Statement by H.E. Mr. Sin Son Ho
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the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
to the United Nations

At the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty
(New York, 2-27 July 2012)

Mr. President,

Let me first congratulate you on your election to the presidency of this Conference and express my confidence that the conference will come to a success under your able leadership.

At the same time, the delegation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) would like to assure you of its full cooperation and constructive contribution.

Mr. President,

Today conventional weapons are emerging as one of the crucial factors with undeniable direct implications on the world peace and security, immediately following the nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction.

While the development of sophisticated conventional weapons is in a steady progress, these weapons do not hesitate to flow into the regions of conflicts as a means of war. What is worse still is that these weapons later find their final destinations in the wrong hands of terrorists or organizations of transnational crimes, eventually becoming sources of further aggravating instabilities worldwide.
The delegation of the DPRK would like to clarify its position as follows regarding the ATT negotiation in this Conference.

First, due attention should be given to the proliferation of conventional weapons towards hot spots and conflict regions. To our regret, supplies of advanced weapons to such hottest spots as the Korean peninsula and the regions of conflicts are already going beyond dangerous line. After announcing the so-called “New Defense Strategy” in January 2012 on shifting its focus to the Asia Pacific region, the United States is increasing and intensifying joint military exercises in south Korea against the DPRK and the neighboring countries as its strategic targets. For implementation of this strategy, the United States is hell bent on selling to south Korea the massive amounts of the most sophisticated lethal weapons, thereby driving the already tense situation of the Korean peninsula to its worst level ever. Last June alone, the weapons requested by south Korea for purchase from the United States are estimated at over 1.4 billion US Dollars covering the most sophisticated ones such as multi-purpose combat helicopters, cruise missiles, most advanced guided weapons, etc. The arms purchase amount will turn into astronomical figures, if the purchase of the latest version of US fighter jets F-35, on which negotiation is reportedly going on, is included.

Second, the inequalities existing in the conventional weapon production capacity should be rejected. It is today’s fundamental reality that it is only the developed countries who are enjoying privileges of monopolies in producing, possessing and exporting of conventional weapons, while the majority of developing countries are left to rely on the mercy of these countries for arms imports. In case the ATT is concluded with no consideration of such inequalities, it will only legally consolidate these inequalities with a monopoly mechanism being established only for certain countries, as in the case of the existing legal framework in the field of the nuclear weapons.
Third, the rights of sovereign states to self-defense should be fully respected. The UN Charter clearly stipulates in Article 51 that the UN member states are entitled to self-defense.

Under this UN Charter, all sovereign states can enjoy their just rights to produce, possess, export and import for the purpose of self-defense and security.

In case political conditions such as “human rights” are reflected in the ATT by major exporter countries, the treaty will serve only their interests and it will lead to the loss of its universality in the long run.

In the following days of negotiations on the potential ATT, the DPRK delegation is fully cognizant that the above-mentioned important elements should be discussed to their fullest extent, in view of the implications the ATT will have upon the world peace and security and in particular in view of the legitimate security interest of sovereign states.

Thank you.