Mr. Chairman, it is indeed a pleasure to see you guide our work. We are confident that under your leadership this Prep Com will conclude successfully, thus laying a solid basis for the work to be undertaken at the UN Conference on the ATT in July.

I also wish to thank you and the Secretariat for providing us with the draft provisional agenda and the draft rules of procedure for the Conference. We look forward to receiving on Wednesday the draft report of the Prep Com to the Conference. We also look forward to contributing to the substantive discussions later in the week under the Item 4 of our agenda. At this stage, my delegation wishes to offer the following brief comments.

Mr. Chairman, throughout our work, India has maintained that prospects for a viable and effective Treaty of universal acceptance would be enhanced only if the interests of all the stakeholders are addressed in a consensus based process and outcome, without artificial deadlines. We are ready to work now and at the Conference to build common ground so that we can achieve our shared goals.

With regard to the draft rules of procedure, we note that they follow the format of rules of procedure adopted for similar UN Conferences such as the 2006 Conference on the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. What is different and hence what we need to focus on is the interface of these draft rules of procedure with OP 5 of UNGA Resolution 64/48 that gave birth to this process and which enabled many of us to engage constructively in a debate on the possible elements of a treaty. To quote OP 5 of 64/48 “Also decides that the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty shall be undertaken in an open and transparent manner, on the basis of consensus, to achieve a strong and robust treaty.”

We are ready to work on the language of draft Rules 33, 35, 52 and 66 in the light of this unambiguous guidance on our work. We do not think that the rule of consensus should be an impediment to our work. As in 2009, we should look at it as an enabler of that work.

With regard to the issue of background documents for the Conference, we are willing to consider different proposals for reference documents for the Conference, including the suggestion made this morning for the Secretariat to prepare a summary compilation of the views of member states. It is our understanding that all these documents are without prejudice to the views of member states and do not impinge on the right of delegations to make national proposals on the text of the treaty at the Conference. They cannot pre-judge in any manner the negotiations at the UN Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty.
I thank you, Sir.