STATEMENT

By H.E. AMBASSADOR. LE HOAI TRUNG
Permanent Representative
of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
to the United Nations

at

the High-level Segment of the United Nations Conference
on the Arms Trade Treaty

New York, 06 July 2012
Mr. President,

1. At the outset, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to extend to you our warmest congratulations on your election as the President of the Conference. We are strongly convinced that with your rich experience and diplomatic skills in multilateral and disarmament affairs, you will guide our Conference to a fruitful outcome.

Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Mr. President,

2. It is Viet Nam’s consistent policy to be strongly committed to international efforts towards disarmament and arms control, including the prevention of excessive use of conventional arms and their illegal transfers. Viet Nam therefore supports and takes part, in an active and responsible manner, in international efforts towards an international instrument regulating international transfer of arms as specified in Resolution 64/48 of the General Assembly. Viet Nam’s position on these issues derives, inter alia, from its own experience as a country that was a victim of war for many consecutive decades and has also had to deal with the terrorist illicit transfer of arms and from Viet Nam’s commitment to the rule of law.

3. Viet Nam is of the view that our Conference must ensure that the Arms Trade Treaty is balanced, non-discriminatory; it should also be practical and effective in preventing illicit trade of conventional arms. ATT should uphold basic principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for state sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs and respect for the legitimate right of self-defense of states and, thus, their right to manufacture, export, import and maintain conventional arms for the sake of self-defense and other legitimate security needs.

4. Let me briefly reiterate our national viewpoints regarding elements of an ATT. First, ATT scope is of great significance to national implementation. To ensure consistency and effectiveness in ATT implementation, therefore, ATT scope must be reasonable and proper, should only include, with specific definitions, 7 categories of weapons, as specified in the UN Register of Conventional Arms, and small arms and light weapons. Inclusion of ammunitions, parts and components, and technology in the ATT would make the implementation process too complicated and inconsistent, creating unnecessary burdens for national developments. With regard to types of activities, ATT should not cover technology transfer, research & development and manufacturing under foreign license as regulation of these activities might inadvertently undermine normal and legitimate trade, socio-economic and technological development of states.

5. Second, Viet Nam believes that criteria for assessment of arms transfer must take into consideration the following: i) the principle of non-use of force or threat of use of force in international relations and the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes among states; ii) responsibilities of relevant states in speeding up the realization of the ATT.
commitments; iii) the potential of the use of transferred arms to seriously undermine international, regional and national peace, security and stability or to carry out terrorist activities or commit transnational organized crime; iv) prohibition of transfer to non-state actors that are not authorized or licensed by state authorities to prevent the diversion of arms to illicit hands. The assessment of arms transfer should also consider the potential consequences of transfer denials, especially to the right of states to adopt necessary measures to exercise the right of self-defense and meet legitimate security needs. To be effective as in case of other international instruments, ATT can not cover every item on the agenda of the international community though they may be immensely important by themselves.

6. Thirdly, effective, consistent and non-discriminatory implementation is one of the most important elements of ATT and the primary responsibility in this regard lies with national decisions of states. ATT should not provide specific, detailed regulations but general guidelines for the framework and mechanism of implementation of each state, taking into consideration the variety of capabilities of states in their implementation of ATT. There should be a balance between the need for transparency and legitimate security needs of states in its provisions on transparency mechanism, including regulations on reporting responsibility of states, which are established in accordance with the primary objective of ATT, namely to prevent illicit transfer of conventional arms. ATT should also provide for appropriate mechanism of international cooperation and assistance to support states in need, especially developing ones, to be adequately equipped with necessary resources and capabilities to establish national implementation systems. On a related point, ATT should establish mechanisms appropriate for consultations between exporting and importing countries prior to transfer assessment to ensure balance, equality and reciprocity in inter-state transactions. The implementation support unit of ATT should be of small, appropriate size to support states in procedural and administrative issues related to ATT.

Mr. President,

7. To ensure the success of the Conference and broad participation of states, it is our expectation that the Conference shall be conducted in a transparent and open manner and its decisions, including the final text of ATT, must be considered and adopted by consensus.

8. Let me conclude, Mr President, by reiterating Viet Nam’s commitment to contributing actively and constructively at the Conference in striving for an international instrument to minimize consequences of illicit transfers of arms. We stand ready to cooperate with all partners to that end.

I thank you./.