STATEMENT DELIVERED

BY

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ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

AT THE

THIRD SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE ARMS TRADE TREATY (ATT)

NEW YORK, MONDAY, 11 JULY 2011.
Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the African Group, I join earlier speakers to congratulate you for your able leadership of the work of the Preparatory Committee for the UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) so far.

We look forward to a sustained debate on the issues highlighted in the adopted programme of work and hope that deliberations at this 3rd PrepCom will further advance the convergence of views and deepen the process which commenced five years ago. We also wish to note the two non-papers prepared and circulated by the Chairman in order to provide a basis for our debate and deliberations at this PrepCom and to assure you of our engagement and continued cooperation in achieving a fruitful outcome.

Mr. Chairman,

As we focus on the consideration of the possible modalities of the implementation, as well as the final provisions of an ATT, we reiterate that the overriding principle and benefit of a balanced, non-discriminatory, potentially universal, effective and fair ATT, is the promotion and sustenance of International Peace and Security. This was further underscored in the General Assembly which encouraged negotiations, on that basis, among Member States of the United Nations to possibly achieve an ATT by 2012 - a fact that must not be lost on us as we reach this stage of discussions and negotiations.
The debates and views reflected by member States during the last two PrepComs have demonstrated that the process of establishing an Arms Trade Treaty requires us to thoroughly reflect on the parameters of the implementation of such treaty. The African Group embraces the call to develop a framework to guide global arms trade and believes our discussions at this PrepCom should focus on the consideration of a balanced, comprehensive, practical and transparent approach to that end.

During the last PrepCom, Member States of the African Group expressed openness and preparedness to further discuss a number of perspectives during deliberations at subsequent PrepCom. In its Statement, the Group shared its general views on how best to consider items such as the Scope, Criteria, Parameters, verification, transparency, accountability and aspects of International Cooperation and Assistance in an ATT.

As we begin deliberations on the implementation and final provisions of an ATT, the African Group wishes to reiterate its call for an equitable ATT - one which takes into account, specific regional dynamics in line with the principles of the UN Charter on the sovereign equality among nations and the right of every nation to legitimate self defence. This is so in view of the fact that while many States, including majority of arms producing States may have in place certain regulatory framework, there is no consensus yet on the exact
implementation modalities of control systems for international transfers of conventional arms, including both imports and exports. There is therefore the need for a uniformity of purpose to enhance the efficiency of an ATT.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group wishes to express support for an ATT implementation process and final provisions which take due cognizance of the responsibilities of major arms producers and the special rights of arms importing States. There is also the need to develop a practical implementation phase of an ATT, which includes specific references to the Production and stockpiling of conventional arms by major producers. In addition, the African Group calls for the consideration of implementation and final provisions which would embrace, without doubt, key variables such as:

(i) An effective deterrence to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in conventional weapons;
(ii) Outline of the detailed procedures for enforcement, full transparency, verification and accountability;
(iii) Mechanism to review existing regulatory frameworks;
(iv) Sufficient provisions on international cooperation as a treaty obligation, including training and building of institutional and human resources in developing States;
(v) Objective, well identified and measurable criteria which could be applied in a manner acknowledged in the United Nations framework; and

(vi) A clear requirement that all transfers of conventional weapons, must be appropriately authorized by competent government authorities of importing State and a clear prohibition of transfers to unauthorized non-State actors.

Furthermore, the implementation process should also serve to, among others:

(i) Bridge existing gaps in illicit arms trading;
(ii) Encourage transparency and accountability among producers and buyers;
(iii) Highlight need for adequate sharing of information and transparency;
(iv) Enhance regulation of global arms production, stockpiling and trade among States; and
(v) Assist in preventing internal and regional instability occasioned by proliferation of and unfettered access to illicit small arms and light weapons (SALWs) by terrorists, insurgents and anarchists.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group’s support of a potential ATT remains dependent on its potential ability to address in a balanced and transparent way, issues of illicit proliferation and illegal trade of
Arms. We believe this is achievable through a consensus based process built on the due consideration of all views in a balanced and reasonable manner.

I thank you.