Statement by Norway, 16 February 2012

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for giving Norway the floor once again - we take this opportunity to make a few comments on the report and other procedural issues. Following your instructions, we will not repeat our views on the substantive issues of the ATT at this stage, but simply recall that we will continue to work for an ATT that includes ammunition and small arms and light weapons, as well as strong criteria for export licencing which must include a human rights and an international humanitarian law dimension.

Mr. Chair,

We would like to associate ourselves with other delegations that have supported your Draft paper of 14 July 2011 as a starting point for negotiations in July this year. We were pleased to see in para 20 in the Draft report that you intend to annex your draft paper to the report to the Diplomatic conference.

Mr. Chair, large parts of the discussions this week have evolved around the rules of procedure regarding decision making. In our view, the wording “on the basis of consensus” in GA resolution 64/48 means that every effort to reach consensus must be exhausted. We assure you, Mr. Chair, of this delegations’ commitment to work on the basis of consensus. We agree with the EU and others that procedural decisions cannot be subject to a strict consensus rule, this could hinder progress on substance in July. We look forward to a further discussion on this in the informal consultations, inter alia on the basis of the proposal by the Arab states.

Mr. Chair,

My delegation is also pleased that the discussions so far have shown that many countries see the need of greater involvement by civil society organisations during the negotiations, and in particular that the proposal to exchange the words “one meeting” with “meetings” in rule 63 d is supported by many delegations. We also support the UK proposal regarding rule 57, opening sessions to a somewhat greater extent, without prejudging the possibility of having closed sessions.

Mr. Chair, under your successful leadership we are presently engaged in discussions on the procedural framework for the conference in July. We should not forget that we discuss these rules of procedure with the aim of achieving a strong and robust ATT. By reaching and implementing a credible ATT, the international community will have demonstrated its determination, in the spirit of humanity and cooperation, to confront and reduce the armed violence, violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses resulting from illicit and irresponsible arms trade. As we are heading for the final phase of our negotiations, Norway stands ready to contribute to ensuring that this process will result in the positive outcome that we all know is badly needed.

Lastly, Mr. Chair, since I have the floor, we would, as others, be very pleased to see you as the president of the diplomatic conference in July.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.