Statement by H.E. Ambassador Mohammad Khazaee
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
Final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty
New York, 28 March 2013

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In the Name of God, the most Compassionate, the most Merciful

Mr. President,

The Islamic Republic of Iran participated in this Conference with a high expectation to conclude an effective, robust, balanced and non-discriminatory Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) aimed at achieving the noble humanitarian goal of reducing human suffering resulting from the illicit trade in conventional arms. However, the achievement of such a Treaty has been rendered out of reach due to many legal flaws and loopholes in the current text that I would like to mention just a few of them:

First, while suppression of acts of aggression is a fundamental purpose of the United Nations, the current draft ignores the legitimate demand by a large number of States to prohibit the transfer of arms to those who commit aggression. As a victim of act of aggression in the recent history, our question is that how can we reduce human suffering by turning a blind eye to aggression that may cost the lives of thousands of innocent people? Are we rewarding aggressors by not prohibiting the transfer of arms to them?

Second, while the right of individuals to own and use guns has been protected in the current text to meet the constitutional requirements of only one State, the inalienable right to self-determination of peoples under foreign occupation or alien and colonial domination has completely been ignored, just to appease that State and its staunch ally in the Middle East. Moreover, despite serious demands by many States, the requirements of the inherent right of States to self-defense, namely the right to acquire conventional weapons to defend against aggression and preserve their territorial integrity has not been addressed.
Third, while regulating international transfers of conventional arms was supposed to be a main goal of the ATT, ironically the draft exempts the transfer of arms for armed forces of countries outside their territories. In recent years, these weapons have mostly been used to commit aggression and occupation causing human losses in many parts of the world including in our region in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

Forth, while the rights of arms exporting States is well preserved in this text, the right of importing States to acquire and import arms for their security needs is subject to the discretionary judgment and subjective assessment of the exporting States. That is why this text is highly susceptible to politicization, manipulation and discrimination.

Mr. President,

In our view, the flaws and loopholes that I highlighted and other deficiencies of the text are the product of a process in which the established practice of the United Nations to conduct negotiations in an open, transparent and participatory manner to accommodate each others' concerns is overlooked. There is no doubt that achieving a legitimate and internationally accepted instrument is dependent on strict observance of such practice.

In conclusion, I would like to clarify that we, in the spirit of flexibility, tried our best to rectify the flaws and remove major loopholes in the text through a real negotiation in which voices are heard and at least serious concerns are equally addressed. It is a matter of deep regret that genuine efforts of many countries for a robust, balanced and non-discriminatory Treaty were ignored.

For the aforementioned reasons, the Islamic Republic of Iran objects to the adoption of the draft decision as contained in document A/CONF.217/2013/L.3 to which the non-consensual text of the draft Arms Trade Treaty is attached.

Thank you Mr. President.