STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE TO THE FOURTH PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

Zimbabwe identifies with and fully supports the African group position as presented by the distinguished representative of the Republic of Nigeria.

Zimbabwe shares the noble idea of an ARMS TRADE TREATY (ATT) whose goal is that of setting up a clear legal framework which will regulate trade in conventional arms, small arms and light weapons (SALW) to among other things, ensure that such SALW do not fall in to irresponsible hands, of NON STATE ACTORS who are prone to using such deadly arms, for unlawful purposes such as violent and unconstitutional removal of legitimate governments, robberies, piracy, murders and some such other criminal acts which create instability and hampers socio economic development as well as create instability all over the world particularly in developing countries. The Proposed Treaty must essentially be focused on prevention of illicit trade in SALW for purposes of preventing the same from falling into the hands of irresponsible hands in particular of NONSTATE ACTORS who have no respect or value of human life.

Zimbabwe believes that as we proceed to the drafting stages of the proposed ATT the underlying and stated principles as outlined in the draft in particular the goals and objectives remain as our focus and guiding principles.

It is crucially important that the purpose, goals, and objectives of the proposed ATT remain clear and are stated in no uncertain, un ambiguous and transparent terms to enable everyone concerned to be clear as to what mischief the proposed ATT is meant to eliminate, what it is intended to serve and conversely what it is not intended to achieve. It is important that the process be transparent and devoid of all forms of hypocrisy that have seen some States blowing hot and cold, ie pushing for an ATT by day and actively supporting and giving arms to rebels, groups and some such other non state entities for purposes of toppling governments that they do not consider as serving their interests.

To this end it is Zimbabwe’s position that linkages to concepts which do not have universal consensus, that are abstract as to their meaning as well as their interpretation can only serve to bring uncertainty as to what the real purpose and agenda behind this proposed ATT is and so should be avoided.

Zimbabwe will associate itself and give its full support to a process that has integrity and is devoid of hidden agendas. Zimbabwe believes in an ATT that is fair, practical, and implementable and that does not impinge on the fundamental right of States to self defense in keeping with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter in particular Article 51 thereof.

Consequently the proposed treaty should in every way uphold the right of every state to enjoy unrestricted right to arm themselves and to engage in arms trade, conventional or otherwise, without
unnecessary encumbrances being brought to bear upon them at the instance of any other state big or small.

The proposed Treaty should not in any way overtly or covertly seek to restrict States from carrying out trade among themselves for purposes of self defense as determined by themselves as sovereign states. To this end the proposed treaty should not be one that is capable of being used as an instrument to victimize, punish or remove regimes that certain powers do not particularly like, as has happened in some parts of the world in particular Africa, ie it should not be used to advance certain political interests.

The Proposed Treaty should not in any way contain ambiguous language that could lead to different and subjective interpretations in as far as what its real purposes and intentions are such that it could be capable of being used as an instrument to inter alia, interfere with the internal affairs of other states or to deny such other states from arming themselves and in the process weaken them and bring about unconstitutional and illegitimate regime change. Above all the overriding principle should be that of the promotion and sustenance of international peace.

The Republic of Zimbabwe will not support the inclusion of any principle, formulation, proposal or provision that she considers or deem to be inconsistent with the above mentioned objective and purposes.

To this end we will be proposing for inclusion into the body of the proposed Treaty of formulations, principles or provisions that we will consider as necessary to buttress the above-mentioned agreed purposes and objectives of the proposed Treaty.

All provisions that are potentially intrusive and have a potential to compromise national security of importing states particularly the landlocked ones must be eliminated from the draft. The Proposed treaty should demonstrate sensitivity of States to maintain confidentiality by avoiding the requirement to divulge information that such States may consider confidential and necessary for national security.

As regards the rules and procedures we have a few comments

Firstly on the issue of consensus, we derive our mandate from the operative paragraph 5 of resolution 64/48 which calls on these proceedings to be conducted in an open and transparent manner and decisions be based on the principle of consensus. We do not see any reason to depart from the dictates of this mandate as worded.

AS for the participation of NGOs Zimbabwe welcomes and appreciates the contributions of NGOs in particular the insights and expertise that they have. To this end Zimbabwe will welcome their participation only to the extent that such contribution and participation remains advisory in nature and consistent with the objectives and goals of this effort. Zimbabwe supports the formulation of rule 63 as it is regarding attendance by NGOs.

In keeping with the principles of openness, inclusivity, transparency and to achieve full participation which are essential to enhance a spirit of identity and ownership of the end product it is important that
rule 47-48 be implemented in such a way that it does not prejudice those states that may not have resources to raise large delegations that will enable them to be represented fully in all meetings if held simultaneously. To this end Zimbabwe lends her support to the calls for a report back system to enable those states that would not have been represented in in parallel meetings to understand the basis of decisions taken in such meetings as well as to be able to make contributions thereto.