STATEMENT BY MR. AMANDEEP SINGH GILL, MINISTER [DISARMAMENT], PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE CONFERENCEON DISARMAMENT, GENEVA, ON THE PREPARTORY COMMITTEE FOR 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 MARCH 19, 2012

Madam Chairperson, I will begin by congratulating you on your election as Chairperson of this meeting. My delegation is pleased with the open, inclusive and purposeful manner in which you have pursued preparations for the Prep Com and the Conference. Please be assured of our full cooperation for a successful outcome. India associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of NAM.

2. As with many other States, India's national security has been adversely affected by illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, which are closely linked to terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, piracy and illegal exploitation of natural resources. India believes that combating and eradicating illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in all its aspects is a key element in global, regional and national security, and the corner stone of multilateral efforts to curb illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons is the UN Programme of Action adopted by consensus at the UN Conference on Small Arms in July 2001. As such we attach importance to the Second Review Conference of the PoA to be held later this year.

3. The full implementation of the Programme of Action especially as a means for combating terrorism and transnational crime is a priority of India. India has a robust legislative and administrative mechanism to combat and eradicate the menace of illicit SALW. Our endeavours in this regard have been regularly highlighted through our national reports. We welcome the efforts towards standardisation of reporting format and the online reporting tool introduced during Meeting of Governmental Experts last year. We are pleased to inform that we have already submitted our national report online.

4. Mr Chairman, despite efforts by responsible states and international organisations, illicit trans-border movement of SALW, ammunition and explosive continues to be a major concern. India has more than 15,000 kilometers of land borders with seven neighbours and a coastline of more than 7500 kilometers including island territories. Securing our borders against illicit trade and other threats while facilitating legitimate trade, commerce and people to people links are among the principle objectives of India's border management policy. A Department of Border Management was created under the central Ministry of Home Affairs to focus attention on issues related to proper management of borders, strengthening institutional

coordination and implementation, creating infrastructure like Integrated Check Posts (ICPs), roads fencing and floodlighting as well as the implementation of the Border Development Programme. As a preventive measures against smuggling of illegal arms through ports, container scanning systems have been installed at our major ports.

5. India is committed to bilateral cooperation on border management. For instance, India and Nepal, which share an open border, have a Joint Working Group on Border Management to discuss issues of mutual security concern and take decisions to further consolidate cooperation in combating trans-border crimes. Integrated border management projects have been taken up with Bhutan and Bangladesh as well.

6. At the regional level, India participates in efforts aimed at combating illicit trafficking of SALW and terrorism. This includes our engagements with the SAARC, BIMSTEC and ASEAN forums. In addition, bilateral cooperation and Joint Working Groups have been established with several countries in the region. Capacity building assistance has been provided to police personnel of Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives. India has contributed to the UN Regional Centre in Kathmandu and we hope that the work of the Centre would support efforts towards combating illicit small arms and light weapons in the region.

7. Globally, we believe that all States should re-commit themselves to the full and effective implementation of the UNPOA as the main framework for addressing illicit trade in SALWs. Gaps in implementation should be addressed and international cooperation and assistance should be strengthened in line with felt needs. The full implementation of the international tracing instrument must be pursued in parallel in order to prevent illegal transport of SALWs. Second, the inclusive and consensus-based approach developed under UN auspices to implement the POA must be continued with renewed vigour. 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 and of the first meeting of the governmental experts in May 2011. It is important that the upcoming Conference focus on reviewing the implementation of the POA in a comprehensive manner without reviewing or reopening the programme itself.

8. Let me conclude with some brief thoughts on follow-up to the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. With regard to the future of the implementation process, we believe that the distinct but related nature of Review Conferences, BMS meetings and expert group meetings should be maintained. The Meeting of Governmental Experts can focus on practical issues that are relevant for implementation at the national, regional and international levels. Issues that require further work to strengthen the political understanding on their implementation can be tackled at a BMS meeting. Proliferation of reports and meetings 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. Synergy between different

aspects of POA implementation should be strengthened within existing resources.

9. Madam Chairperson, I thank you for this opportunity to share India's views under Agenda Item 7. Our main message is that we should preserve the consensus driven nature of the POA process while maintaining the focus of international action on the area of illicit trade in SALWs where such action can deliver maximum benefits. India stands ready to contribute to the successful outcome of the Review Conference.

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