Statement of

The Arab Republic of Egypt

before

The Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference to Review progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

20 March 2012

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Madame Chair

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you and other members of the bureau on your election and to express Egypt confidence that under your able leadership, the Preparatory Committee will advance our work, leading to achieving a successful 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. I would like also to congratulate Mrs. Angela Kane for her appointment as the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on 8 March 2012. My delegation aligns itself with the Statements delivered earlier by Indonesia on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement, by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group, and by Mauritania on behalf of the Arab Group.

Our preparatory committee meeting today is of paramount importance, as it is intended to pave the way for the Review Conference to assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the 2001 United Nations Program of action. The basis of this review, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/47 should be concentrated around the question whether we, as member states, have faithfully implemented our commitments. The commitments of the donor countries, international organizations and arms producers to build the capacity of states and to avail necessary financial and technical assistance to implement the needed measures nationally, regionally and internationally on one hand, and the commitment of all other countries, particularly non-producing countries, to combat illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons on the other hand.

Despite the failure of the review conference in 2006 and the lack of necessary international assistance, progress have been made. National measures have been under implementation, legislations have been strengthened, implementation of regional initiatives have been advancing. So the task at hand today is primarily to assess how best to support those efforts through availing proportionate funding to address the needs of the affected states to implement the PoA in a manner that ensure supporting their self defense capabilities and preventing the adverse security political and social aspects of the illicit trade of SALW’s.

At the time nuclear disarmament and non proliferation of nuclear weapons remains the first priority of the international community as stipulated in SSOD1, Egypt is committed to achieve the desired progress by all peoples and states in
preventing the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, through the full implementation of all the PoA commitments agreed by consensus in 2001.

Madame Chair

Egypt believes that the adoption of the PoA by consensus in 2001 should provide all the incentives to adopt the outcome of this review process by consensus as well, thus sending the right signal about the unity of the international community, rich and poor, developed and developing, producers and customers, in strengthening national, regional and international cooperation towards its full implementation.

In this respect, Egypt would like to put forward some important elements aimed at ensuring the successful review process:

1- The recommendations of the Preparatory Committee to the Review Conference on all relevant matters, including the draft Agenda, should abide by the agreed mandate of the Review Conference as mandated by the General Assembly, which is to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. Attempts to add new commitments or to reinterpret the PoA in a manner different to the letter and spirit of the PoA should be avoided.

2- The review process should be based on a balanced assessment of the implementation of all elements of the Programme of Action without exception. My delegation expresses its appreciation to you, Madame Chair for using the indicative non-papers as a negotiating tool till the end of this preparatory meeting and stresses that future conduct of the review process shall remain within a state-driven process that would include the different elements of the Program of Action in a manner that reflect the aspirations of member states without going beyond the 2001 document. In this regard, Egypt emphasizes the necessity to avoid adding new commitments that are not agreed upon by consensus in the General Assembly. Other commitments that are being advanced by other principles and subsidiary organs of the United Nations could be taken into consideration without turning them into additional commitments on member states.

3- The African continent represents by far the most pressing priority in our collective effort to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Therefore, we have to redouble our efforts to address the underlying causes of conflicts in Africa including poverty, epidemics and marginalization that affect many states in Africa
and to assist capacity building in the implementation of the PoA financially and technically.

4- The developing countries have assumed their national responsibilities, within their limited national abilities, through continues efforts in implementation of the POA, the international community, in particular developed countries, international financial institutions and international organizations, have to fulfill their respective responsibilities as well. That responsibility goes beyond offering short term assistance and should be expanded to providing sufficient financial and technical assistance in quality and predictability to the developing countries toward implementing the PoA, within a long term strategic move aimed at achieving sustainable development and addressing other underlying causes.

5- An equally important and related issue concerns how the scale and effectiveness of the international assistance can be measured and improved, as there is a need for indicators to evaluate whether the assistance provided to support national efforts was adequate. There should be reports by major arms exporters on their PoA-implementation related financial and technical assistance, including the level of main assistance to developing countries. Such assistance should not be based on reallocation of resources devoted to economic and social development programmes and should not be at the expense of support for developing countries in the execution of their national plans to attain the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

6- The Non-Align Movement, which Egypt is honored to be chairing now, has underlined in its working paper on Enhancing International Cooperation and Assistance, concrete ideas that deserve great attention. This Working Paper will be presented to the preparatory committee during its meeting this week. We expect that its provisions will constitute an integral part of our future work on this important issue.

7- The responsibilities of developed states and major producers includes also strengthening their own national legislations and measures aimed at regulating the manufacture, possession, trade and brokering in Small Arms and Light Weapons, thus preventing their illicit manufacture, transfer, circulation and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread, especially into conflict areas and post-conflict situations.
Madame Chair

Finally, Egypt stresses once again the importance of strengthening our collective efforts in order to ensure the successful conclusion of the review process through recommendations that enhances the capacity of states in implementing the POA, in an integrated and balanced manner, based on the agreed principles upon which it was built in 2001, till we achieve our objectives in the years to come, gradually but steady and with vigor and determination.