Statement of the delegation of the Russian Federation

Open-Ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

(New York, May 9-13, 2011)

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the implementation of the United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as to the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. In this respect due marking, record-keeping and tracing of weapons at all stages of their lifecycle are considered to be tools of preventing their diversion to illegal circulation.

In Russia we are working intensively on building a centralized inter-agency record-keeping system for military, service and civil firearms, grenade launchers, infantry jet flame throwers, man-portable air-defense and anti-tank systems. Besides, a comprehensive plan to counter illegal circulation of weapons, ammunition and explosives for 2011-2015 was adopted and is currently being implemented.

Interior Ministry of the Russian Federation is the main federal agency responsible for controlling SALW circulation and creating its united number databank. It also keeps records of lost (stolen) and recovered (seized, found, voluntarily handed in) firearms. There is an established network of cooperation among law-enforcement agencies of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

In its turn, Ministry of Defense has created centralized databanks of SALW records including those of lost ones.

The main objective of such databanks is to facilitate the process of tracing SALW and locating each of them, as well as identifying arms seized from illegal circulation.
In order to ensure due record-keeping and tracing of SALW in the Russian Armed Forces, special measures are adopted to control safe keeping of arms and ammunition, organization of their record-keeping and storage, legality of their giving out, use and discarding. Besides that, inventory check-ups take place on the annual basis.

A special governmental entity – Service for Arms Circulation Supervision in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, with subdivisions in service branches – was established to solve the tasks of controlling arms circulation within the Ministry of Defense, perfecting the legal framework dealing with arms circulation, operative tracing of each piece. As a result of its activities the number of arms stolen in the Russian Armed Forces has fallen more than twice from 2006 to 2010.

In addition the Service provides assistance to law-enforcement agencies in identification of seized arms and ammunition, uncovering of channels of arms diversion into illegal circulation. Thus, during 2010 the Service studied 128 requests on 481 small arms seized from illegal circulation.

Another way to enhance controls over circulation of small arms is the use of technologies of hidden additional marking. Introducing such technologies would allow checking if arms are in place in a non-contact way during inventory and record-keeping check-ups, displacements, repairs and transfers of arms, sufficiently reducing time required for such check-ups.

Simultaneously Russia is elaborating methods of physical and chemical examination of seized arms in order to recover eliminated or changed original markings.

In general, basic markings of civil and service arms currently used in Russia meet the requirements established by the UN Program of Action on SALW and the Permanent Commission of the 1969 Brussels Convention (Russia joined the latter in November 1994). It allows tracing arms from the moment of their manufacture to their disposal, and discovering channels of their diversion from the legal to illegal circulation. The markings made at the moment of manufacture on the main
parts of an arm and including its own serial number, factory stamp and the year of manufacture allow identifying unambiguously its manufacturer and the country of origin.

Our activities are outlined in a more detailed manner in the 2009 report “On the implementation of “the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons” and “the United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects” in the Russian Federation” submitted earlier to the United Nations Secretariat.