

**4<sup>TH</sup> ARMS TRADE TREATY CONFERENCE (CSP4)**  
**DRAFT STATEMENT BY THE AFRICA GROUP**

Mr. President,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Africa Group. We join others to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as the President of the 4<sup>th</sup> Arms Trade Treaty Conference and affirm the Africa Group's continued support for your leadership and our cooperation toward a successful outcome of this conference.

Mr. President,

The ATT Sponsorship Programme allowed many of our delegates to attend this CSP4 and the Africa Group would like to express their appreciation to all countries that have contributed to the Programme.

May I also thank the Government of Japan, our host this week for the excellent facilities and organisation of this Conference.

Mr. President,

Are we today closer to peace than in 2009 when President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica introduced the Treaty at the United Nations, saying that *'it was up to us to ensure that in twenty years we do not awaken to the same terrors as today'*? A study on armed conflict published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies revealed that fatalities in armed conflicts tripled between 2008 and 2014.

The inexorable rise in civilian deaths in Africa and around the globe elucidate that diplomatic interventions need to be supported by the implementation of the ATT, a legally binding international treaty to bring the arms trade under control, obliging states to ensure responsible and effective controls are put in place on all types of international transfers of conventional arms, ammunition, and parts and components. Our mantra is that the ATT has the potential to reduce the capacity to wage civil war and conflict and reduce insecurity worldwide.

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Ambassador Smail Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security stated on several occasions and I quote that *'a host of emerging threats to peace and security now influence conflict dynamics and complicate mediation efforts, such as the proliferation of illicit arms, especially small arms and light weapons. The insecurity and instability in certain regions has been greatly enabled by the widespread of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition which originate from various sources, including circulation of arms from other conflicts on the continent, regional and international trafficking networks as well as arms diverted from government held stockpiles. This has allowed rebels, criminals and terrorists to significantly boost and expand their power. As we have witnessed, arms and ammunition availability significantly determine the dynamics of a crisis, its magnitude and dimensions.*

*This problem has been duly recognized by the Peace and Security Council and the different forums of the Nouakchott Process. In this regard the AU Commission, in close collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities and the relevant regional bodies, has continued to support Member States in implementing the regional and international framework against the illicit proliferation of small arms including promoting the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty', end of quote.*

Mr. President,

Research has shown that besides the human cost of conflict, the arms trade also has a devastating impact on the economic development of poor countries. Increased military expenditure in fragile and conflict-affected countries result in a lack of investment in basic services, which is detrimental to development.

Mr. President,

We all battle with gender based violence. The ATT plays an important role in curbing gender-based violence (GBV) in conflict zones. Under the ATT, states that export arms will be obliged to consider the risk that the weapons could be used to facilitate serious acts of GBV or violence against women and children.

It will take determination and political will from those states that have ratified the treaty to ensure it is enforced, but we have no other solution to prevent future suffering and save lives.

In conclusion, the Africa Group believes that the ATT is crucial to ensure international peace, security and stability, reduce human suffering and promote cooperation and transparency to foster a responsible trade in conventional arms and as such we call for its universalization and implementation.

Mr President, I thank you.

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