PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE REVIEW CONFERENCE ON THE UN PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

AGENDA ITEM 7.A.I.:
PREVENTING, COMBATING AND ERADICATING THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SALW IN ALL ITS ASPECTS AT THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVEL

STATEMENT BY
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

(NEW YORK, 21 MARCH 2012)
Madame Chair,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Preparatory Committee of the Second Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action. My delegation is confident that, under your guidance and leadership, we will be able to succeed in strengthening the Programme of Action and improving its implementation.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Angela Kane on her appointments as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

My delegation fully subscribes to the statement pronounced yesterday by the European Union. Allow me, however, to present some remarks in a national capacity.

Madam Chair,

Eleven years after the adoption of the UN Programme of Action, the illicit trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons remains a cause for concern for the international community. We know too well that such trade is fuelling violence, instability and enormous human suffering in many parts of the world. It is therefore of the most importance that here, at the United Nations, the international community is taking this issue seriously. And even more important, that there is a commitment to tackle the causes of illicit trade and trafficking and find ways to curb it effectively.

Italy is therefore looking forward to the upcoming Review Conference and hopes that it will be able to agree on a work plan which will further strengthen the Programme of Action.

As far as this Preparatory Committee is concerned, Italy is pleased with the programme of work that you have devised, Madam Chair. The fact that we have only one week at the PrepCom and nine working days at the Review Conference requires from all of us a focused, concrete and result-oriented approach.

My delegation is thankful to you for the six indicative non-papers you have circulated in advance of the meeting. They seem to us to be quite exhaustive, covering most important issues in the thematic areas we have identified.

Madame Chair,

Allow me to present some specific comments.

With regard to the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national level, Italy supports the inclusion of the issue of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADs) as one which requires serious consideration at the RevCon. Illicit trafficking and use of
MANPADs constitute a serious threat to stability and is a cause of deadly effects on civilian population, including civil aviation. We therefore believe that there are measures that could be carried out, at the national level, to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade of such deadly weapons.

On the implementation at the regionale level, Italy recalls the activities carried out within the European Union and within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on SALW as clear examples of the our commitment to act against illicit trade of SALW at the regional level. In general, we believe that action at the regional level is one of the necessary ingredients for improving the effectiveness of measures aimed at tackling illicit trade of SALW.

As far as measures at the global level are concerned, there are two aspects that we would like to elaborate on.

First of all, we would like to recall the importance of the UN Firearms Protocol as a key component of the international efforts aimed at curbing the illicit trade of firearms and the role that such weapons play in transnational organized crime. Italy has been at the forefront of the international efforts to fight transnational organized crime, through the Palermo Convention, and we see very much the connection between the phenomena we combat through that legal instrument and the phenomena we try to curb through the Programme of Action.

As other delegations have already pointed out, there is a link between the PoA and the ATT Process. Should the UN Conference in July adopt the Arms Trade Treaty, as we strongly hope, then the RevCon must take into account the ATT and the impact that it will certainly have on the implementation of the Programme of Action. My delegation is also of the opinion that, through greater transparency, we will be able to better curb illicit trade. That is why Italy, together with its EU partners, support the inclusion of Small Arms and Light Weapons as a standing category of the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

Madam Chair,

In conclusion, let me reassure you of my Delegation full support during this meeting and at the Review Conference.

I thank you, Madam Chair.