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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement

By

Ambassador Tekeda Alemu

**Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia during the United Nations
Conference on Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)**

**18 March 2013
UN Headquarters, New York**

Mr. President,

I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as the President of the final Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) Conference. I would like to assure you Ethiopia's full cooperation and support in the discharge of your responsibilities which is quite a heavy one. Ethiopia associates itself with the statement delivered by Nigeria on behalf of the Africa group.

Mr. President,

Africa in general, and the Horn of Africa in particular, is one of the regions that has suffered the most as a result of extensive flow of illicit arms - particularly Small Arms and Light Weapons. It is indeed a well known fact that the illicit circulation of small arms has remained a major source of security and development challenge for many of our countries. This problem, no doubt, has direct and indirect implications in multifaceted areas, among others, for crime prevention, human rights protection, democratization, gender mainstreaming, regional integration and economic development, countering transnational crime and terrorism as well as peacekeeping.

It is with the understanding of this crosscutting and trans-boundary nature of the problem that our nations need to come together, including at the global level, to forge a common front to fight against, and control the scourge. It is also because of our conviction that overcoming the challenge is in the interest of all that we remain of the strong view that, this treaty should address, among others issues, the problem of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, including ammunition.

Mr. President,

Allow me to express some of the issues that we consider to be of paramount importance.

First, we want to emphasize the need to preserve the right of States to self-defense as enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter. No doubt, what we do should in no way impinge on the legitimate rights of States to produce, acquire and sell arms as well as transfer technology in a manner consistent with the Charter. Therefore, in our view the Treaty should focus on preventing the diversion of arms to the illicit market and ensure denial of access of conventional weapons to unauthorized non-state actors and terrorist groups. This is critical for us and the crux of the matter. Do we have the political will to do so? That for us is the main issue.

Second, for obvious reasons, the Proposed Treaty should not in any way contain ambiguous language that could lead to different and subjective interpretations.

Third, we consider international cooperation is a key element for the successful implementation of this future legal instrument. The provisions concerning this should be strengthened. We believe that adequate international support is crucial for the effectiveness and universality of the treaty.

Fourth, we believe in consensus as a method of decision making. But the principles of consensus should not be allowed to be abused in the sense of facilitating the exercise of veto.

Finally, Mr. President, the adverse consequences of the illicit transfer of weapons has been felt for many years in Africa. Ethiopia, therefore, supports every effort that will make this conference a success in delivering a strong and robust arms trade treaty that will serve as an instrument with the potential to significantly contribute to a reduction in the diversion of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons as well as ammunition, from the licit to the illicit market. That achievement, in our view, would make a difference towards the enhancement of peace and security in our sub-region and in Africa in general, and would be in the interest of the international community as well.

Thank You!