

**Statement by Mr. Vipul, Counsellor [Disarmament] Permanent Mission of India,
to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva at the Second Review Conference
of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the
Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects,
at New York, on August 29, 2012**

Madam President,

Please accept felicitations from the Indian delegation on your election as the Chair of the Second Review Conference of the UNPOA. We would also like to congratulate other members of the Bureau on their elections. We appreciate the transparent and inclusive manner in which you have undertaken the preparations for this Conference, including at the Preparatory Committee meeting in March this year, and assure you of our full cooperation for a successful outcome.

India associates itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of NAM.

Madam President,

India attaches high importance to the UN Programme of Action as the cornerstone of multilateral efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. As with many other States, India's national security has been adversely affected by terrorism, transnational organised crime, drug trafficking, piracy and illegal exploitation of natural resources, in all of which illicit trade in SALW plays a crucial role. The full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action is therefore a priority for India, especially as a means for combating terrorism and transnational crime. As such this Review Conference which is mandated to review the implementation of the Programme of Action assumes great significance.

It is evident that Member States have made progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action over the past decade. However, it is also true that much remains to be done. Despite the efforts of responsible States and international organizations, small arms, light weapons, ammunition and explosives continue to move illicitly across borders. It is therefore imperative to further strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action in an inclusive and consensus based manner. In this regard, India welcomes the return of consensus to the POA process as evidenced by the successful holding of the 4th BMS in June 2010, the first Meeting of Governmental Experts in May 2011 and the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference in March 2012. We hope that a consensus-based approach will mark this Conference as well as follow-up meetings of POA.

Madam President,

India has a robust legislative and administrative mechanism to combat and eradicate the menace of illicit small arms and light weapons. The details of the steps taken by India for implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument can be found in our national reports. We welcome the efforts towards standardization of the reporting format and the online

reporting tool introduced from this year. We used the online reporting tool to submit our national report this year.

As a country with more than 15,000 kilometres of land borders with seven neighbours and a coastline of more than 7500 kilometres, border management is a significant challenge for India. A principal objective of India's border management policy is to secure our long borders against illicit trade and other threats while facilitating legitimate trade, commerce and people-to-people links. The Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India has set up a Department of Border Management to focus attention on issues related to proper management of borders and strengthening institutional coordination and implementation. As a preventive measure against smuggling of illegal arms through ports, container scanning systems are being installed at our major ports. We have established productive bilateral and multilateral avenues of cooperation in controlling illicit trading of small arms and light weapons.

India had the honour to Chair the GGE whose recommendations led an Open-Ended Working Group to negotiate International Tracing Instrument. India's national report on UNPOA implementation includes information on ITI implementation as well including our marking and record keeping practices. We believe that full implementation of the ITI will go a long way in tackling illicit trade in SALWs, international terrorism and transnational crimes. The ITI recognised the interconnected nature of marking, record keeping and international cooperation. These are the three pillars of successful tracing of illicit SALWs. We encourage full reporting on the implementation of the ITI by Member States as part of their national reports.

Madam President,

Let me now turn to our expectations from this Review Conference. We believe that the Review Conference provides Member States a valuable opportunity to reaffirm the obligations stipulated in the Programme of Action and to reiterate the commitment of States to implement them. It is also an occasion to comprehensively review the progress in implementation of the Programme of Action so as to identify gaps in implementation of the Programme by States and suggest concrete measures which need to be undertaken to fully implement the Programme.

As Member States we should commit to making further substantive progress in the implementation of the Programme by the Third Review Conference. In doing so, we should strive to keep the language in our outcome document(s) consistent with the objective of the Programme of Action i.e. to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Review Conference should also indicate the way ahead on strengthening international cooperation and assistance for enabling States which lack the capacity and seek international assistance to implement the Programme.

With regard to the next inter-sessional programme of meetings of the POA, we believe that the distinct but related nature of Review Conferences, BMS meetings and expert group meetings should be maintained. Issues that require further work to strengthen the political understanding on their implementation can be tackled at a BMS meeting. The Meeting of Governmental Experts can focus on practical issues that are relevant for implementation at the national, regional and international levels. Proliferation of reports and meetings and indeed new mechanisms or burdening the POA with timelines and targets should be avoided. Instead, existing follow-up mechanisms should be reinforced and related clearly to the core obligations of the POA.

The areas selected for focussed attention in the next cycle should reflect a good balance among priorities of different groups of member states and regions. The selection of some subjects for in-depth consideration in the next cycle should not lead to overlooking the challenges in implementation in other areas. For instance, significant gaps remain in the areas of national controls, international cooperation in combating illicit transfers, transfers to non-state actors etc. There is a need to continue to address these issues in the POA framework.

In terms of our work in the next two weeks, we believe that the preparations you have undertaken for the Conference stands us in good stead. The informal consultations on the four zero drafts presented by you under your own responsibility have indicated the priorities and concerns of various delegations. We believe that they are a good basis on which the outcome of this Review Conference could be arrived at following negotiations in the next two weeks.

Madam President,

In conclusion, let me reiterate the importance we attach to the POA as the main international framework to deal with the issue of illicit trade in SALW. We hope that this Review Conference would be able to preserve the consensus driven nature of the POA process and make concrete suggestions for progress in POA implementation. India stands ready to contribute to a successful outcome of the Conference.

Thank you.

BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS