Preparatory Conference for the Review Conference of the
United Nations Programme of Action against
the Illicit Arms Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons

Statement of the Spanish Delegation
By Minister Counsellor Victoria González-Román
New York, 19 March 2012

Madame Chair,

First of all, the Spanish delegation would like to congratulate you on your election to preside over this Preparatory Conference and would like to offer you our cooperation for its success as the first step towards the future of the United Nations Review Conference. We would also like to congratulate Ms. Angela Kane on her recent appointment as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

During this week, the international community has the opportunity to put in place all the instruments necessary for this Review Conference to mark a turning point in the fight against the illicit arms trade, and to concentrate in those issues that concern the international community, which are reflected in the “Indicative Non-Papers” that have been circulated and that are of a high value.

Madame Chair,

Spain fully supports the position of the European Union in its statement and would like to highlight the following points on their implementation at a national level for consideration during this week debates:

The matter to establish stronger controls on arms transfers and their ammunition. This is a key issue in the implementation of the Programme of Action, and is becoming the focus of a debate, which finds an echo in other international forums such as the Arms Trade Treaty process.

Security in the maintenance and management of stockpiles or arms: The UN programme of Action should pay special attention to this matter. In the last few years, we have witnessed unfortunate ammunition explosions, which have caused chaos and destruction. The recent events in Africa are an example of a disaster already suffered by all continents. This is an issue in which international cooperation plays an important role, and if we approach it with conviction within the UN Programme of Action it can play a greater one in the prevention of future disasters.

Expanding on the broader approach to security of stockpiles, we cannot overlook the risk of potential diversion of weapons to organised criminal and terrorist groups. The UN Programme of Action should continue to look for solutions to this threat, mainly in the case of MANPADS. Taking into account the destabilising potential of these weapons, the Spanish delegation considers that this issue should be given particular attention.

Madame Chair,

Spain believes that all efforts in the field of disarmament and control of firearms, particularly in the implementation of the Programme of Action, will see their results multiplied when they are articulated at regional level.
Spain has maintained a firm commitment in the fight against the illicit arms trade, from a regional perspective and within the UN multilateral framework by supporting its Agencies and programmes aimed at increasing the levels of regional and global security, such as our collaboration carried out on an ongoing basis with human and material resources with UNLIREC in Central America.

My delegation would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the Central American Integration System in the fight against illicit firearms in the Central American region. It is our opinion that the UN Programme of Action should focus on the effective promotion and support of the implementation of the provisions at a regional level.

Furthermore, with reference to the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons at a global level, Spain would like to highlight the need to take advantage of the synergies and opportunities offered in this field. In this regard, I would like to add the following points:

We would welcome a fixed mandate in peacekeeping operations aimed at management of marking and tracing, destruction of surpluses and security of weapons stockpiles in order to make the best use of the UN instruments for attaining peace and international security, and thus ensure a lasting peace and stability in those regions where UN peacekeeping missions are deployed.

The links between the UN Programme of Action and the Arms Trade Treaty process: These instruments should never overlap; on the contrary, they should complement each other in different facets: effectiveness of the arms embargo imposed by the UN, a margin squeeze for arms traffickers’ manoeuvre, transparency in standard global operating procedures on investigating arms trafficking, etc.

A closer cooperation with International Organisations such as the WHO and INTERPOL to assist the UN Programme of Action in the implementation of the provision of the instruments already set in motion by these International Organisations.

In this context, small arms and light weapons and munitions should be mentioned in the international instruments, such as the UN Register of Conventional Arms or the future Arms Trade Treaty.

Madame Chair,

To conclude, I would like to add the need to include the civil society to this process, the first and ultimate beneficiaries of the measures to be considered in this debate, which will materialise in concrete measures in the Review Conference to help guarantee a lasting peace and international security, which ultimately leads to the saving human lives.

Madame Chair,

The Spanish delegation would like to thank you for your productive efforts during this week meetings and would also like to offer you its collaboration to make this Preparatory Conference a success.

Thank you very much.