Mr President,

Throughout the second conference of States Parties and the subsequent meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation, my delegation has continuously advocated the necessity of a formal, technical working group with a strong mandate to support national implementation.

We are therefore pleased to have now a proposal for standing working group with fixed terms of reference and an ambitious work plan for consideration.

As to the priorities that are identified, we are happy with the clear list in the proposed work plan, which includes our own points of attention. As time during working group meetings will be precious, we do urge the incoming Co-chairs to structure the work of the working group in such a way that during a given meeting the focus is put on just a few of the identified priorities. The proposed work plan explicitly provides this opportunity and for us this is instrumental in order to have meaningful discussions. As we said in the working group: to be effective, we should avoid talking about everything all at once and all the time and thus sequence the topics that we will discuss. In the same regard the incoming Co-chairs should also consider providing more guidance on discussions in the agenda of meetings, building further on the questions that are already included in the proposed work plan.

Further concerning the functioning of the working group, my delegation has said time and again that ensuring maximum participation of technical experts, with relevant experience in legal, licensing and enforcement matters, is the key to success.

Experts from capital are at the forefront of treaty implementation and therefore best placed to contribute meaningful input in these discussions. It will also be those people who will benefit the most from the exchange of information and national approaches that is to be the core business of the working group. This is particularly true for experts of those States that are still in the process of implementing the Treaty. Every effort should therefore be made to ensure broad involvement, not only by facilitating attendance of meetings, but also by using the ATT IT system as a full-fledged tool for information exchange and discussion. The focus on technical experts could also be reflected in the chairmanship of the working group, by combining practical arms transfer control experience from capital with Geneva experience.

Mr President, we look forward to continue engaging in meaningful discussions in the working group, especially on topics that also constitute a daily challenge in the work of our Belgian licensing and enforcement officers, such as transit and trans-shipment. We do hope that these discussions will also lead to tangible results, both on the national level as within the CSP, which could include, where helpful and feasible, concrete proposals for recommendations by the Conference, in line with article 17 (4) (b) and (d) of the Treaty.

Thank you, Mr President.