The consideration of the 2008 BMS3 of the Implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to thank the you and delegations for the consultative efforts conducted on substantive preparations for this Meeting, leading to the selection of Marking, Record-keeping and Tracing as main themes for our meeting today. In this context, the importance of the framework provided by the ITI for the consideration of the three issues remains prominently evident.

From a practical standpoint, we are at an advantage today with regards to the implementation of the ITI as compared to the situation in 2008. We certainly have a better practical experience in implementing the instrument and have a better understanding today than we had then of ways and means to enhance its fullest and widest implementation.

The ITI was adopted by the General Assembly on 8th of December 2005. In the following year, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 61/66, which decided that the first meeting of States to consider ITI implementation would be held within the framework of the Third Biennial Meeting of States in 2008. In 2008, my delegation was asked by H.E. Ambassador Dalius Cekulis of Lithuania, Chair of BMS, to facilitate the preparation and drafting of the draft substantive report on the ITI dimension of BMS3. Wide consultations conducted with various delegations reflected an almost collective will to benefit from BMS3 to share national and regional experiences, to recognize best practices and to identify ways and means to promote such implementation where it lags behind or where assistance or cooperation are needed to allow the optimal and largest possible scale of benefiting from comprehensive measures contained in the instrument.

A number of national reports, which included a section on the implementation of ITI, presented prior to the BMS3, made the picture even clearer. Some identified problems in implementing the instrument or reflected that they could still have more room to implement its full potential but needed legislative help, technical
training or marking equipment or sought international cooperation and assistance, as well as experience-sharing as a route to that end. It was clear that once ITI was integrated in national legislation, practical implementation efforts revolved around three central pillars, namely Marking, Record-keeping and cooperation in tracing.

At the meeting, States considered the extent to which they has succeeded in enacting national regulations and procedures for marking of small arms and light weapons both at the time of their production or importation. They highlighted in this context that import marking could greatly facilitate the tracing of illicit SALW and heard expressions of interest in assistance to non-manufacturing states in this regard. States also considered accurate and comprehensive record keeping for all marked small arms and light weapons on their territories as a necessary requirement for the implementation of the ITI. In this context, some states highlighted their need for assistance in training personnel for record management and in the acquisition of hardware and software to improve their national record-keeping capacities.

On cooperation in tracing, the nomination of national point(s) of contact was highlighted as key to that end. States, which had not yet done so, were encouraged to nominate their national points of contact and to benefit, where appropriate, from mechanisms and facilities of the INTERPOL, in accordance with paragraph 35 of the ITI. Law enforcement training on the identification and tracing of small arms and light weapons was confirmed as an important asset in their ability to place effective tracing mechanisms in the context of all forms of crimes and conflict situations they might work on.

Many states noted in BMS3 the utility of regional workshops to enhancing awareness on the ITI, promoting international cooperation and for its effective practical implementation on the regional, national and global levels. One of many areas of international cooperation seen to have potential was the area of technology transfer.

In charting the way forward, States saw that weapons marking, record-keeping and tracing were mutually reinforcing activities which required integration on the national level. States were encouraged in that context to exchange information on potential technical, financial and other assistance which might be required by some
and which could be provided by others in the context of international cooperation be that in the bilateral, regional or multilateral level. States were encouraged at BMS3 to promote the role of the United Nations in promoting the ITI and in building national capacity which might be requested for its effective implementation.

States were invited to support the INTERPOL Weapons Electronic Tracing System and other mechanisms aimed at facilitating the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons. They viewed the web-based Programme of Action Implementation Support System as a useful tool for practitioners and policy makers involved in the ITI implementation and acknowledged the role of civil society in advancing ITI implementation in the areas of increasing public awareness and capacity-building.

This, Mr. Chairman, is the brief, account of the effort to consider the ITI implementation at BMS3. It is far from comprehensive, yet I hope it will be helpful in tracking progress on efforts in the context of the POA to consider ways and means to advance the implementation of the ITI. This brief account of the BMS3 consideration of ITI will not be complete if I fail to acknowledge the outstanding leadership of Ambassador Cekulis of BMS3.

Finally, the delegation of Egypt looks forward to a rich and constructive exchange on issues relating to ITI implementation and to a constructive consensual outcome that can help advance our collective objectives in this regard.

Thank you.