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STATEMENT BY

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AT THE

**FIRST COMMITTEE THEMATIC DEBATE ON
CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS**

New York, October 26, 2015

Mr. Chairman,

It gives me great pleasure to see you in the Chair as I address the Committee on the important topic of Conventional Weapons.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, which adequately convey our position on the range of issues covered under this thematic debate. Due to time constraints, I will limit my remarks to a few issues.

Mr. Chairman,

The illicit proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) remains a major threat to stability and security. The negative impact of their circulation and trafficking in Africa continues to pose serious humanitarian as well as socio-economic challenges in many parts of the continent. In West Africa, the proliferation of illicitly acquired conventional weapons have fueled the rise in terrorism and other forms of armed violence, transnational organized crime, corruption and the menace of drugs, and consequently, are a matter of serious concern for Ghana. Their devastating impact on women and children compel us to urgently address this issue.

We are, however, encouraged by the commitment demonstrated by the international community to addressing this challenge and have reason to hope that our continuing engagement and concerted efforts at national, regional and global levels will lead to significant achievements in the fight against the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. In this regard, we would urge the international community to pursue discussions already begun, on forging synergies and complementarities between the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action with a view to their effective implementation in West Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the successful convening of the First Conference of State Parties (CSP1) in Cancun, Mexico this year are indeed positive developments in the global consciousness and effort to win the fight against the illicit proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Ghana was pleased to collaborate with Australia to co-facilitate the adoption of financial rules for the ATT Secretariat and Conference of State parties, necessary to ensuring an efficient framework for the implementation of the Treaty. It is expected that the ATT would, inter alia, help stem the flow of arms to destinations where they could potentially fuel conflict or undermine national and regional peace.

Ghana, on its part ratified the Treaty on 13th May, 2015 in accordance with its Constitutional requirements and is making arrangements to deposit the instrument of ratification soon.

We look forward to the convening of the extraordinary meeting of the ATT early next year, and we renew the call for enhanced international cooperation and assistance at the national, regional and international levels, to ensure the Treaty's successful implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana wishes to reiterate appeals made to arms-producing countries to ensure that the supply of Small Arms and Light Weapons is limited only to governments and entities duly authorized by them. We cannot but belabor the point that the illicit transfer of these weapons to non-state actors continues to pose a grave threat to the peace and security of many countries in Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the convening of the Second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action (POA) held in New York in June of this year. Ghana notes with satisfaction the key outcomes of this meeting, which included the need to strengthen the International Tracing Instrument, by taking into account new developments in technology to enhance weapon marking, record-keeping and tracing. We also wish to reiterate our support for the strengthening of mechanisms for the provision of assistance under the United Nations Programme of Action as well as controls over 3D printing technology to prevent illegal applications of the technology.

It is our expectation that the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, scheduled for next year, will dispassionately deliberate on these issues, among others, in order to promote human security and development.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to call on Member States to take necessary action towards the implementation of Goal 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which calls for the significant reduction of illicit SALW trafficking by 2030. Posterity will not forgive us if we fail to meet this goal. We also call for a fundamental review of the nexus between disarmament and development and the current excessive global military spending, in favour of meeting SDG Goals 1 and 2 of ending poverty, hunger and inequality.

I thank you for your kind attention.