Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin my brief remarks by congratulating you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this important meeting. I would like to thank Switzerland, Egypt and U.S. for their presentations on the development of the International Tracing Instrument. I would also like to thank Susan Parker for her presentation on reporting under the ITI. Let me offer a couple of comments on these presentations.

We were privileged to chair the GGE that looked at the feasibility of the eventual ITI and in that context we support the full implementation of the ITI to enable states to identify and trace in a reliable manner illicit SALWs, as well as to strengthen the implementation of UN arms embargoes (as also noted by the UNSG in his latest report on SALWs). Second, I would like to emphasise that the ITI recognises the interconnected nature of marking, record keeping and international cooperation. These are the three pillars of successful tracing of illicit SALWs. Finally, with regard to reporting, it was envisaged in the ITI that reports on its implementation could be combined with reports on the implementation of the UN PoA. Any analysis of data on reporting on the ITI should therefore consider these two types of reports together.

I thank you.
Remarks by India at the MGE, 10 May 2011

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would like to address briefly the issue of marking and record keeping of small arms and light weapons by highlighting some elements of the Indian experience and by trying to address some of the questions that you raised yesterday.

All small arms produced or manufactured in India are uniquely marked. This requirement is based in law. The Arms Act of 1959 provides that arms which do not bear specified identification marks may not be sold or transferred. Further, under the same Act, any person found in possession of a weapon without identification marks would be presumed to have removed or obliterated the marks unless proven otherwise.

With regard to technology and content, the SALWs produced by Indian factories are marked by stamping, engraving or laser marking to indicate the type, the country of origin (IN), number, manufacturer/factory of origin and the year of manufacture on one or more of the vital and critical components of the arm. A record of each and every weapon manufactured by the factory is kept in designated registers including the Gun Manufacturing Register and the Register of Rectification which contains data on arms which are not passed by the Proof House on first submission.

For imported firearms, if an imported firearm does not bear the manufacturer’s name, the importer is required to engrave appropriate identification marks identifying the importer as allotted by the Government under the provisions of the Arms Rules of 1962. Further, the Government has issued instructions to the procurement agencies not to import small arms which do not have markings indicating country of origin. To this end the requirements of para 8 of the International Tracing Instrument have been incorporated in the Request for Proposal for import of SALWs.

Let me now address a couple of the issues you raised and which other delegations have raised. First, on what technology is best suited for marking, in my view cost and recoverability of the mark (for tracing) are the most important considerations in the choice of technology. It should be noted here that stamping, one of the older technologies, is superior on both these counts. Second, on import markings, again as highlighted by the Kenyan delegation the issue of cost and resources is important. The exporting manufacturer could assume the responsibility and cost of marking, failing which the importing country can place the mark, preferably under a legally-binding requirement for marking. Finally, on marking of ammunition, I would like to note just as the U.S. delegation did yesterday that there are practical difficulties with marking ammunition. This is a complex issue with many facets. However, we can keep it under review. In this regard we thank the delegation of Brazil for highlighting their successful experience with laser marking of ammunition.
Remarks by India at the MGE, 12 May 2011

National implementation and international cooperation, including regional cooperation are two essential elements in the success of our efforts to implement fully the Programme of Action. We thank the representatives of various regional organisations in Africa and Latin America for sharing their experience in combating illicit SALWs. It is clear that despite their laudable efforts the basis for regional cooperation has not disappeared. In that sense regional cooperation is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the success of our efforts. Indeed it cannot take away the need for a broader international effort under UN aegis, which is necessary not only to pull together the various regional threads but also to provide a safety net where regional cooperation is insufficient or absent for various reasons.

The presentations also highlighted some of the challenges in regional cooperation including inter alia insufficient capacity and resources, gaps or differences in legal and regulatory frameworks and absence of mechanisms for cooperation, particularly timely sharing of information.

From India’s perspective, we are a party to all the thirteen counter-terrorism conventions and we have recently ratified the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime and its Protocol on Fire Arms. This in our view provides a solid basis for international cooperation. Bilaterally, we have 25 Joint Working Groups on Counter-Terrorism and a bilateral Joint Working Group in our region on border management. All of them touch upon the issue of illicit SALWs. Further, as part of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTECH) with Bay of Bengal littoral and other states such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and Sri Lanka, we have a joint working group to coordinate efforts in areas such as intelligence sharing, capacity building as well as strengthen joint efforts on counter-terrorism and transnational. Finally, we continue to support initiatives taken under UN auspices, including seminars, on SALWs. We believe that the UN regional centres could play a role in furthering regional cooperation on illicit SALWs.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.