles to making progress on implementation. In this regard, the recent effort to supply nations with firearms marking machines is a significant step forward. The United States applauds this effort and looks for such work to continue.

As we look forward, we must identify additional obstacles that keep us from full compliance with the ITI. Is it legislative assistance, lack of training, insufficient technical experts in our nations, or a lack of understanding of the full value of tracing as a means to combat arms trafficking? In other words, what precisely is preventing nations from meeting our common obligations to mark weapons, keep records on their international movement, and trace them should the weapons turn up in crime? Until we can identify the problem, we are further from the solution. The United States stands as a faithful partner ready to assist to make the promise of the ITI, the end of illicit trafficking, one step closer to reality.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman