Statement by the Chinese Delegation at the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and All Its Aspects

(New York, 10 May 2011)

Marking and Record Keeping

Mr. Chairman,

Since it is the first time for China to take the floor, I would like to join other colleagues to congratulate you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the meeting. And I will assure you the full cooperation of the Chinese Delegation.

Before I share with you the experience and practice of China on marking and record keeping of small arms and light weapons (SALW), I would like to brief you on China’s view on the International Tracing Instrument (ITI).

First, as one of the important follow-up actions of the United Nations Programme of Action (POA), ITI has become an important guiding document in the efforts to combat the illicit trade in SALW.

Second, we are all glad to see that, over the past six years, the international community has fully recognized the importance of marking, record keeping and tracing illegal SALW for the combat against the illicit trade in SALW. Parties have taken active measures to strengthen domestic legislation, law enforcement and institution building, to improve the marking and record keeping system and to enhance international tracing cooperation. All these efforts have promoted the implementation of the ITI in a comprehensive and effective manner. International, regional and sub-regional organizations also carried out constructive efforts in strengthening cooperation among national governments on the implementation of
the ITI.

Third, at present, the illicit trade in SALW is still severe. Parties should further implement the ITI and enhance international efforts in combating illicit trade in SALW. To that end, China upholds that to combat illicit trafficking of SALW, governments should shoulder main responsibilities.

We believe that marking and record-keeping play an indispensable role in identifying and tracing SALW. States should ensure manufacturers applying reliable marking to each piece of SALW during its production process. States should also establish complete and accurate record-keeping systems on each stage of SALW’s circulation and maintain these records, according to its national condition, as long as possible. This is crucial for countries to enhance the capacity of tracing to make sure the origin of each piece of illicit SALW can be identified and traced through strengthening administration over SALW marking and record keeping.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly introduce China’s practice on marking and record keeping of SALW.

China adopted its National Military Standards-Minute Regulations of Small Arms Marking in August 2007. In line with the POA and ITI, each piece of SALW is required to be stamped with a unique marking that provides information on country code, code of the Model of small arms, manufacturer’s code and a manufacturing serial number. The importation Arms in China are required to mark the export country and the year of importation. SALW manufacturers and arms-trading companies in China are asked to establish record-keeping systems for retaining complete and detailed information of SALW they manufacture or export. In China, according to the Arms Exports Management Regulation, all arms trade could only be operated by state-authorized arms-trading companies and there are now 3 arms-trading companies be licensed and permitted to export small arms. Furthermore, most of China’s
SALW manufacture enterprises have established special computerized information management systems to monitor SALW manufacturing and its movement. At present, China is working on improving and optimizing the marking system to make SALW manufactured in China easier to be identified and traced.

Mr. Chairman,

China believes that only with the enhancement of the capacity of every state, the full and effective implementation of the POA and ITI can be achieved. China will join the international community to make due contributions to this endeavor.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.