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General Statement on Cluster 4, Conventional Weapons
by Ambassador John Freeman as Presidency
on behalf of the European Union

New York, 26 October 2005

(Check against delivery)
Mr Chairman

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on draft decision, L55 entitled “International instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons”.

The EU welcomes the hard work done by the Open Ended Working Group on Marking and Tracing, under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Thalmann. Whilst supporting the decision to adopt the instrument we must register our regret that no operational provisions on ammunition and peacekeeping operations were included, and that the instrument is not legally-binding. It is however an important step in the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action. In that sense, it represents a positive signal from the international community to those countries most affected by this scourge. If it is applied by States with the necessary political will, the content of the instrument will help to discourage, and thus reduce, the illicit trafficking of SALW. We hope that it can be strengthened at further review meetings. The EU will be strongly committed to promoting further the issue of ammunition, thus taking up the recommendations of the Chairman’s Procedural Report. The EU appeals to all Member States to support the adoption of this Decision by consensus. The EU would regret any break in consensus.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.