STATEMENT

BY

MR. MAFIROANE MOTANYANE
CHARGE' D'AFFAIRES OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

10 JULY 2012
New York

Please check against delivery
Mr. President,

Thank you for giving me the floor. I congratulate you on your well deserved election as President of this Conference. You have demonstrated great skill and ability in leading us since the inception of the ATT process until now. I assure you of my Delegation’s full support in your efforts to galvanize consensus among us.

I associate myself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. President,

One of the cardinal principles underpinning the formation of the United Nations (UN) is the maintenance of international peace and security. To that end, we have resolved to “take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace...”. In our view, the ATT is our collective effort to embark on a course that leads to the removal of threats to peace, or at least minimize them. Many delegations who took the floor before me have underscored the consequences of unregulated international trade and transfer of conventional weapons, which, at the risk of repetition, include fuelling conflict, violating international humanitarian law and human rights, contributing to organized crime and terrorism, etc.

The aim of our Conference has always been very clear from the onset, that is; “to elaborate a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms”. The existing arms transfer control measures at the national, regional and international levels have proved to be wanting in many respects. However, such measures provide a good basis upon which the ATT may build. Consequently we need to take them into account in negotiating the Treaty.

Mr. President,

Conventional arms are conventional arms – nothing more, nothing less. Therefore, regulating the international trade or transfer of only some of these weapons and excluding others in the scope of the ATT will run counter to the aim of this Conference. The importance of including small arms and
light weapons, in particular, cannot be overemphasized. These are the weapons that are of great concern to many African Countries, including my own. As some delegations have pointed out, they are the real weapons of mass destruction. They account for the daily loss of life of scores of people, and are used in the commission of many criminal activities in many Countries. Equally important is ensuring that ammunition, parts and components are included in the scope of the ATT. Arms are useless without parts, components and ammunition. We, therefore, need to work towards finding a compromise in coming up with a broad scope and yet implementable. In doing so, care must be taken not to weaken the treaty.

The ATT should be relevant to all States, whether exporters or importers of conventional weapons. It should carefully balance the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the international trade, transfer, export, import or transit, or trans-shipment of these weapons. Needless to mention that inherent in the ATT should be the aim to promote transparency without compromising the legitimate security interests of States. National reporting and structured meetings of State Parties are, therefore, key to achieving our objective for an ATT. There is no doubt that a well-managed and regulated international trade in conventional weapons will go a long way in promoting peace, freedom, observance of human rights and prosperity.

**Mr. President,**

It is important for the ATT to be unambiguous. The transfer criteria should be clear, objective and easy to follow. In this regard, Your July 14, 2011 Non-Paper is in point when it suggests that competent national authorities should take into account information on the nature of the arms to be transferred and the risk assessment of the potential use of the weapon and the end user. We cannot agree more with the elements enunciated in your paper, which include, inter alia, that the transfer should not be made if there is a substantial risk that the arms would be used to undermine peace and
security, commit violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, or violate measures adopted by the Security Council.

Mr. President,

I wish to conclude by appealing to all the delegations that we should not let the golden opportunity presented by this Conference go to waste, otherwise history will judge us harshly. National economic interest should not override our collective resolve to build a safer world and, therefore, protect humanity. Intransigence has no place in this International Conference. This is a Treaty which is long overdue. The time for a robust and legally binding ATT, that is fully consistent with the UN Charter, is now.

I thank you Mr. President