INTERVENTION BY ZAMBIA ON THE RULES OF PROCEDURE TO BE ADOPTED FOR THE JULY DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

MADE ON BEHALF OF THE ZAMBIAN DELEGATION TO THE 4TH ARMS TRADE TREATY PREPARATORY COMMITTEE, NEW YORK, 15TH FEBRUARY 2012, UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS BY BRIG. GEN. MOSES PHIRI
Chairman,

Thank you very much for giving Zambia the floor.

And since Zambia is taking the floor for the first time after the euphoria of last weekend, allow me to join the chorus of others in congratulating you on your leadership so far and to affirm Zambia’s continued trust in your wisdom and special skills to steer us to the desired haven.

Dear colleagues many of you, no doubt, must have heard by now that Zambia was crowned, last Sunday, as the Confederation of African Football Champions after gunning down the “Elephants” of Cote D’ Ivoire!

It is in the spirit of being Champions of African Soccer that Zambia therefore wishes to make some remarks on the Draft Rules of Procedure towards the Diplomatic Conference (DIPCON) on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in July 2012!

Chairman,

Zambia is of the considered view that the Chairman’s Draft Paper of 14 July 2011 should be part of the compendium of documents that will form a good basis for discussions during the DIPCON on the ATT.

Chairman,

Regarding Rule 33 on Decision-Making, Zambia submits that only the final text of the treaty instrument be adopted by Consensus as coined in para 3.

Zambia further proposes that instead of garnering consensus article by article, only substantive matters of a procedural nature be subjected to majority decision rather than consensus as currently stated in para 1.

Zambia is persuaded that nothing should be agreed until everything is agreed. In this light, Zambia counsels that the President of DIPCON should negotiate on the basis of good faith transparently, inclusively and consultatively with all States, who may have different and divergent views on any issue. Rule 57 on in-camera sessions, besides open plenaries should be exploited fully with a view to narrowing those differences in the spirit of give and take. In this way the
conference will be improving the prospects of engendering consensus, as a package of compromises, reflective of the best possible and acceptable final treaty text.

Zambia urges that the precedents set in past negotiations on similar processes be used to maximum advantage in enhancing Rule 33 and Rule 35 para 2 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure.

Chairman,

Allow me lastly to comment on Rule 63, paras 3 and 4 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure on the participation of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Zambia supports the proposal by Norway and others, that all main meetings of the Conference be assumed open to NGOs unless otherwise declared closed.

Therefore this conference would do well to heed the clarion call to defer to best practice of the United Nations in humanitarian negotiations including allowing NGOs to take up the floor in all open meetings as often as they wished and on any article or articles rather than restricting them to one stand-alone meeting. The unique perspectives, words of caution and expertise of NGOs are well worth their weight in gold and thus often a useful resource at the disposal of States.

Chairman,

In conclusion, allow me to pay growing tribute to you Chair for the wise and able manner in the way you have led the PrepComs thus far.

I thank you all for listening.