Statement by Israel on the issue of SALW marking – 9 May 2011

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Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship as well as on the extensive efforts exerted by yourself to prepare for this important meeting. Israel attaches great importance to the ITI and views its effective implementation as crucial for combating the illicit trade in SALW. With regard to the issue of marking, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the Israeli experience as well as some challenges we see with regard to this issue.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israeli companies manufacturing SALW are obliged by regulations to mark, at the time of manufacture, the weapons with unique markings which include the name of manufacture, country of manufacture as well as a serial number. They are also encouraged to include in the markings the year of manufacture, type and caliber. In reality, the four major Israeli manufacturers; IWI, LHB, BUL and Soltam include all of the aforementioned information in their markings using methods such as stamping and engraving.

With regards to SALW imported to Israel, those are required to have the necessary markings prior to their arrival to Israel.

It should be emphasized that in Israel, licenses for private possession of firearms are granted per weapon, and not as a general license for possession. In this respect, a license will not be obtained without the demonstration of the necessary markings.
Mr. Chairperson,

At this point we would like to refer to two challenges we see with regard to the issue of marking;

The first challenge refers to the fact that increasingly more components of SALW are made from materials other than metal. This has direct impact on the method of the marking employed and hence on the permanency of the markings or in other words on the ability to alter or deface the markings. This is of course crucial to states' ability to trace SALW.

The second challenge refers to marking at the time of import of SALW. This may be carried out by states of varying capabilities, inter alia with regard to expertise and machinery. This in turn will determine the method of marking employed, its permanency as well as possibly even adversely affecting the performance of the weapons. In this respect, ITI member states should look for ways and means to improve the situation, be it by providing assistance to enhancing the capabilities of importing states or by giving priority to carrying out marking by professional manufacturers.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.