Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Lights and Light Weapons and all Its Aspects

Statement by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

May 9-13, 2011, United Nations, New York
The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has consistently called for the comprehensive implementation of the *International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons* (the ITI). Effective marking, record-keeping and tracing can significantly enhance responsible arms transfer practices and can be an essential tool in protecting civilians in armed conflict and other situations of violence from the poorly regulated availability of small arms and light weapons. States should adopt the laws, regulations and administrative procedures to ensure the effective implementation of this instrument.

At the 4th Biennial Meeting of States on the Implementation of the Programme of Action, the ICRC recommended that governmental experts directly involved in implementing the commitments of the ITI meet on a regular basis. The ICRC welcomes this Meeting of Governmental Experts, which will hopefully allow States to share their experiences, evaluate progress, and consider how to address obstacles in the implementation of this instrument.

As the ITI states in the second paragraph of its preamble, "*the tracing of illicit small arms and lights weapons, including but not limited to those manufactured to military specifications, may be required in the context of all forms of crime and conflict situations*". The ICRC urges all States to ensure that illicit weapons that are recovered during or after armed conflicts are traced, and to maximize tracing cooperation to this end.