Intervention on follow-up, 20 March, India

In continuation of our statement of yesterday, I would like to make a few brief remarks on follow-up. Before I do so, allow me to thank the Japanese delegation for presenting a working paper on follow-up. Japan has made an immeasurable contribution to this meeting by stimulating debate on this important subject through the paper. In this regard, my delegation wishes to emphasise the following six points:

1. Any follow-up process should be faithful to the nature and content of the UN PoA and preserve its integrity as well as the distinct but related character of the Review Conferences, Biennial Meetings of States and meetings of experts.
2. The type and frequency of meetings should not impose an undue burden on our individual and collective resources, and in particular should not prejudice the full participation of developing countries. In principle, we can look at a meeting every other year.
3. We can also agree in principle to more expert level consideration of issues in the format of MGEs, which have the advantage of being open-ended and inclusive compared to GGEs, which are by their nature limited. The BMS format should be preserved at the same time to allow for review of implementation at national, regional and global levels, also in light of national reports.
4. With regard to subjects, we believe that this is a political choice to be made by member states at the appropriate time. The selection of some subjects for in-depth study at the next cycle should not lead to an overlooking of implementation challenges 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. All of these may not be addressed in processes outside the PoA and even if they are, the resulting obligations may not be adequate or universally applicable. Therefore we should preserve space within the PoA framework to continue to address them.
5. The areas selected for focused attention in the next cycle should reflect a good balance among priorities of different groups of member states and regions. For instance, while stockpile management and safety may be an important issue in one region, it may not necessarily be so for other regions where for instance international cooperation on tracing illicit arms or curbing illicit transfers may be more important. We do not believe that there is an immediate need to focus on a reporting template. As several delegations have pointed out, international cooperation and assistance as well as regional efforts could both be retained as cross cutting themes throughout the next cycle.
6. The UNGA resolution on illicit trade in SALW has proved to be a useful platform for harmonizing positions as well as an important link in the institutional chain of
expert meetings, BMSs and Review Conferences. As in the past, it can provide the opportunity to delineate subjects and mandates for upcoming meetings.

Madam Chair, we believe that the above six points, if reflected in our work, would allow us to answer the call of BMS4 for continuity, complementarity and coherence of follow-up.