

**Second Meeting of State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
Geneva, SWITZERLAND**

22-26 August 2016

**Remarks by
ECOWAS Commission**

Mr. President of the Second Conference of State Parties, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, On behalf of the President of the ECOWAS Commission H.E Marcel de SOUZA, I bring greetings from Abuja, Nigeria to this distinguished audience.

Your Excellencies, I wish to seize, quickly, the opportunity of this platform to congratulate the UN and member states, civil societies and pressure groups for initiating and sustaining the efforts that led to the emergence of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The ATT is clearly an imperative in the effort to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and by so doing promoting democratised development globally.

At this point we think it still apt to congratulate the Government of Mexico for its successful hosting of the conference in Cancun in 2015 and the Government of Nigeria on its election as Chair of the Second Conference of State Parties. The ECOWAS Commission wishes to express its solidarity to the President of this conference and subsequent ones and calls on all stakeholders to mobilise support towards the same end. In this regard, we wish to appeal to states that are yet to ratify the ATT to do so, in order to block leakages that may occur in its implementation as a result of not doing so. And for those that have ratified to go the whole hog to domestication and ensure reporting on agreed terms

We note with pleasure that the numbers of CSPs have risen over time to 87 all over the world with 18 from Africa and wish to state that the 11¹ ratifications recorded notwithstanding, we are not resting on our oars as we step up the campaign to get the remaining four states of the ECOWAS region to ratify the ATT. We are willing to collaborate with other RECs through experience sharing to raise the numbers of CSPs. That said, it is apt to note that rapid and record ratification by ECOWAS member states is a case in point of the importance of international cooperation and assistance, major provisions of the ATT. In this regard, we acknowledge the Government of Britain which provided the funding resources, the experts who developed a simple advocacy instrument and the West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) the civil society, for the sure-footed implementation of the vibrant advocacy efforts.

Allow me to recall that since its entry into force, indeed in anticipation of it, the ECOWAS Commission had engaged partners such as the Germany, the EU, UNODC, UNREC, ICRC, Safer World among others, in charting a course for the

¹ Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone. The Other African Countries are Central Africa Republic, Chad, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mauritius, South Africa and Zambia

effective and efficient implementation of the ATT. This is to ensure the finest distillation of other relevant international frameworks ²including the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons by seeking synergy and complementarities among them and the ATT. Our commitment to the implementation of the ATT, in letter and spirit is unalloyed. We have thus integrated its implementation in our five-year priority activity plan, the same implementation framework that has propelled the region in its fight against proliferation of small arms focusing on age long strategies such as sensitisation and advocacy, capacity building, resource mobilisation, partnership/networks/ monitoring and evaluation.

In this regard, it is pertinent to underscore for you that dear to ECOWAS is the need for coordination in the implementation of the ATT. Coordination is important even if there were just one instrument and one stakeholder involved in this process or indeed any other. It is even more so pertinent on this subject of managing the trade in conventional weapons and considering the myriad instruments, stakeholders and programs and projects that all seek to address the issue. The mix of actors and actions make ensuring coordination at community, national, regional and global levels, on concepts and content, definitions, objectives, space, time tools and methodology has become imperative. Clearly we need coordination among stakeholders to reduce parallel interventions and therefore save money and time and still get the best results. Being part of this conference strengthens our resolve as a REC and will rub off positively on our efforts and capacity to deliver on our mandate of providing policy and technical support to our member states and contribute positively to global efforts in the implementation of the ATT.

ECOWAS would like to acknowledge the good work being done by the President of the Second Conference of State Parties, H.E Amb Emmanuel IMOHE of Nigeria and his team as well as the ATT Secretariat led in the interim by Mr Dladla Dumisani and his team even as they work towards settling down. Indeed, we wish to congratulate the ATT Secretariat on its first major outing of providing the whole range of effort that have gone into planning this conference. In the specific case of this meeting and on a bilateral level, we want to applaud the Governments of Australia and Switzerland for their generous and focused support part of which made it possible for a number of delegations including that of the ECOWAS Commission to participate at this major event. We thank all

² UNPoA, Firearms Protocol, The International Tracing Instrument and many other regional instruments

our other partners helping out in various other ways and acknowledge openly that their constant assistance is a major prop on which rests the successes that the ECOWAS region has recorded. We look forward to enhancing our relationship across board recognising the huge work that lies ahead.

Finally we at ECOWAS and the Commission wish to re-state our commitment to the successful, sustainable implementation of the ATT because this will fill a yawning gap in our collective efforts to control the illicit proliferation and trafficking of arms in our region and therefore by extension considerably reduce the negative impact on the peace, security and sustainable development of our region.

We wish this meeting a successful outcome

Thank you for listening!