OPENING STATEMENT

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

5 JULY 2012, NEW YORK
Mr. President,

At the outset, let me begin by congratulating you for your election as President of this important Conference. I would like seize this occasion to express our satisfaction in seeing you at the helm of this important process, and reiterate our full support.

Mr. President,

Inclusivity in this process is crucial. We have supported the full participation of Palestine and the Holy See in this Conference, in accordance with the “all States Formula”.

Mr. President,

Turkey supports developing a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. The absence of such standards contributes to conflict, instability, terrorism and crime. A strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty is needed today.

Turkey attaches utmost importance to the development of these standards, through a step-by-step approach, in an open and transparent manner. It is with this understanding that Turkey co-sponsored the respective General Assembly resolutions on the ATT.

Mr. President,

As emphasized in Resolution 64/48, the inherent right of all States to individual or collective defenses should not be compromised in any way. To this end, the ATT should not prejudice the legitimate defense and internal security needs of states.

But, it should ensure that states adhere to universal norms, values and principals, and fully respect and fulfill their obligations emanating from various multilateral legally and politically binding instruments.

One of the basic objectives of the ATT should be the prevention of diversion of conventional arms to illicit markets, where they can be used for terrorist acts, organized crime and other criminal activities.
Mr. President,

Security is indivisible. Therefore, the Treaty should reflect a holistic understanding. Leaving out one or more of the categories of conventional arms will create loopholes that could jeopardize the overall objectives of the Treaty. The main focus should be on categories that are most suitable for use by non-state actors, for terrorist and criminal purposes.

Therefore, small arms, light weapons, man-portable air defense systems, explosives and land mines should be included within the scope of the ATT, along with the seven categories of the UN Register for Conventional Arms. Their ammunition and components, as well as technology designed for their manufacture should also be added therein. Furthermore, a comprehensive, flexible and a forward-looking approach should be pursued, to accommodate the exponential evolution in technology.

Mr. President,

Some express doubts that this conference process can yield a successful outcome, citing as evidence some fundamental differences between the positions and perceptions of member states. However, such approaches underestimate the fact that all delegations are fully aware of the severe consequences of an unregulated global arms trade, in the form of human lives and suffering, regardless of the level of economic development of their countries. Furthermore, the fact that these premises are accustomed to difficult, yet successful negotiation processes should also always be borne in mind. We have all the reasons and means to achieve a successful Arms Trade Treaty, for a safer future.

Thank you.