PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

828 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • TEL. (212) 953-9130 • FAX (212) 697-1970

(Please check against delivery)

STATEMENT

BY

LAWRENCE OLUFEMI OBISAKIN
PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA

AT THE THEMATIC DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 23 OCTOBER, 2007
I wish to thank the Chairman for giving me the floor in this round of thematic debate of the First Committee, specifically on the conventional weapons cluster. Earlier on, during the general debate, The Nigerian delegation had reaffirmed Nigeria’s total commitment to irreversible and verifiable destruction of nuclear weapons, total disarmament and non proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We wish to highlight, the question of Small arms and light weapons (SALW). We are of the view that the threat to peace and stability posed by this category of weapons is enormous and pose danger for mankind. These lethal weapons must definitively be controlled in a systematic way to make the world safe and secure for all in accordance with the charter and principles of the United Nations.

The United Nations Programme of Action (PoA) adopted in 2001 at its Conference on Illicit Trade In Small Arms and light Weapons represents a key element in promoting long term security and thereby sustainable development for the developing world and Africa in particular. From this PoA, various countries and regional groups had developed legal frameworks for combating and, tracing the menace presented by the illicit trade or transfer of this category of weapons.

In this regard, it may be recalled that, The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had placed a moratorium on the importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa. This was originally signed in 1998 for three years and renewed in 2001 for another three years. The Moratorium had led to the establishment of focal points or national commissions in 13 out of the 15 member states of ECOWAS as recommended by the Code of Conduct, adopted by the Heads of State in 1999 for the implementation of the Moratorium itself.

ECOWAS has further demonstrated its unflinching commitment to the control of this category of weapons when, on 14 June, 2006, in Abuja, Nigeria, the leaders signed the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons their ammunition, and other related Materials. Nigeria has commenced domestication of this convention.
Nigeria believes firmly that an Arms Trade Treaty will not only help in tracing movement of SALW, it will go a very long way in combating their illicit use and trade. In the light of this, Nigeria welcomes adoption by the United Nations General Assembly resolution in 2006, on an international instrument on marking and tracing the movement of illicit small arms and light weapons. We believe it represents a credible step towards establishing international standards in the transfer of these arms and weapon as well as control in their illicit brokering. We therefore welcome warmly the on-going arrangement in the United Nations with a view to fashioning legal instruments at multilateral level that will effectively curb the serious threat posed by uncontrolled movement of these weapons of destruction.

Nigeria, hereby, calls on all Member States to give their unalloyed support and commitment towards an Arms Trade Treaty.

I thank you.