STATEMENT

BY

THE DELEGATION OF ZIMBABWE

TO THE

SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

29 AUGUST 2012
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Madam President,

At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of this Second Review Conference. I also wish to extend congratulations to the members of the bureau on their appointment. I assure you of the support and cooperation of my delegation in your efforts to steer this meeting to a successful conclusion.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Madam President,

Zimbabwe is committed to implementing the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. My delegation shares the view that some progress has been in the fight against proliferation of illicit small and light weapons in Africa through implementing legally binding protocols or conventions at the continental and sub-regional levels.

Like other delegations, we are however concerned that the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons continues to cause armed violence, transnational-organized crime, the rise in social violence, undermines good governance, results in destabilization, leads to unconstitutional removal of legitimate governments, contributes to human rights violations and threatens peace, security and development. Zimbabwe joins other delegations to call for the manufacturers of these weapons to exercise restraint and responsibility by limiting the production and flow of such weapons particularly into the hands of non-state actors who are not authorized to receive such arms by the governments in whose territories such entities operate or exist. My delegation further calls for an effective, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of the Programme of Action as well as the International Tracing Instrument.

Madam President,

The problem of the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons can only be resolved holistically and in an integrated manner through improving cooperation and coordination. It is also important to reinforce the capacity to regulate compliance with all aspects of the problem as expressed in existing international and regional instruments. Zimbabwe is committed to the international goals of arms control and disarmament and seeks to strengthen international and regional efforts to contain and prevent the proliferation of small arms, mines, conventional armaments and weapons of mass destruction. Zimbabwe is also in full support of all efforts that are aimed at the establishment of regional arms registers to record information on imports, exports, production and holding of conventional weapons.
My delegation shares the view that the international community should take concrete measures to help developing countries in particular in Africa to promote economic development, reduce poverty, achieve peace and security and remove the dangers of conflict. In our view, development will reduce the need to acquire small arms and light weapons and to use them to destabilize most of our countries.

Madam President

Zimbabwe is a signatory to inter alia the SADC protocol on the control of firearms, ammunition and other related materials in the SADC region. The objective of the protocol is to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of firearms, ammunition and other related materials, as well as to regulate the import and export of legal small arms. In addition, Zimbabwe is working with SADC and the Southern Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (SARPCCO) on the implementation of its programmes on SALW. In this regard, the SARPCCO has with Zimbabwe's active support, prepared new programmes to address inter alia the harmonization of legislation, institutional capacity building, joint cross border operations, demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and development, research and publication activities as well as arms destruction. In SADC, bilateral and regional cooperation exists within the framework of SARPCCO and other multilateral arrangements.

Madam President,

At the national level, Zimbabwe remains committed to revising and improving its legislation, regulations and administrative procedures aimed at enhancing controls in the areas of acquiring, possessing, manufacturing firearms, import/export and transfer of firearms. We share the view that it is essentially through the effective application and use of legislation as well as through commitment to implement the programme of action that countries can be able to deal with this challenge. A few years back, through vigilance, Zimbabwe's law enforcement and security agencies at Harare International Airport were able to intercept and arrest a group of 70 mercenaries who were headed for one African country with an assortment of arms of war with the intention to bring about unconstitutional regime change.

Zimbabwe remains ready to cooperate with other countries through exchanging information relating to tracing of SALW. Zimbabwe put in place a National Point of Contact which is fully functioning. Under the legislation such as the Firearms Act, Customs and Excise Act, Public Order and Security Act, to mention but a few, the police are required and mandated to mark homemade weapons upon registration. All SALW in the possession of armed and security forces have additional departmental markings supplied by the respective quartermasters in addition to manufacturer's serial numbers which should remain clear and easily readable. The country has received marking machines and is in the process of re-marking all arms that are in the possession of all government security and armed forces.
Under the relative provisions of the Firearms Act all gun dealers are required to keep and maintain records including manufactures records and year of import as long as the firearms are active. All civilians intending to use and possess firearms for legitimate purposes go through a rigorous security vetting system before they are licenced to possess such firearms. Such licences are required to be renewed regularly on production of the weapons that are subject of such licences.

In conclusion, Madame President, Zimbabwe fully supports your draft outcome documents as a sound basis for our deliberations during this Conference.

I thank you.