REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT BY

MS. TAPIWA S. MONGWA
CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES, A.I.

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

DURING THE 66TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AT THE

FIRST COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ON
CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

NEW YORK, 20 OCTOBER 2011

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Mr. Chairman,

My delegation shares concerns about the significant work that still needs to be done in the area of conventional arms control, to make the world a safer place. Addressing the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is of particular importance to Botswana, as well as the rest of Africa.

The use of illicit small arms and light weapons in violent crimes, including robbery, transnational organized crime and piracy, are major causes of insecurity in our region.

In other words, this class of weapons poses a serious threat to countries in the region and further undermines efforts aimed at achieving sustainable economic development and social progression, including regional integration.

There is, therefore, a need for stronger and more robust cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons at national and regional levels.

In this regard, Botswana remains fully committed to the implementation of the U.N. Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as measures mandated by regional and international legal instruments including the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the SADC Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials.

Botswana also commends measures taken to by the U.N. system and other relevant partners to enhance international assistance and cooperation. We note in particular, the encouragement of donors to provide technical and financial assistance to facilitate technology transfer and assistance for the implementation of regional agreements, as well as the use of regional and sub-regional organizations to facilitate practical cooperation within and between regions.

In this regard, greater international assistance and cooperation is critical particularly in the areas of border control, marking and record-keeping.

Mr. Chairman,

We also encourage continued efforts towards the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including through the development and enhancement of follow up mechanisms.

Also important, is the process of matching needs with resources because it enables efficient and systematic implementation of identified projects which further advance the goals of the Programme of Action.

My delegation also recognizes and appreciates the important role played by initiatives such as the Group of Interested States for Practical Disarmament Measures, in
promoting the implementation of relevant disarmament agreements, including the Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

Botswana notes, with appreciation, the convening of the Meeting of Governmental Experts on Small Arms in May 2011 which brought together senior law enforcement experts to exchange views on the challenges and opportunities of implementing the Programme of Action. We believe it provided a useful platform on which new strategies and tools could be developed in order to tackle existing and emerging challenges in implementing the Programme of Action.

In this regard, my delegation also believes it provides useful input for the 2012 Review Conference on U.N. Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We hope that during the review process, the issue of the means of implementation will be high on the agenda.

We take this opportunity to congratulate Her Excellency, Ambassador Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria, for her nomination as the Chair-designate of this Review Conference. We wish her all the best in the discharge of her duties. Let me also assure her of the support and cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

Botswana attaches great importance to the conclusion of an Arms Trade Treaty in 2012. We hope it will be a comprehensive and balanced legally-binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms.

Our appreciation also goes to Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan for the excellent manner in which he is steering the preparatory process towards the Arms Trade Treaty.

My delegation hopes we will resolve all outstanding issues on the deliberations towards an Arms Trade Treaty without compromising its quality as a valuable instrument for preventing illegal acquisition of weapons as well as acquisition by those who would use them for criminal acts or the perpetration of atrocities against innocent people.

I thank you for your attention.