Statement to the Small Arms and Light Weapons Programme of Action
Review Conference
29 August 2012

Thank you, Madame Chair, for the opportunity to offer a few brief remarks. As many delegates will remember, the Defense Small Arms Advisory Council is the only NGO to have participated in this process that is comprised entirely of companies that manufacture small arms and light weapons to meet the legitimate military and law enforcement requirements of states pursuant to the provisions of Article 51 of the UN Charter. Because of the special experience and expertise of our member companies, we have been able to offer a unique perspective during past discussions of how the Programme of Action might be most effectively structured to combat the illicit trade in military weapons. And let there be no mistake, our organization has no sympathy for—nor anything in common with—those who engage in the military arms trade unlawfully; we believe that the Programme of Action is rightly focused on preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in military arms, weapons which, when they fall into the wrong hands, have caused—and continue to cause—human suffering in so many parts of the world.

We believe that the international trade in military small arms and light weapons should be strictly regulated by states. We are perhaps the only NGO participating in the PoA review whose members actually manufacture and sell military small arms and light weapons and also deal with national regulations concerning production, export and import licensing of military small arms on a daily basis. Collectively, our companies have been in the arms business for hundreds of years. Because of that experience, we believe that we have a unique perspective on where and how the system might be improved.

During the PrepCom, we noted the recommendation regarding the ITI, that there be established a technical committee to draft recommendations on weapons marking in light of new developments in weapons design and manufacturing. This is an excellent example of an area where the military small arms industry will gladly contribute its technical expertise if asked to do so. We make this offer because experience strongly suggests that the best policies are those based on accurate information, both technical and practical, even when—perhaps especially when—that information runs counter to the conventional wisdom on the subject.

As always, Madame Chair, DSAAC stands ready to assist in any manner deemed appropriate.

Contact: D. Allen Youngman, Executive Director, execdir@dsaac.org