Prevention and Combat of Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons across Borders

Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time Thailand takes the floor, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of BMS4. My delegation has no doubt that with your able leadership and guidance, this meeting will arrive at a successful conclusion. Thailand associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and would like to reiterate that the illicit transfer of arms in any form is unacceptable.

In regard to illicit trade in SALW across borders, despite our stringent measures and effective law-enforcement, Thailand is still facing certain challenges. New possibilities of illicit arms-trade routes, such as trafficking through maritime transport, have emerged.

Therefore, Thailand values practical cooperation at all levels. Thus far, we maintain close cooperation with our neighbors as well as relevant international organizations: Among them, INTERPOL and World Custom Organization. Thailand and neighboring countries have cooperated in the conduct of many joint investigations through formal and informal channels. Additionally, we have participated in Container Security Initiatives (CSI) Program to enhance our incoming and outgoing shipment security.

Thailand agrees that effective border controls have contributed to the prevention and combat of illicit trade in SALW as well as other related criminal activities. Having said that, in consideration of the border control issue, we would like to share our observations and comments as follows: We feel that geography is an important factor in the problem of border control, not just the absence or ineffectiveness of border controls. The inaccessibility of certain border areas poses challenges and difficulties in controlling cross-border activities, including the flow of illicit arms and weapons. Therefore, it would be very helpful to keep this in mind when discussing border control.

We also feel that 2011 Open Ended Meeting of Governmental Experts will be an appropriate forum for us to start examining how to better prevent and combat illicit trade in SALW across borders as the clarification regarding the scope and parameters to prevent and combat the illicit trade in SALW across borders is needed. Border-related issues are multi-faceted and many of which are sensitive. Furthermore, border control has been addressed and implemented through various existing mechanisms at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. Therefore, we would welcome a clearer idea on what aspects of this issue should be covered. And Thailand is ready to share its views and discuss this matter with other member states.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.