Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of civil society and IANSA members in over 90 countries around the world.

I would like to congratulate the Chair on leading this meeting, the first of its kind, and an opportunity for experts to engage in areas so important to the successful implementation of the UN Programme of Action.

We have been greatly encouraged by the way that Member States have entered into the spirit of this meeting, engaging in a detailed, substantive discussion on all of the important subjects on the agenda.

The range of information on existing practice, as well as problems, has been extremely useful, and we commend states for this.

We are encouraged by the many existing, practical measures identified this week to implement and advance state responsibilities in these areas. It is also apparent that much work remains to be done.

My colleague will be touching on some of the specific and more technical issues that we have identified as particularly relevant as discussions have developed during the week.

But first of all we would like to take a step back and place the issues of marking, record-keeping and tracing in a slightly broader context.

In the first instance, we think it is fundamental to remember that while marking, record-keeping and tracing are central to the global struggle to the end the illicit and irresponsible use of small arms, they are not ends in themselves. Nor can they alone prevent the problems caused by small arms proliferation, diversion and misuse.

Rather, they must be developed, in conjunction with other measures contained in the UN PoA and other multilateral instruments, as part of a broader small arms control strategy which itself should serve a “higher” purpose. This must surely be to help prevent harm to individuals, communities, and indeed whole societies.

Moreover, we should be wary of letting the satisfaction of the completion of technical tasks — for example, marking all weapons in a territory, or transferring records from a manual to an automated system — obscure the fact that such endeavours are only worthwhile if they do indeed form part of a broader strategy to prevent gun violence.

In a world of limited resources, there is also a need to consider whether increased attention to marking, record-keeping and tracing should be a priority in all cases.

I am nervous that all of these caveats could be taken to mean that we think that this meeting is not important or proving extremely useful. That is not our intention.

It is merely to remind states that what we are doing this week fits into a bigger picture.

It is also worth keeping in mind the cascading and inter-related nature of these issues.
Everything starts with marking, without which nothing is possible but this must cascade down to effective record-keeping or it becomes a futile exercise.

Tracing is impossible without marking and record-keeping, but if there is no tracing, what is the point in marking and record-keeping?

And of course to be effective, tracing requires the proper engagement of all the parties to the history of the weapon.

From there we move to the bigger context to which I referred earlier.

States must act on the information that all this technical activity generates, be it for example in terms of improving stockpile management or border controls, training of police, arms transfer decision-making, or prosecution of law-breakers. Without this follow-through, all this activity is nothing more than sound and fury.

It is noteworthy that without meaningful international co-operation, the whole endeavour of marking, record-keeping and tracing of small arms is doomed to failure. Ultimately, effectiveness is based on states assisting other states to identify the provenance of small arms.

But experience suggests that it is often technical co-operation which leads the way to deeper engagement and interaction.

Thus, greater co-operation in marking, record-keeping and tracing may yield even greater benefits in other areas further down the track. We therefore commend this meeting, not just for what it might achieve on its own terms, but for what else it may contribute to as we go forward.

I have just a couple more general points before I hand over to my colleague.

Marking, record-keeping and tracing are preventive tools to prevent diversion to those who would misuse small arms. They apply not only to diversion into criminal channels but, equally importantly, diversion in conflict situations.

Diversion in both contexts threatens the safety of people and communities world-wide and each requires attention to tracing systems, in particular those that are context-effective. This is an issue to which my colleague will return.

We would also like to refer briefly to ammunition.

The diversion of ammunition is also critical in terms of feeding criminal activity and conflict. While we appreciate ammunition may not fit within the terms of reference of this meeting, we remain concerned that ammunition is not included in the International Tracing Instrument. However, the 2012 PoA Review Conference presents an opportunity for states to acknowledge this omission and explore how, where possible, to best include ammunition in marking, record-keeping and tracing systems.

I will now hand over to my colleague who is going to talk about record-keeping, tracing and international and regional cooperation, and the role of civil society.

Please note that in the interests of time what follows is not intended to be an exhaustive description of everything that falls under marking, record-keeping and tracing, but rather is a quick survey of just a
few of the things that have motivated the NGO community on these issues in the past and that have come out of the discussions over the course of this week.

I should also stress that most of the NGO representatives here this week are not experts in marking, record-keeping and tracing, and that in many respects we would not presume to be able to "compete" with many of the technicians here from government.

However it is the case that there are some NGOs who can bring a particular technical expertise to the table, and we would encourage states to keep that in mind when looking for technical support or assistance.

It is sometimes claimed that record-keeping is not worth the trouble.

That the registration of small arms in particular wastes money, and invades the privacy of gun owners.

Such arguments favour self-interest over the wider public interest.

And governments already know that as a method of keeping people safe, record-keeping does work.

Public health and safety are protected in many ways by public registries. Among other measures to reduce the toll of death and injury on our roads, governments licence drivers, and mark, trace and register their cars. We mark, trace and register aeroplanes, boats, dogs and jet-skis.

In the European Union, every head of cattle is marked, traced and registered. To protect the public from exploding home-made gas bottles, India marks, traces and registers each propane bottle. These are tried and tested public safety measures, designed to reduce the risk of injury.

The three pillars of record-keeping are to mark the object (that is, the car or the firearm), to licence the person (the driver or the gun owner), then to record both of these in a register.

Good record-keeping holds each owner personally accountable for any misuse or neglect. But as we have heard from the experts speaking here this week, all three of these components are complimentary and inter-dependent. If one aspect is weak, others fail.

The International Tracing Instrument deserves to be backed with more commitment by member states than current reporting levels suggest. If we see the UNPoA as a mechanism to save the lives of people, then marking, record-keeping and tracing are the engine-room. These are the measures on which the whole machine depends.

Those responsible for the design and operation of the ITI – those to whom citizens look for safety and support -- are your governments. And those tasked with taking the message home from this meeting are the people in this room. In the names of all victims of gun violence, we urge you to actively promote effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument

**Tracing is rarely done for recovered illicit SALW**

Tracing remains a tool used mainly by law enforcement circles in only few states and sub-regions. In other parts of the world, recovered small arms are traced infrequently or never. Importantly, state actors in many states remain unconvinced about the benefits of tracing illicit small arms. Further, in
most states, national tracing agencies are not systematically informed about the recovery of illicit small arms and are not instructed to trace every illicit one that is recovered.

The ITI encourages cooperation in tracing between states, but it does not encourage or require states to initiate traces. Preferably, there should be a standard that a state recovering an illicit small arm will automatically trace it within domestic records to identify whether it was diverted while within the state’s jurisdiction. If the small arm is not identified in domestic records, the state should then initiate an international tracing request.

Civil society welcomes the adoption of the Public Agents Firearms Regulations in Canada in 2008 as an example that could be followed by other states not yet operating the relevant standards. The Public Agents Firearms Regulations stipulate that the national tracing agency has to be informed of the recovery of any illicit small arm in Canada within 30 days of the recovery. In addition, the national tracing agency is required, by law, to trace any such small arm.

**Tracing of illicit SALW ammunition remains ignored**

At present, it is mainly UN Groups of Experts monitoring the implementation of mandatory UN arms embargoes with explicit mandates to trace illicit ammunition. Experiences of these groups demonstrate the viability of tracing operations in relation to ammunition transferred in violation of UN arms embargoes. Tracing operations by these groups has allowed for monitoring illicit ammunition flows as well as for the identification of diversion points. At the same time, any such tracing should not be understood to aim at uncovering concrete evidence that could be used by law enforcement agencies to initiate legal proceedings.

Debates on tracing illicit small arms ammunition remain marred by unrealistic expectations and limited technical understanding of possibilities. States should launch discussions on tracing illicit small arms ammunition that account for the differences between the monitoring of illicit flows and tracing for law enforcement purposes. Any such debates should also account for the differences in the traceability of ammunition produced for military markets and ammunition produced for civilian markets.

**Information provided in state reports**

As has been demonstrated this week, there is a growing wealth of experience of states in tracing operations and their success, including in respect to follow-up action that is taken once a point of diversion is identified. Increasing information is available therefore on whether the ITI achieves its purpose to increase accountability in the small arms trade. This information though is only infrequently reflected in state reports on the implementation of the ITI.

The guidelines for national reporting on the implementation of the ITI should encourage states to provide specific information on whether the national regulatory framework effectively promotes the conduct of tracing operations. The information provided on national experiences in tracing illicit small arms should also cover the frequency of tracing operations by states as well as relevant follow-up.

As my colleague said earlier, without meaningful co-operation both at regional and international levels, the whole endeavour is at risk.

We firmly support more coherent regional cooperation on marking, record-keeping and tracing, as this has the potential to:
- Contribute to the development of regional standards on, and approaches to marking;
- Establish common methods of recording and managing data on firearm markings; and
- Facilitate greater collaboration on the tracing of illicit firearms.

Regional cooperation also allows for those states with considerable expertise on marking and recordkeeping to provide technical advice and support to those states that are seeking to enhance their approaches to marking and recordkeeping.

In this regard, we recommend that regional training courses on marking, recordkeeping and tracing be developed in those regions where a need exists.

We also recommend that states consider, where possible, inter-regional cooperation to further enhance sharing of information on marking and recordkeeping, as well as wider and more effective collaboration on the tracing of illicit firearms.

Some IANSA members have been making valuable contributions to improving regional cooperation on marking and recordkeeping, as well as providing technical assistance, particularly in Africa.

Therefore we call upon states to continue to collaborate, where appropriate with civil society groups and networks.

**National frameworks**

We note that there has been some progress in implementing the key provisions of the ITI. However, we remain concerned that national small arms legislation in a number of states is outdated and not in line with the ITI. Therefore, we call upon those states to make the necessary legislative amendments.

In addition, we are concerned about the low number of National Points of Contact on the ITI listed on the ISS-POA website. We request states to urgently identify such a National Point of Contact and to provide the contact details to UN ODA.

**Conclusion**

I would like to conclude by reiterating that marking, record-keeping and tracing are one part of the larger picture in providing a comprehensive solution to prevent gun violence. And, as with all parts of a whole, the picture is not complete unless all the components are present.

It is with this in mind that we urge all those here today and their colleagues around the world to put their experience and effort into finding solutions to solve some of the issues raised by my colleague and others during the meeting this week.

Civil society remains committed to finding ways to supporting efforts, tracing and record keeping systems and is available to offer its assistance and knowledge in working with UN member states and other actors in order to do so. I would like to thank the Chair for his supporting civil society participation here, and we hope that the MGE will provide new impetus to work on marking, record keeping and tracing and that will input to a successful UN Review Conference in 2012.

Thank you.