STATEMENT

BY

THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA

DURING

THE THEMATIC DISCUSSION
OF THE
FIRST COMMITTEE
ON
CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

Wednesday, October 23, 2014
United Nations, New York

Please check against delivery
Mr. Chairman,

Kenya aligns herself with the statements delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by the Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

In the 21st Century we face the unprecedented challenge of how to build a society that is more peaceful and secure, while at the same time contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and crafting the Post 2015 Development Agenda. A major impediment to overcoming this challenge is the issue of armed violence which continues to occur in many countries and regions globally. The humanitarian impact of armed violence is by no means limited to armed conflicts. The majority of civilian casualties and deaths resulting from armed violence and acts of terrorism actually occur in countries that are not affected by armed conflict. Moreover, armed violence and terrorism cannot be separated from transnational crime, including human trafficking, drugs and arms trafficking.

Mr. Chairman,

While the world continues to focus its attention on Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) due to their high profile impact and destructiveness, the effect of conventional weapons is more insidious and get causes mass casualties and untold suffering in all parts of the world, due to their misuse on a daily basis. The problem of the illicit trade and misuse of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) has therefore been highlighted by many other delegations during this session. This aptly reflects the fact that many countries and regions particularly in Africa continue being affected by armed violence and conflict due to illicit trade and trafficking of SALW. We therefore reiterate the call for enhancement of international cooperation and assistance in dealing with the challenge presented by this scourge.

Mr. Chairman,

The proliferation of Conventional weapons, especially the illicit transfer, excessive accumulation, uncontrolled spread and misuse of SALW poses not only a significant threat to global peace and security, but also to the social, and economic development of many countries. As the current cause of the most fatalities worldwide, SALW have a profoundly destabilizing effect and are an obstacle to development, particularly in the most fragile regions of the world.

In this regard, Kenya welcomes the unanimous adoption of Resolution 2117 on Small Arms and Light Weapons last year by the United Nations Security Council. This resolution is critical as it expresses the grave concern of the international community regarding the threat that the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of SALW poses to the maintenance of international peace and security, and the significant losses to human life.

Mr. Chairman,

As a country which has experienced the deleterious effect of SALW proliferation, Kenya remains deeply concerned regarding the challenges this presents. Kenya therefore continues to emphasize the importance of a balanced, full and effective implementation of the Second Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action on SALW and lauds the successful convening of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS 5) on UN PoA on SALW in 2014. Kenya also welcomes the outcome reached by consensus at the BMS5 and stresses that international cooperation and assistance is essential to the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

The Government of Kenya has taken practical measures that we believe will contribute significantly to the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national level. Clear legislative and administrative procedures for arms management and control have been put in place. In addition, a policy framework has been developed in accordance with the provisions of the Programme of Action on guidelines on legislative, institutional and regulatory measures, governing the control and management of small arms and light weapons. Kenya also has an elaborate centralized stockpile management system for purposes of accountability.

Mr. Chairman,
Monitoring of the UNPoA remains a very critical aspect in ensuring that its implementation is carried out effectively. In this regard, Kenya has developed a National Monitoring and Implementation framework on the progress of UNPoA. Of importance to note is the participation of civil society Organizations (CSOs) in the monitoring of UNPoA as well as the initiation of processes aimed at promoting an illicit SALW free society. In Kenya, CSOs are invaluable partners in the fight against illicit SALW, and thus are key players in the work and activities of the Kenya National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya values Regional and International cooperation as a critical pillar in the fight against illicit trade in SALW. At the Sub-regional level, Kenya cooperates closely with participating States under the auspices of the Regional Centre for Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Neighboring States (RECSA) in developing effective measures in the areas of marking, tracing and record keeping; stockpile management and security, monitoring as well as harmonization of legislations. Kenya is host to the RECSA secretariat and commits to the full implementation of the Nairobi protocol.

Kenya has also continued to actively participate in the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) processes, which propose a multi-faceted approach to Peace, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region as well as the establishment of bilateral, multilateral and tripartite arrangements with neighboring countries in order to cooperate in the effective prevention, combating and eradication of the illicit trade in SALW and other security concerns.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya as a State Party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) welcomes the successful conclusion of the Third Review Conference and Maputo Action Plan which aims at building on the achievements made under the Nairobi and Cartagena Action Plans, while acknowledging local, national and regional circumstances in its practical implementation.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I wish to observe that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Kenya is a consequence of the wider challenges we face in our region. It is the illicit transfers of such weapons to our region that have led to those arms falling in the hands of militant groups such as the Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab. The latter, as is known, claimed responsibility for the terrorist siege that took place at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi in September last year. We therefore believe that the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons should play a central role in the implementation of practical measures for combating the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Kenya will continue to actively contribute to all efforts within the United Nations and other fora to develop and promote effective norms and rules aimed at eradicating illicit trade in SALW.

I thank you.