Statement by H.E. Ambassador Ham Sang Wook

Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

at the Preparatory Committee for the Third 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 – Part II (Int’l Tracing Instrument)

at the UN Headquarters, New York
March 22, 2018

Thank you, Mr. President.

My delegation would like to take the floor again to reiterate our commitment to the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument). As one of the most practical outcomes of the Programme of Action (PoA), the ITI features a framework for cooperation in tracing.

In the Republic of Korea (ROK), small arms and light weapons are registered and regulated by a dual electronic system run by the Acquisition Program Administration and the National Police Agency. In addition to manufactures’ marking and record-keeping requirements under the Act of Defense Acquisition and the Act on the Control of Firearms, Swords, Explosives, etc., this system adds precision to our firearm tracing system and enables us to better correspond to various inbound law enforcement inquiries to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons.

With a view towards promoting transnational or inter-agency exchanges of information requisite for the tracing of illicit trade of small arms, the ROK
government would like to underline the importance of INTERPOL's Illicit Arms Records and tracing Management System, or "iARMS." Identified in the ITI as a key partner in the implementation of firearm tracing activities, we strongly believe that INTERPOL's system will not only contribute to tracing efforts, but will also help identifying and prosecuting the very traffickers of small arms and light weapons that fuel armed conflict around the world.

Mr. President,

As the 2001 UN PoA and its 2005 ITI offered us detailed guidance in shaping the international community's efforts to curb the trade of illicit small weapons during the last decades, it is now high time for us to consider the introduction of another forward-looking guide with regard to the implications of recent developments in weapon-making technologies. This includes the advent of polymer handguns and modular weapons, new manufacturing and marking methods, increased access to 3-D printing, etc. Recent news reports have indicated that a design of a working plastic gun was downloaded by more than 100,000 people just in two days of its disclosure.

Given the increasing threat from the advancement of 3-D printing technologies, which can be used by malicious actors in manufacturing small arms or their parts more quickly and cheaply, the ROK government proactively introduced, in 2016, a regulation banning the online distribution of blueprints for making firearms and explosives.

Before concluding, the Republic of Korea would like to mention that ensuring adequate technical support for those who finds difficulty in addressing new developments in technology can be just as important as adapting our marking, record-keeping, or tracing to those developments. The ROK stands ready to work with all Member States to fully and effectively implement the ITI and continues to offer our support to you Mr. President in successfully concluding our deliberations this week.

Thank you. /End/