STATEMENT BY

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AT THE

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE
ARMS TRADE TREATY (ATT)

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Mr. President,

My delegation wishes to join other speakers in congratulating you on your election as the President of this Conference. Let me also thank you for your exemplary leadership, stewardship, efforts and endeavors towards creating an efficient and broad ranging ATT that hopefully will represent the beginning of a new era in the work of regulating trade in arms. We are convinced that, with your outstanding diplomatic skills and experience, you will steer this conference to a successful end. My delegation further pledges its utmost support to you, and would cooperate fully with you.

Ghana associates itself with the Statement made by Nigeria, on behalf of the Africa Group.

Mr. President,

We acknowledge the value of the summary outcome of the Prepcom Chair’s Non-paper circulated to Member States on 14th July, 2011. We strongly support your paper which reflects majority of the views expressed by States during the Prepcom and we firmly believe that it should serve as a basis for negotiating an ATT at this Diplomatic Conference.
Mr. President,

Ghana is happy to note the goals and objectives necessitating the need for an ATT and affirms that poorly regulated global trade in conventional arms and ammunition fuels conflicts and also exacerbates poverty and human rights abuses. We recognize that an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) would assist to minimize these phenomena to help save lives, prevent human rights abuses, and protect minority rights and livelihoods of people around the world. In this regard, we wish to re-affirm that an ATT that would regulate conventional arms is borne more out of the humanitarian concerns that it is expected to address and not solely as a disarmament or trade treaty.

Mr. President,

Ghana shares the views expressed by many other delegations that an ATT must respect States right to Self Defence and law enforcement under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Also considering the humanitarian concerns that gave birth to this treaty and the overwhelming number of people who die every year as a result of the use of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the scope of an ATT should include these categories of arms plus their Ammunition for
it is the bullets that kill not the Small Arms and Light Weapons. If these categories were not included, it would be difficult to achieve the purposes of the Treaty, which is to ensure safety and security of people, particularly in Africa. After all, our objective is to regulate and not to prohibit the use of these arms.

Ghana thus supports the view that the Treaty scope should include all tanks; military vehicles; artillery systems; military aircraft and helicopters (manned or unmanned); surface and submarine naval vessels armed or equipped for military use; missiles and missile systems (guided or unguided); Small Arms and Light Weapons; ammunition for use with any of the above; parts or components specially and exclusively designed for any of the above; and technology and equipment specially and exclusively designed and used to develop, manufacture, or maintain any of the above.

Mr. President,

Ghana believes that the transfers of conventional arms must not be authorized if there is a substantial risk that those arms would be used in a manner that would aggravate international or regional conflicts and instabilities. Transfers should not be permitted if the transfer will also
facilitate the commitment of serious violations of the recipient States obligations under relevant international agreements such as those on prevention of crime, international humanitarian law or international human rights law or in support of acts of terrorism.

We further support the view that the Treaty should apply to all international transfers and to the identities of the parties to the transfer, including inter alia states or agents thereof, commercial operations, organized non-state groups or individuals.

Ghana also supports the call for international assistance in building the capacity of less endowed States, and we call for cooperation in the fields of information exchange, education and training particularly the preparation of relevant domestic laws and implementation of the treaty to ensure its effectiveness.

Mr. President,

In view of the humanitarian imperatives that gave birth to this treaty, an ATT must, therefore, provide ‘assistance or support’ for victims of irresponsible arms transfers. We are of the view that the language in the Chair’s Non-paper needs to be strengthened as a form of reassurance to the victims of irresponsible arms transfers.
In conclusion, it is our expectation that we shall come up with an ATT that has a clear and unambiguous implementation mechanism for States with appropriate national control mechanisms.

I thank you.