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**STATEMENT
BY**

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**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE ARMS TRADE TREATY**

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Mr President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you and the members of your Bureau upon your appointment to lead us through this United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We continue to have the greatest confidence in your experience and well-demonstrated diplomatic skills that guided us through the Preparatory Committee Process, to lead us to the successful conclusion of a strong and robust Treaty to regulate the global trade in conventional arms.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered earlier by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Mr President,

South Africa's approach continues to be that in order for us to achieve a strong and robust Treaty, States should endeavour to enter these negotiations with an open mind, an ambitious attitude and a goal to adopt an instrument that is as comprehensive as possible. It remains our goal that this Treaty should make a meaningful difference in the international legal arms trade. Any final product that would merely mirror the UN Register of Conventional Arms, as important a purpose which that instrument has served to date, would amount to failure.

The ATT should be an international instrument that fills a glaring gap that currently exists in the global arms control system. It should set high norms and set criteria that States will adhere to when considering arms transfers and not only, therefore, aim to prevent the illicit conventional arms trade.

The central pillar of the ATT should be premised on the requirement that prospective States Parties should establish, where they do not already exist, effective national conventional arms transfer control legislation, designated arms control systems, as well as official national administrative guidelines, national inspectorates and practical enforcement measures, including punitive measures for transgressions. South Africa considers it vital that the term that defines transfers should be broad and we should explore ways to include services such as import, export, transit, trans-shipment, temporary transfers, as well as to covering brokering services at the very least.

In this context, Mr President, South Africa supports an ATT that will regulate all arms transfers, both military and commercial. Thus, it should not be limited to the weapons covered by the UN Arms Register, but should include small arms and light weapons, as well as ammunition. While we know that some States may believe that the administrative burden of regulating ammunition may be too excessive, my delegation believes that the argument that the death, injury and suffering caused by ammunition, particularly to civilians in armed conflict and in the use of illicit small arms and light weapons, by far outweigh such administrative concerns.

My delegation remains open to the inclusion of the issue of parts and components of conventional arms in the ATT, given the fact that they are readily identifiable and can, in my delegation's experience easily be regulated. However, the inclusion of dual use items could prove to be a challenge and will probably be difficult to regulate or prove to be a reporting burden to developing countries.

As for criteria, South Africa has as its central national legislative measure on conventional arms transfer controls, its National Conventional Arms Control Act. This Act contains a number of transfer control criteria not dissimilar to those contained in the draft paper on the elements for inclusion in the ATT, as presented to the Preparatory Committee by you, Mr President. We continue to believe that agreed upon criteria that take into account the respect for obligations in terms of international law relating to peace, security and stability, International Humanitarian Law and International Human Right Law, as well as the respect for civilians and their protection should form the basic tenets of such criteria.

Mr President,

The ATT's success will largely be based on its provisions relating to its implementation, including through regular follow-up meetings of States Parties to consider the operation and status of the Treaty, as well as periodic conferences to allow for the review of the Treaty. As far as reporting on arms transfers is concerned, the submission of such reports should be regular, but in a format that is uncomplicated and not burdensome.

As far as the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), or the unit that will act as a Secretariat is concerned, it should be assigned a clear mandate and role and it should be given the necessary resources to function effectively. South Africa supports the establishment and maintenance of a secretariat or a unit that will, amongst others, act as a repository for national reports and act as a clearing house for requests relating to cooperation and assistance. It could also be given the mandate to facilitate communication amongst States that may seek clarification from each other on certain issues. Whatever the final provisions that will be adopted on issues such as scope, parameters and criteria, South Africa believes that the creation of an Implementation Support Unit will, amongst others, be one of the key issues to the successful implementation of the ATT.

On the whole, Mr President, South Africa believes that the draft paper that you presented to the Preparatory Committee is well-balanced and could be supported in principle, as it represents a good basis for consideration during our negotiations. Central to the success of the final instrument is ensuring that it has a real effect in setting an international norm to which States adhere and in monitoring the global arms trade.

I thank you, Mr President.