Statement by
Mr. Mohammad Sarwar Mahmood
Charge d’Affaires, a.i
Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations
At the 3rd Session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations
Conference on Arms Trade Treaty

New York, July 11, 2011
Mr. Chairman

Let me congratulate you for your continuation as the Chairman of the meeting. My delegation believes that your able leadership will bring a fruitful outcome of the meeting. My delegation also expresses its appreciation to you for the draft papers on the issues of implementation and final provisions. Indeed it is a good basis for the deliberations by the Member States.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) should crystallize in the context of existing international arms transfers, regimes and the commitments already assumed by States under the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the two International Covenants on human rights, other widely supported international conventions and established principles of customary international law.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to highlight some of the points which my delegation wishes the ATT should focus on:

a. ATT should reflect the inherent right of all States to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter and acknowledge the right of all States to acquire legitimate arms for self defence and security needs in accordance with international law and standards.

b. ATT must also reflect the obligation of States under the UN Charter to promote and observe human rights and fundamental freedoms - including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

c. ATT should cover the import, export, State-to-state, State-to-private end-user, Commercial sales, Leases, loans or gifts or any other form of transfer of material goods or expertise, re-export, transit, temporary transfer and trans-shipment and brokerage of all conventional arms, including but not limited to, Heavy weapons, Small arms and light weapons, Parts and components of the afore-mentioned, Munitions, etc.

d. To be effective, an ATT should contain a comprehensive system to control the cross-border movement of all conventional weapons, munitions and associated parts, technology and equipment.

e. Overcoming economic challenges resulting from Arms Trade Control may be kept in view.
f. Governments should not hand over the imported arms to any political group or insurgent groups. The Importer should be liable for any transfer of arms to any such group.

g. There should not be any trade of arms in exchange of food, mineral resources or agricultural products convertible to narcotics.

h. ATT may contain provisions for special sanction for countries attempting to combat terrorism. There should have also special provisions for newly born countries and all developing countries to enhance their defense and law enforcement capability.

i. It should assess the involvement in armed conflict and commitment of war crimes.

j. Finally, there should be a system for ensuring proper implementation of the treaty provisions.

Mr. Chairman,

According to the Arms Act 1878, Arms and Ammunition management is conducted by the Bangladesh Home Ministry which are non-military nature. Broadly there are two types of weapons namely non-prohibited and prohibited bore. Non-prohibited weapons license are generally issued to the civilian for safety, games and sports. Prohibited bore weapons are used by law enforcers and security forces in the country. In Bangladesh, all types of weapons handling, purchasing, manufacture, import, export, shipment etc are guided by this Act.

Manufacturing arms and ammunition is only done by the Bangladesh Ordnance factory, which is a concern of the Armed Forces Division. Other than this, there is no other manufacturer or producer of arms and ammunition in Bangladesh. Almost all other arms and ammunition are imported from abroad.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, Bangladesh has a strong track record on socio-economic development over the past decades, and this has been possible in part to a set of existing common principles and commitments on international assistance and cooperation. This has enabled us to engage with processes of transparency and anti-corruption, all of which are relevant to the ongoing discussions of national implementation of the ATT. If countries like Bangladesh are expected to institutionalise very strong and high standards of arms control in a national context, then the international community should be prepared to assist this process by committing appropriate and adequate technical, financial, and other relevant resources.
Thank you Mr. Chairman.