Mr. Chairman,

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the consideration of the issue of conventional weapons within the United Nations. We reaffirm the sovereign and inherent right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms for their self-defense and security needs in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. Any arrangement for regulation of conventional armaments should be in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

We are of the opinion that for addressing effectively the negative implications emanating from illicit arms trade, it is essential to develop and maintain an integrated approach.

My delegation believes that the legitimate and licit conventional arms trade among Member States is not the major problem and no urgent need exist for this matter to be dealt with at this stage. As reported by the UN Register System, major categories of conventional arms transfers are covered by the Register and are mainly transparent. It is evident that illegal transfer of certain categories of conventional weapons such as aircrafts, warships, missiles and tanks could not be taken place as easily as illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Therefore, there is little merit to try to cover such transfers. Furthermore, according to the valid international surveys, it is estimated that “from 60 to 90 per cent of the direct deaths” in violent conflicts are caused by small arms. It goes without saying, that tremendous effort has already been made by international community in the conclusion of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects which was adopted by consensus in the 2001 United Nations Conference. It then was followed up by the 2006 UN Conference to review the implementation of the PoA.

Moreover, the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons was painstakingly negotiated by all Member States and adopted in late 2005 by the United Nations General Assembly within the framework of the Programme of Action. All of these efforts which represent a multilateral progressive approach should not suddenly be abandoned and overlooked. Though the major problems of the developing countries in this regard has been the transfer of illicit small arms and light weapons, regretfully the provisions of the PoA have not been fully implemented and was not duly supported by certain major exporters of such weapons.

Given the time and money spent by the Member States in the conclusion and then implementation of the Programme of Action as well as the disagreement over the substantive issues in the 2006 Review Conference, it is not appropriate to add more burden on the shoulders of the Member States particularly developing countries by creating a new non-consensual track. The illicit trade in small arms continues to
be the most destabilizing factor which is often associated with terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime. It is, thus, necessary for the United Nations to continue to focus on measures aimed at eradicating the illicit trade in small arms.

Mr. Chairman,

The unabated production of arms by major producers at a very large scale aimed at exporting most of them to other countries is a matter of serious concern. Overproduction of arms could lead to excessive supply of weapons and consequently facilitates their entry into regions of tensions.

In this context, the ambitious and irresponsible export of arms to the Middle East region represents a clear example in this regard. The recent announcement by the United States to export billions of dollars of arms and military assistance to the Middle East countries is a cause of concern not only for us, but for many peace-loving countries across the international community because it has raised the specter of arms race in the region. The planned 30 billion dollars of arms export involving offensive sophisticated weapons to the Zionist regime is intended to give confidence to the war machine of the said regime to pursue its expansionist and destabilizing policies in the region.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to state that at the national level, The Islamic Republic of Iran has responsibly enforced and continues to enforce effective measures to prevent and curb the illicit trafficking and transfer of such weapons while emphasizes on the inherent rights of States for national production or legal export and transfer of such weapons which should be duly marked and registered under strict national law and regulations. In order to deal with the problem of illegal transfer of arms and to discuss possible solutions in this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran declares its readiness to discuss and exchange views with other Members States within the framework of United Nations.

In this context, we will wait for the result of the discussion of the upcoming GGE on Arms Trade Treaty. In the meantime, my delegation would like to put on the record that it reserves its right to present substantive proposals and comment on the report of this Expert Group in future.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.