STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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,

I wish to begin by thanking you for your efforts and leadership to steer our negotiations towards providing the platform for regulating trade in conventional arms. In this regard, I join earlier speakers to congratulate you for the leadership of the work of the Preparatory Committee for the UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Nigeria aligns itself with the statement made by the African Group earlier delivered by my delegation. My delegation also notes the non-papers provided to delegates by the Chairman in order to provide useful basis for debates and deliberations, and in particular, the recently circulated Chair’s informal draft papers on “Implementation” and “Final Provisions” for this PrepCom. Let me assure you of our support and continued cooperation in achieving a fruitful outcome.

We are meeting again in furtherance of the process begun five years ago to provide a veritable platform for global arms trade – one which guarantees transparency, verification and accountability, as well as deepen the promotion and sustenance of International Peace and Security. As a co-sponsor of resolution 61/89, Nigeria recognizes that the absence of a common international standards on arms trade is a contributory factor to conflict, violence and organized crime, including terrorism – actions which undermine peace, security, stability and sustainable development. My delegation,
therefore, wishes to re-iterate its support for a treaty and to assure you of our full engagement and active participation.

Mr. Chairman,

Nigeria commends the devotion of this PrepCom to discussing, among other things; the twin-themes of Implementation and Final Provisions, in view of the need to begin our final lap towards an arms trade treaty as succinctly described in resolution 64/48. Notwithstanding the two informal sessions at the July 2010 PrepCom which deliberated on the subjects of Implementation and application on 19th and 21st July 2010 respectively, my delegation supports the highlights, in form and content, as outlined in the Chair’s newly proposed draft on implementation and final provisions as pertinent pre-requisites in the envisaged treaty.

My region – the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) suffers a great deal from the effects of illicit transfer and unfettered access by unauthorized groups and other non-State actors to small arms and lights weapons. This has become a ready and useful tool of destruction, devastation and negative impact on development. Nigeria and other member – States of the ECOWAS are ready to engage well-meaning partners for peace across the world to stem this ugly tide – one which stifles development, encourages corruption and causes untold misery among our people.

My delegation wishes to inform of an on-going collaboration with the Government of Norway in this respect
and its determination to forge necessary partnership with other countries with a view to assisting in the global desire to regulate trade in conventional arms. Towards this end, a “Seminar on Effective and Promising Practices on Reduction of Armed Violence in West Africa” was held two weeks ago in Abuja in partnership with Norway, the UNDP and the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. The Seminar explored a number of options available for addressing the myriad of challenges associated with implementation and application of regulations of trade in arms.

Mr. Chairman,

We share your objective view that delegates at this PrepCom have not convened to re-invent the wheel but to further explore the proposals for an enduring ATT. In this regard, we wish to suggest that the envisaged ATT on conventional weapons could, in addition to the Chair’s useful non-papers, draw some lessons from developed instruments and implementation mechanisms of most regional communities such as the ECOWAS, SADC, ECCAS and the EU among others. We believe this approach would further deepen the process while ensuring a more comprehensive and effective regime in the ATT.

Mr. Chairman,

As we focus on the consideration of the modalities of the implementation, as well as the final provisions of an ATT this week, we wish to highlight the central roles of export, import
and transit in an ATT. These three are considered as the core issue-areas upon which other implementation strategies derive strength. Having identified and deliberated on the elements, scope, criteria and parameters of an ATT, we believe that it is at the stage of export, import and transit, for example, that issues such as acceptance or denials, information exchange, enforcement, illicit brokering, transparency, accountability, inducement and corruption, as well as cooperation and assistance are either observed and/or compromised.

This is part of the reason why both the importing and exporting States should do their utmost to ensure appropriate information-sharing/exchange, adequate documentation and record-keeping. We are reminded, yet again, that the overriding objective of an ATT, is the promotion and sustenance of International Peace and Security. Therefore, Nigeria embraces the call to develop an enduring framework to guide global arms trade and believes that our discussions at this PrepCom should reflect the consideration of a comprehensive, practical and transparent approach to the establishment of adequate control systems for international arms trade.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is prepared to further engage other distinguished delegates with a view to finding an acceptable basis for the implementation of the items outlined in our
Statement. This, we believe, will ensure uniformity of purpose to enhance the efficiency of an ATT.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, my delegation wishes to reiterate the need for an ATT that serves as:

(i) An effective deterrence to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (salws);

(ii) A procedure for enforcement, transparency, verification and accountability;

(iii) Mechanism to review existing regulatory frameworks and weapon transfer legislations;

(iv) Sufficient training and building of institutional and human resources in developing States;

(v) A contract with requirement that all transfers of conventional weapons must be appropriately authorized by competent government authorities of both the importing and exporting States and a clear prohibition of transfer to unauthorized non-State actors.

Furthermore, the implementation process should also highlight:

(i) The reduction of arms sale and exploration of other areas of societal growth and human development;
(ii) Existing gaps in illicit arms trading;

(iii) Need for transparency and accountability among producers and buyers;

(iv) Also, need for adequate sharing of information and transparency with a view to combating the aspect of corruption in an ATT;

(v) Adequate regional regulation of global arms trade among States; and

(vi) The problems of internal and regional instability occasioned by proliferation and unfettered access to illicit small arms and light weapons by terrorists, insurgents and anarchists.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is no doubt aware of the challenges that confront us as we approach the final lap of our engagements. We are, however, convinced that these are not insurmountable issues, even as we have the option to choose whether to come to equity with clean hands or not. We are confident in your commitment to ensure fairness and impartiality of the process. For this, Mr. Chairman, Nigeria is prepared to support your efforts.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.