Intervention by Thailand on the issue of Marking, 9 May 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

It’s nice to see you back in NY chairing this session. I would like to join other delegations in congratulating Ambassador Jim Mc Lay on assuming the Chairmanship of this important meeting and in thanking him for his substantive preparations for the meeting.

Let me share with you Thailand’s experience on the issue of Marking.

Thailand has consistently conformed to the marking requirements for small arms and light weapons according to international tracing instrument implementation commitments. We are of the view that effective marking can circumscribe the prevalence of illicit small arms and light weapons and curtail suffering from the misuse of these weapons. Current national legislation provides latitude to allow for the implementation of the ITI commitments. Thailand does not domestically produce any SALW. We have strict practices to uniquely engrave serial numbers registering all imported weapons. Additionally, ammunition produced in Thailand are also serially marked and can be effectively traced.

However, we face some challenges as follows:

The first challenge is on “Marking alterations.”

Though we follow the implementation commitments of the ITI, Thailand faces shortcomings in weapon marking alterations. The sophistication of these alterations, coupled with the versatility of SALW modifications, have made it extremely difficult to trace weapons involved in crimes. Currently, Thailand is able, with intermittent success, to use chemicals to recover erased serial number markings.

The second challenge concerns the “Lack of proper tools and techniques.”

At provincial and district levels, the serial numbers of new weapons are manually marked. This could produce unclear markings which are not durable and can easily be altered by wrongdoers. As a result, tracing becomes more difficult or even impossible.

The third challenge is on “Harmonizing domestic marking practices with international standards.”

The relevant authorities have expressed budgetary and technical requirement concerns regarding harmonizing domestic marking practices with international marking standards. Budgetary challenges have made it difficult to track down markings of previously imported weapons prior to the current marking practices.

I therefore look forward to learning about the best practices and technical know-how on these issues: innovative marking measures that can prevent removal or alteration of markings, and techniques that can retrieve erased markings. Some innovative marking measures that will be useful in supplementing our current methods include gunshot residual marking samples, ammunition chamber inscription, but also any other practices that can be shared during this meeting.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.