STATEMENT OF NIGERIA DELIVERED BY CHUKA UDEDIBIA ON INTERNATIONAL TRACING INSTRUMENT AT THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE OF UN PROGRAMME OF ACTION, WEDNESDAY, 21 MARCH 2012

Madam Chairperson,

From the time of adoption of the UN Programme of Action in 2001, States had always identified marking and tracing illicit small arms and light weapons as a key mechanism for national, regional and international efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit SALW. The adoption of the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) in 2005 represented a partial fulfillment of the desire of States in that regard. Though my delegation had expressed, and still expresses preference for a legally-binding ITI, the main challenge before us today remains the adoption of a robust strategy for strengthening the implementation of ITI as already adopted.

On the character of the instrument specifically, my delegation wishes to state, as it had done on several occasions in the past, that a legally-binding ITI presents a much better promise in achieving our collective goal than a political document. It is our hope that States should at one point in future re-energize discussions on this subject that is so critical to the overall success of UNPoA implementation.

We recognize that at various international fora including BMS4 and MGE where the issue of implementation of ITI was considered, States had provided information on the difficulties they had encountered in implementing ITI and highlighted areas where international cooperation and assistance could help advance implementation.

We are, therefore, of the view that the Second Review Conference should take into account the issues raised by States that could promote ITI implementation. This can effectively be carried out through identification of key impediments and adoption of effective measures to overcome them.

It is encouraging to note that INTERPOL has recorded a significant increase in tracing requests. We underline the importance of ensuring that responses to tracing requests on the part of INTERPOL actually result in stemming the flow of illicit SALW across borders.
Nigeria believes that regional and sub-regional organizations have important roles to play in facilitating progress on ITI implementation. In this regard, it is our sincere belief that the right to make tracing requests accorded to States and UN peace support operations be extended to peace support missions undertaken by regional and sub-regional organizations that enjoy UN support. The practical experience in the collective endeavour of the African Union and sub-regional organizations in Africa has necessitated the call for a re-consideration of this issue. For the current peace support engagement of the African Union in Somalia to be successful, for example, it is critical that the AU mission there be conferred the authority to make tracing requests. As you are aware, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) had in the past succeeded in restoring peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone, indeed in the Mano-River Union as a whole. There is, therefore, the need for operations of this nature that enjoy UN support to be granted authority for making tracing requests.

In this connection, it is critical that all peace support operations in conflict environments be given the capacity to request information on the source or sources of weapons that circulate illicitly their area of operation, if such operations are to be successfully executed.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson