STATEMENT

BY

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AT

THE UNITED NATIONS
DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE
ON
ARMS TRADE TREATY

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Mr. President,

My delegation joins others who spoke before us in congratulating you on your election as President of this very important Diplomatic Conference, and through you let me congratulate all members of the Bureau on their election. We also wish to thank you for the transparent manner in your stewardship of the PrepComms that have paved the way for this Diplomatic Conference. There is no doubt that under your skillful leadership the Diplomatic Conference will achieve its objectives, and in this regard let me assure you my delegation’s full cooperation and support.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group, who eloquently expressed the Group’s position and vision on a future Arms Trade Treaty. Article 96 of the Namibian Constitution commits the country and its people to the promotion of international peace and security. My delegation remains convinced that poor regulation in the global trade in conventional arms and ammunition, fuels conflict in many parts of the world, leading to poverty and human rights abuse. Therefore, the effective regulation of international trade in conventional arms as envisaged in an Arms Trade Treaty, will contribute to the promotion and sustenance of international peace and security, making the world a safer place.

Mr. President,

The contents of General Assembly Resolution 61/89 and 64/48, of which Namibia is proud to associate itself with, provides us with the platform to address the question of the establishment of common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. Since the adoption of these resolutions, we note with appreciation efforts by the Group of Governmental Experts as well as the UN Membership, to strongly remain committed to the objectives of the said resolutions, which is to amongst others, prevent the illicit transfer of conventional arms. We therefore envisage an instrument that is of global reach, legally binding, and comprehensive in its scope and criteria, these elements are absolutely critical for an effective Arms Trade Treaty.
Furthermore, we call for a Treaty that is strong and not one that basically legitimizes the existing trade, but one with unambiguous language that clearly defines the obligations of State Parties. This type of language should be applicable to the full range of conventional arms, munitions and ammunition, as ammunitions are the ones that make arms lethal, hence from our perspective the ATT should include conventional arms and ammunition.

Mr. President,

The Rules of Procedure provide us with clear guidelines as to how we are to conduct the negotiations for this ATT. With this in mind, my delegation notes the importance of consensus as outlined in Resolution 64/48 that consensus is aimed at promoting the adoption and implementation of the future Treaty. In reference to Rule 33 of the Rules of Procedure, consensus is a means to achieve a strong and robust Treaty, therefore we remain convinced of the notion that “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed”. This will require from the entire membership, a spirit of openness, transparency and understanding as we negotiate this important treaty, which will enhance global peace and security.

Mr. President,

We foresee a Treaty that is transparent and this can only be verified by clearly defined reporting mechanisms. Reporting under the ATT should be simple, to encourage States to report on their obligations. In this regard, we wish to emphasize the importance of international cooperation and assistance, to help developing countries in their reporting obligations under the envisaged Treaty. This can go a long way in ensuring that the treaty achieves its major objective of greater transparency in international arms transfers.

Finally, my delegation draws the attention of this Conference to Article 51 of the UN Charter which refers to the right of States to arm themselves, for legitimate self-defense and proposes that this should no where be compromised in the ATT.

I thank you Mr. President