



## Statement by the African Union Commission for the 4<sup>th</sup> Preparatory Committee Session on the Negotiations for an Arms Trade Treaty, 13-17 February 2012, New York

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- Member States of the African Union are actively engaged in the ongoing negotiations to seek the views of Member States of the UN on the feasibility, scope and parameters for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).
- It can be recalled that the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted the “**African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons**” in December 2000, as Africa’s input to the negotiations on the **United Nations (UN) Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA)**. In this Declaration, Member States undertake to identify, seize and destroy illicit weapons. The Declaration also provides for the establishment of measures to control the circulation, transfer and use of Small Arms And Light Weapons (SALW).
- It is further recalled that the 8th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union (AU) adopted Decision EX.CL/Dec.255 (VIII) in January 2006, in which they requested the Commission to take the necessary steps towards the establishment of a legally binding instrument to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and weapons in Africa.
- To this end, the Commission established a mechanism for coordination, policy guidance, research, and monitoring circulation of SALW through the *ad hoc* **AU-Regions Steering Committee on SALW**. It comprises the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Inter-Governmental Bodies with a small arms mandate. The main task of this Steering Committee is to enhance the capacity and harmonize and coordinate the efforts of the AU, the RECs and Regional Bodies with a SALW mandate to implement their programmes, and enhance cooperation and synergy across the regions in the fight against illicit proliferation and trafficking of SALW.

- The Steering Committee has developed the draft “**African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons**”. The draft Strategy was adopted by Member States Experts at the meeting that was held 26-29 September 2011 in Lome, Togo. It will now be submitted to the Executive Council in June 2012 for adoption.
- The Member States Experts also elaborated an African Common Position on an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) during the same meeting. This is out of the realization that Africa should engage in the negotiations with a common voice. The draft will also be submitted to the Executive Council for adoption in June 2012, before the UN conference on an ATT that will be held in July 2012.
- AU Member States will continue to actively uphold what they have collectively agreed are key areas that African Member States wish to see in the final Arms Trade Treaty.