



**STATEMENT  
BY  
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AFRICAN UNION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SECOND UNITED  
NATIONS CONFERENCE TO REVIEW THE PROGRESS MADE IN  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT,  
COMBAT, AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS  
AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS**

**Madam Chairperson,**

The African Union joins other speakers in warmly congratulating you on your election as Chair of the Preparatory Committee, we are particularly happy to see you at the helm of this Prep Com given your longstanding proven leadership qualities and skillful diplomacy. We also congratulate Madam Angela Kane for her appointment as the High Representative of Disarmament Affairs and wish her success in all her new endeavors.

The African Union fully subscribes to the statement made by the delegation of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and also aligns itself with that of the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM).

**Madam Chair,**

As you are aware and, as already eloquently articulated by the Nigerian delegation on behalf of the African Group, since the adoption of the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2000, Africa has accorded high priority to the fight against the proliferation of illicit SALW through the signing, ratification and implementation of legally binding protocols or conventions in practically all regions of the continent.

Furthermore and, taking into account the importance of regional approaches to the implementation of the UN Programme of Action, the African Union Commission established a mechanism for Coordination, Policy guidance Research and Monitoring Circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons through the Ad Hoc AU Regional Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons. This mechanism comprises the Regional Economic Communities and Regional inter-governmental bodies with small arms mandate with the core task of enhancing the capacity, harmonizing and coordinating efforts of the African Union, the RECs, and other relevant Regional Bodies for implementing their programmes, including enhancing cooperation and synergy across regions in implementation of agreed actions in the fight against SALWs.

Accordingly, the African Union Commission convened a meeting of Member States Experts of the African Union in Lome, Togo, 26-29 September 2011 which considered a Draft African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons with a view to its adoption by the AU Executive Council.

The overall objective of the proposed African Union Strategy is to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons in an integrated and holistic manner across all regions of Africa aimed at achieving the following specific objectives:

- Promoting a culture of peace through education and public awareness programmes;
- Addressing comprehensively the problem of SALW through the mainstreaming of SALW control as a cross-cutting and multidimensional issue in achieving peace, security, development and stability in the Continent;
- Strengthening the capacity of AU Member States, RECs and Regional Bodies and the African Union Commission to implementation measures against the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of SALW;
- Promoting cooperation, coordination and exchange of information between relevant stakeholders at national, regional, trans-regional and continental levels;
- Enhancing international cooperation and assistance in the fight against proliferation of small arms and light weapons at the national, regional and continental levels;

Madam Chair,

Allow me, In conclusion, to touch on the ever-increasing problems arising from the illicit proliferation of weapons into a number of areas in Africa particularly, the Gulf of Guinea and the Sahel. The escalation of instability in these regions

occasioned by terrorist activities and piracy underscores the need for the comprehensive approach and global political will and commitment. The magnitude and far-reaching implications of these challenges informed the convening of a Ministerial Meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council in Bamako, Mali on 20 March, 2012 culminating into the adoption of a Declaration on the Situation in the Sahel. The Peace and Security Council Meeting was preceded by a Joint African Union-United Nations Experts' Meeting on the Situation in the Sahel. In the same vein, the African Union looks forward to the early convening of the proposed Regional Summit of Gulf of Guinea aimed at developing a comprehensive regional anti-piracy strategy as recommended by the UN assessment Mission to the Gulf of Guinea.

I wish to thank AU partners for their continued support to capacity building efforts of African countries in the fight against the proliferation of SALW and pledge the African Union's commitment to continue in its efforts to harmonize and coordinate regionally developed strategies aimed at enhancing the implementation of the UNPoA based on the principle of national and regional ownership.

Thank you for your kind attention.