ZAMBIA STATEMENT

AT THE

SIXTH BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES ON THE UN PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, THE REGIONAL LEVEL - INCLUDING THROUGH REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS - AND AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL AND IN LIGHT OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

NEW YORK
JUNE 2016
Mr. Chairman,

1. As this is the first time I take the floor during this biennial meeting of states, allow me first to congratulate you on your appointment as chairperson. Zambia welcomes the way you have steered preparations for this meeting. We remain convinced that the ultimate goal of each biennial meeting is to agree on precise and operational recommendations aiming at ensuring the full implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA).

2. Zambia aligns itself with the statement of the Africa Group delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zambia.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The discussion at the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS5) highlighted some specific issues that needed to be prioritized within the UN PoA framework in order for it to have a meaningful effect on preventing human suffering. Some of these priorities included international assistance and capacity building, marking, record keeping and tracing.

Mr. Chairman

4. Zambia is cognizant that the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of conventional weapons, particularly Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) continue to pose a serious threat to continental security, fuel human conflict, cause significant loss of lives and serious violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law, undermine conflict prevention and hinders post conflict reconstruction and development.

5. Having regard to the outcome of the BMS5 and the discussions of the Government of Experts (MGE 2), in order for the UN PoA to become more effective in main object, the Government of the Republic of Zambia as a first step proceed to ratify the ATT and hopes to effectively implement it into domestic law and policy.
6. Further at the national level, my country welcomes the support and assistance received from the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), with the help of the African and the European unions in form of equipment for marking small arms and the holding of various workshops on capacity building which were financed by these international partners. Arising from the foregoing, most SALW have been licensed. Those found unlicensed have been confiscated and destroyed. Further current storage depots are guarded clearly and securely. However, it is hoped that there will be more investment and developmental international assistance in areas of legislation, training, coordination and border control.

7. Further to the above, Mr. Chairman, my government intends to continue to promote education and raise awareness among government employees, police, wildlife officers, license and export authorities, schools and communities about the use of SALW in domestic violence and acts of gender based violence including sexual violence because we feel this is critical in having a holistic approach in mainstreaming the issue of small arms across development, human rights, crime prevention, peace and security agendas.

8. Being fully aware of the primary responsibility of individual Member States to mitigate threats posed by illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of SALW. Mr. Chairman, Zambia will continue to renew its commitment and effort towards the full and effective implementation of the relevant regional and internal instruments through nationally led and owned programs.

9. We are also cognizant that in our region, the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of arms and ammunition is significantly aided by porous borders. In this regard my country welcomes the calls for regional approaches based on strong inter-state cooperation that fosters sharing of intelligence and information on suspected traffickers, trafficking routes and suspected diversion activities. Zambia is a landlocked sub-Saharan country with an extensive land borderline which it shares with eight (08) other nations. Its total land mass is 752,618 square kilometers (slightly larger than France) and has a population of approximately 14,309,466 roughly translating to 17.22 person per density square kilometer. The issue of land border security is important for Zambia being a landlocked country just as it is for the other 16 landlocked African countries. And in addressing the challenges of the
big porous borders the Zambian government has established many specialized departments attending to their areas of specialization.

Mr. Chairman

10. Zambia just like any other landlocked African country always wants its borders to be bridges rather than barriers for cross border cooperation and regional integration arising from its geo-political location, Zambia has sought to establish itself as a trade friendly transit hub (innocent passage). In enforcing transit controls, the country issues transit and transshipment permits and devotes resources to controlling transfers of strategic goods through its territory. In this regard, it is a requirement that before an entity seeking to move arms and military equipment through the Zambia’s territory, that entity should apply for transit before shipment can be authorized. Written authorization is vested in the Ministry of Home Affairs and in certain instances the Ministry of Defence. However, a lot of assistance in form of technology transfer and capacity building is required in this area so that transit goods are not diverted and also ensure right goods transit the country.

Mr. Chairman

11. With the above, let me submit that the significant challenge in this area relates to lack of information sharing between exporting and importing with the transit states. Cooperation and information sharing is required among all stakeholders in order to mitigate the risk of diversion and also making it possible to understand the goods in transit.

12. As a developing country, Zambia supports the call for help for sub-Saharan countries to build sufficient institutional capabilities. Further, more technical resources are needed to fully implement and effectively enforce the two instruments.

13. Lastly chair, Zambia is of the view that women's participation in this area of combating illicit trade in small arms is vital because women are the most affected by armed violence both directly and indirectly. Further, it is common knowledge
that women endure the long lasting effects of war, displacement, hunger and disease while often becoming the main providers of households. Therefore, our womenfolk should be made to be active, advocating for awareness raising by engaging them in policy formulations and engaging them in workshops dealing with armed domestic violence and the gender dimensions of armed violence. One other issue which has worked well for us in Zambia is allowing participation from the civil society who most of the times have the expertise and a large women following.

I thank you.