India

Item 6 (d) Other issues and the identification of priority issues or topics of relevance in the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and of their implementation challenges, and opportunities

Mr. Chairman, I would like to touch upon two issues under the agenda item on ‘Other issues’. First, India was disappointed that the UN Conference in July 2001 could not agree on the prevention of the sale or transfer of arms to non-state actors, a concern reflected in the statement of the President of that Conference after the adoption of the Programme of Action. We have witnessed since then the death, destruction and destabilization wrought by illicit weapons in the hands of non-state actors. While small arms and light weapons in the control of states and state-authorized entities or individuals are a legitimate means of self-defence and maintenance of law and order, illicit SALWs especially those in the hands of terrorists and organized criminals are a grave threat to peace and security. There should be a complete prohibition on transfer of small arms, light weapons and ammunition to terrorists and terrorist groups. This is an issue the international community needs to address seriously again as we prepare for the Review Conference in 2012.

Second, we would like to thank the distinguished delegate of Nigeria for his discussion paper on Culture of Peace. As you have noted, Mr. Chairman, this is a personal contribution as we have not had a discussion on this subject. We look forward to an exchange of views with other delegations. It is not our contention that this issue is unimportant. Quite the contrary. However, there are established UN processes and longstanding agenda items both at the UNGA and UNESCO on this subject. We should therefore focus on our core substantive issues related to illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and avoid duplication of effort and overlap with other instruments and processes.

Mr. Chairman, The primary responsibility for ending illicit trade in SALWs rests with states. States are obliged under the UN PoA to have in place export control measures, especially the requirement of end use certificates, to ensure there is no diversion of arms and
ammunition. They should strictly regulate the manufacture, possession, trade, transfers and disposal of small arms, light weapons and ammunition. Since illicit trade is transnational, controlling it also requires international cooperation inter alia on brokering, border and custom controls, tracing of illicit weapons and prosecution of offenders. The main emphasis of international efforts should therefore be two fold: promoting state responsibility and promoting international cooperation to prevent illicit trade. We expect such efforts to have a tangible national security benefit with regard to the use of illicit weapons, explosives and ammunition by terrorists and non-state actors. This is the touchstone we should use to evaluate our implementation efforts.