



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT
ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
BY
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PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS, NEW YORK

AT THE
70TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASEMBLY
FIRST COMMITTEE DEBATE ON CONVENTIONAL
WEAPONS CLUSTER

NEW YORK, MONDAY 26TH OCTOBER, 2015

**Statement by Nigeria
on behalf of the African Group
at the Thematic debate of the First Committee:**

Conventional Weapons Cluster

New York, 26th October, 2015

Mr. Chairman,

1. It is my honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. The Group aligns itself with the Statement on Conventional Weapons cluster delivered by the Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

2. The African Group remains deeply concerned over the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons, their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly in Africa. The Group continues to underscore the importance of a balanced, full and effective implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). In this context, the Group welcomes the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts (MGE2) being the last event held under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons from 1-5 June 2015.

3. The group views the full implementation of the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA) and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), as key elements to promoting long-term security and for creating conditions for security and sustainable development in Africa. African States have indeed been guided by the efforts to address the menace of the illicit trade in SALWs on the continent, within the framework of the Program of Action.

4. The Group wishes to highlight the extensive work done towards addressing the subject of the illicit trade in SALWs since the Bamako Declaration (2000), the AU Constitutive Act and the Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU (2002), and the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy in Sirte (2004). In addition to the aforementioned are the Nairobi Protocol, the SADC Protocol (2004), the ECOWAS Convention (2006), and efforts in the framework of CENSAD

and the Arab Maghreb Union and other relevant sub-regional initiatives aimed at addressing the issue in Africa.

5. Similarly, African Heads of State and Governments have, on numerous occasions, expressed concern over the impact of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in undermining peace and security and fueling conflicts in Africa.

6. Despite these efforts on the continent of Africa, the Group continues to stress that international assistance and cooperation, on a broader scale, remains an essential ingredient to the full implementation of the Programme of Action. In view of this, the African Group wishes to call on Member States of the UN from developed economies to render cooperation and more technical and financial assistance to developing countries in the realization of the overall objectives of the UN PoA and the ITI, with a view to eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Group believes such efforts will promote national and regional initiatives and assist efforts at the global level. The Group urges all States to continue to fulfil their obligations regarding reporting, technological transfer and by ensuring the unhindered flow of international cooperation and assistance as mandated by the UN PoA on small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

7. A veritable confidence-building measure is an actual reduction of military expenditures by major arms producing countries, in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments. In this regard, we urge those countries to devote the resources to global economic and social development and, in particular, in the fight against poverty and disease

8. The African Group acknowledges the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 24 December 2014, as well as the successful Conference of its States Parties held in Cancun, Mexico from 24-27 August, 2015. The Group urges appropriate implementation of the ATT, as the only legally binding instrument on the international transfer of conventional arms, in a balanced and objective manner that protects the interests of all States and not just the major international producing and exporting States. The Group reaffirms the sovereign right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms and their parts and components for their legitimate self defence and security needs in accordance with the UN Charter. The full implementation of the treaty is practically

achievable with the cooperation of all. The Group acknowledges that unregulated conventional arms transfer fuels the illicit trade and further urges major arms suppliers to ratify the treaty and promote its implementation.

9. The African Group seeks to raise the lingering question of autonomous weapons. The manufacture of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) is a threshold that raises ethical, legal, moral and technical issues in relation to international humanitarian and international human rights law.

10. The Group notes the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in providing assistance to African States on the elaboration of the various multilaterally agreed conventions and for the control of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and all parts and components. Such efforts should correspond with those rendered to its counterparts in other regions.

Mr. Chairman,

11. The delegation of Nigeria would like to introduce the draft resolution titled: "**United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa**", on behalf of the African Group. This draft resolution has already been circulated to delegations. We note with satisfaction, the overwhelming support for this resolution in the past sessions of the General Assembly and call on all delegations to continue to support it. The presentation of the resolution is to ensure, among others, the re-doubling of efforts on disarmament education and support for African States to address the challenges of arms proliferation.

12. Finally, Mr. Chairman, the African Group wishes to restate the critical importance of political will and transparency in addressing international disarmament and security issues. The Group believes that deliberations in the coming days should be guided by the need to advance the work of the First Committee and enhance the cause of peace.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.