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**FLOOD OF WEAPONS, AMMUNITION INTO COUNTRIES UNDER SANCTIONS SHOWS CURRENT
CONTROL SYSTEMS DO NOT WORK, CONFERENCE ON ARMS TRADE TREATY TOLD**

**President of Liberia Cites \$2.2 Billion Worth of Guns
Flowing into Targeted Countries despite United Nations, Regional Embargoes**

The \$2.2 billion worth of arms and ammunition that found their way into targeted countries in spite of United Nations and regional arms embargoes imposed on Liberia and other countries was proof that the current system was not working, the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty heard today as it concluded the high-level segment of its discussions.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia said in a video message to the Conference that her own country's experience and those of other States in Africa and other parts of the world showed that without such a treaty, armed violence and wars would continue to be fuelled by irresponsible arms transfers. "As a development economist, I am acutely aware of the devastation to African economies due to armed violence," she added.

"One cannot but be appalled by the cost of conflicts for Africa, which loses at least \$18 billion a year," she continued. "This is money our continent can ill afford to lose." By contrast, in 2008, the Millennium Development Goals Steering Group had identified an annual requirement of \$14 billion to scale up effective HIV prevention and universal access to AIDS treatment across the continent, she noted.

The representative of the United States said the international community should strengthen international peace and security, as well as the rule of law, by requiring the universal establishment of responsible national standards for the arms trade, but warned that a treaty should not in any way handicap the legitimate right of self-defence.

He said that lawfully conducted international arms transfers, managed according to transparent national control practices, were vital to maintaining good governance, protecting citizens and upholding international security, consistent with the United Nations Charter, he added.

Exporting Governments should be obliged to weigh carefully whether a potential recipient of conventional arms would use them or divert them for criminal or other unacceptable or inhumane purposes, he continued. That was why the United States supported establishing additional criteria that each Government must consider carefully before authorizing the export of conventional arms.

For his part, the representative of Lesotho warned that regulating international trade in some weapons while excluding others from the scope of a treaty would run counter to the aims of the

Conference. Urging the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the treaty, he said they were of great concern to many African countries, including his own. They were the “real weapons of mass destruction”, accounting for daily loss of life and the commission of many crimes. The inclusion of ammunition, parts, and components in the treaty was crucial, he added.

Speaking in a similar vein, the Deputy Secretary-General of the East African Community said small arms and light weapons posed the most serious threat to peace and security in that subregion.

The observer for the Holy See said the Treaty should have a broad scope and go beyond the seven categories considered by the United Nations Registry of Conventional Arms to include small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and the licensing technologies involved in their production. References to human rights, humanitarian law and development must also be included in the treaty, he said, adding that basic principles should recall respect for human dignity and human life, peace and security, development and fundamental human rights, which were essential for collective security.

Also addressing the Conference today were representatives of Mongolia, Botswana, Cameroon, United Kingdom (speaking on behalf of China, France, Russian Federation and the United States), Kenya, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Ghana and Togo.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and United Nations Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator also addressed the Conference.

Representatives of Syria and Iran made statements in exercise of the right of reply.

The representatives of Morocco and Norway, respective Chairs of the Conference’s Main Committees One and Two, presented their reports, before hearing comments by representatives of Algeria, Iran, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Egypt, Syria, Kenya, Cuba, Pakistan, Nigeria and India.

The Conference will reconvene in plenary on a date to be announced.

Background

Delegates to the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty met this afternoon to continue their general exchange of views in continuation of the negotiations towards a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons. (For background, see Press Releases [DC/3361](#) and [DC/3362](#) of 3 July 2012.)

Statements

ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF, President of [Liberia](#), in a video message to the Conference, said that her country’s experience, along with the experiences of other countries in Africa and elsewhere, showed that without an instrument like an arms trade treaty, armed violence would continue to be fuelled by irresponsible arms transfers. Even with a United Nations and regional arms embargo on Liberia and other countries, more than \$2.2 billion worth of arms and ammunition found their way into the targeted countries, thus proving that the current system, without a treaty, was not working. The case of bullets and ammunition reminded the international community of how their absence during the battle of Monrovia between rival armed groups in June 2003 temporarily ended the terror on that city’s population until fresh and illegal supplies arrived. That was why a treaty needed to not only regulate transfers of small arms and light weapons, but also must regulate the bullets and ammunition, which actually killed people and without which guns might be reduced to silence and peace efforts would bear fruit.

Acutely aware of the devastation to African economies due to armed violence, she said that

one could not but be appalled by the fact that that the continent lost at least \$18 billion a year due to conflicts. That was money it could ill afford to lose. In 2008, the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group identified an annual requirement of \$14 billion to scale up effective HIV prevention and universal access to AIDS treatment across the continent. Considering that all low- and lower-middle-income countries, which allocated more than 10 per cent of central Government expenditure to the military in 2009, scored poorly on corruption indices that year, a robust arms trade treaty must create anti-corruption standards which States could use to assess specific transfers on a case by case basis.

She expressed appreciation for the work of civil society organizations which had helped the Liberian people to access much needed food, water and medicines when there was hardly a functioning Government. When States forgot that they existed first and foremost to protect their citizens, it was vital that civil society continued to remind them of their responsibilities and obligations. It was crucial that the international community support the diligence and perseverance of non-governmental organizations, which had for many years spearheaded the arms trade treaty process and which must press on “until the very last minute” of the negotiations.

ENKHTSETSEG OCHIR ([Mongolia](#)) said that in her country, the Academy of Medical Sciences and Amnesty International Mongolia were actively collecting signatures in support of the treaty. The establishment of a strong, robust but effective legally binding instrument could ensure the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. That, in turn, she stated, would prevent illicit trade and supply to terrorist groups and countries committing serious and systematic violations of international humanitarian law or human rights. In that regard, it was important that the future treaty had “clearly defined goals” and required States to implement effective national controls based on those common standards.

However, she continued, the treaty also needed to protect the inalienable right of States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and retain conventional arms for self-defence and security needs and for participation in peacekeeping operations. The Treaty, therefore, needed to be inclusive of major arms trading States. It also needed to include all conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, and ammunition, and she urged that a transparency mechanism be incorporated into the treaty. Concluding, she emphasized the need for international cooperation and assistance, especially in developing countries, and voiced her support of the Chair’s 3 July discussion paper as a “viable starting point”.

CHARLES T. NTWAAGAE ([Botswana](#)), commending the video messages from the President of Liberia, underscored his country’s commitment to a “strong and robust” treaty that would successfully curb the illicit transfer of conventional weapons at national, regional and global levels. Further, he supported the inclusion of small arms and light weapons as well as ammunition in such an instrument. However, for successful implementation of the treaty, international cooperation, including benchmarking exercises, capacity -building, and information and technology exchange, was essential. In that regard, Member States’ pledges towards some assistance to developing countries in implementing the proposed treaty was encouraging and he called for the creation of an implementation support unit that would, among others, match needs with resources.

Concluding, he stated that the Security Council sanctions and arms embargoes should be the main criteria for applying the treaty. He also said that each State Party should reserve the right to allow import or export of arms that the treaty would cover, as long as such transfers not be made to States which violated international human rights or humanitarian law.

DONALD MAHLEY ([United States](#)) said that his country sought a treaty that established high international standards for controlling the transfer of arms on par with best practices. A key benefit of such standards would be to reduce illicit arms trafficking. The international community as a whole suffered from illicit trafficking, which armed repressive regimes, criminal syndicates, insurgent groups and terrorist organizations, and weakened legitimate Governments and the rule of law. The international community must create additional barriers to illicit and irresponsible international arms transfers to those who had little regard for the most fundamental standards of decency and civilization.

In that regard, he said that the United States underscored its objection to selection of Iran to the ceremonial role of a Vice President of the Arms Trade Treaty Conference. That country's long record of weapons proliferation, illicit nuclear activities and flagrant human rights abuses grossly disqualified it from serving in any such capacity in the United Nations. At a time when Iran was violating its United Nations Security Council obligations, including by helping to rearm Hizbullah in Lebanon and providing weapons to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's regime to use to slaughter its own people, that selection made a mockery of the Conferences underlying purposes and undermined the credibility of the United Nations. The United States rejected the legitimacy of Iran's claimed capacity to play any credible role in the Conference.

Lawfully conducted international transfers of arms managed according to transparent national control practices were vital to maintaining good governance, protecting citizens and upholding international security consistent with the United Nations Charter, he went on. The arms trade treaty should not, in any way, handicap the legitimate right of self-defence. Acting together, the international community could strengthen international peace and security and the rule of law by requiring universal establishment of responsible national standards for the arms trade. States were already obligated to abide by Security Council arms embargos, but an arms trade treaty should reinforce that fundamental obligation.

In addition, exporting Governments should be obliged to weigh carefully whether a potential recipient of conventional arms was going to use or divert them for criminal or other unacceptable or inhumane purposes. That was why his country supported establishing additional criteria that each Government must consider carefully before authorizing the export of conventional arms. In order for the treaty to be effective, it must cover the widest range of conventional weapons as was practical from small arms to aircraft carriers. Today, only a quarter of Member States had developed legal controls regarding their international arms trade. The common goal was to have a treaty at the end of the month that would require States Parties to regulate their international arms trade according to their own constitutional and legal structures.

It should be acknowledged that the negotiations were not an attempt to intrude, either in principle or in process, into States' internal activities, laws or practices concerning the domestic possession, use or movement of arms, he said.

TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon) said a treaty was "more than ever a moral and humanitarian necessity" that would free countries from the extremely liberalized weapons trade. The protection of populations, infrastructure and civil society, specifically those of developing States, was crucial, he said, adding that broad adherence to regulation of the conventional weapons trade would benefit all countries in all regions. He expressed concern about the uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons, citing their use in multiple conflicts which challenged international security. Due to the impact of uncontrolled arms movement in West Africa, it was vital to include regulations covering small arms, light weapons, ammunition and parts used to repair and assemble weapons.

He said his country was a party to the Declaration of Sao Tomé and also adhered to Protocol V of the United Nations convention that addressed unexploded abandoned weapons which could be fed into the black market. While noting the need for a flexible treaty, he said its scope must be broad, not only covering small arms, light weapons and ammunition, but also the regulation of all activities of the weapons trade — imports, exports, transshipment, gifts, licensing, manufacturing and brokering. A treaty should also have elements of transparency, including obligatory reporting and commitments to assist developing countries. In this regard, the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit would be indispensable, he said.

Ms. ADAMSON (United Kingdom), making proposals for the negotiating process on behalf of China, France, Russian Federation, and the United States, said "Authorization and Notification Systems" should be merged into one section in the negotiating document to ensure equally tight controls over arms transferred. She also proposed that the "Criteria or Parameters" section and the

“Enforcement” section be moved to “National Implementation”. In addition, reporting, transparency and national contact points were more appropriately placed under international cooperation.

MAFIROANE MOTANYANE (Lesotho) said the treaty represented a collective effort that would lead to the removal of threats to peace or “at least minimize them”. Developing a legally binding instrument that would establish the highest possible common international standards was necessary as existing national, regional and international arms transfer control measures had been proven wanting in many respects, although they provided a good basis upon which the treaty could be built. However, the regulation of international trade in some weapons while excluding others from the scope of the Treaty ran counter to the aims of the Conference, he noted, calling for the inclusion of small arms and light weapons.

He went on to point out that such weapons were of great concern to many African countries, emphasizing that they were the “real weapons of mass destruction”, accounting for daily loss of life and the commission of many crimes. In that regard, inclusion in the treaty of ammunition, parts and components was crucial, he stressed, urging compromise so that a broad scope could be incorporated into the treaty so as to make it implementable without weakening its effectiveness. Further, the treaty must be relevant to all States, whether exporters or importers of conventional weapons, while promoting transparency and without compromising the legitimate security of States. In that regard, it was important that the treaty be “unambiguous” and the transfer criteria be clear, objective and easy to follow.

JOSEPHINE OJIAMBO (Kenya), stating that the video message from the President of Liberia was “a wake-up call” to the international community, echoed Ms. Johnson Sirleaf’s reminder of the devastation armed violence wrought on African communities, especially on the women and children living there. To that end, it was essential to include in the treaty small arms, light weapons and ammunition. She concluded with thanks to the civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations for their “sustained involvement” in the treaty negotiation process.

ARCHBISHOP FRANCIS CHULLIKATT, Observer of the Holy See, said his delegation continued to believe that an arms trade treaty could make an important difference for millions of people confronted with insecurity, deprivation and fear linked to the unregulated and irresponsible transfer of arms and ammunition and the illicit acquisition of such by criminal and non-State actors. The treaty would help in the promotion of a world more respectful of human life and human dignity. The core objective of the treaty would not merely be the regulation of conventional arms trade but was, above all, the disarming of the international illicit market. That needed to be underlined so as to place the human person at the center of the treaty.

He said that the treaty should provide strong and credible review and update mechanisms in order to enable the expeditious incorporation of new developments in the framework of the treaty, which must be open to possible future technological developments. In order to reinforce the provisions, more effective assistance for victims could be achieved by promoting a process focused on the reduction of the number of victims through the intensification of the prevention of illicit arms proliferation and a reduction in the overall trade in arms. It was such trade that fuelled conflicts and instability and impeded the course of development and peace. The arms trade treaty should not only be focused on the supply side of the arms trade but should also provide some elements relating to the demand for side arms which often fed the illicit market.

JULIUS ROTICH, Deputy Secretary-General of the East African Community (EAC), underscored the need for an arms trade treaty as a tool for combating the illicit trade in conventional weapons. The East African Community believed that in its region, small arms and light weapons posed the most serious threat to stability and development. It, therefore, hoped that the treaty would reflect the importance which the region attached to those weapons.

The implementation arrangement for the treaty would require in-built technical support to states in their effort to undertake the implementation, he said. He then paid tribute to civil society organizations for the work they had undertaken to contribute to the debate on the treaty over the past

six years and said that the East African Community looked forward to their continued contribution to the negotiating process.

CATHERINE BRAGG, Assistant Secretary-General, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), speaking on behalf of ten United Nations agencies and other humanitarian actors, stated that the international community now had the opportunity to regulate the trade of arms and, in doing so, reduce the widespread killing and wounding of civilians, especially women and children. It was also an opportunity to prevent human displacement, as millions of civilian were forced to seek refuge across the borders because of the widespread use of weapons.

Continuing, she said that the current meeting was an opportunity to address access to humanitarian support, as well as the establishment of measures to prevent the attacks and killing of humanitarian workers, numbering in the hundreds since 2000. The human cost of poorly regulate trade required a treaty, she stressed, and it needed to be effective. It should contain, among others, components for States to assess the risk of weapons being transferred and refrain from authorizing such transfer if there was risk that the weapons would be used to commit violations of the treaty. She also noted that the popularity of certain small weapons was due to the availability of ammunition and thus, it was necessary to include the regulation of ammunition in the treaty. Concluding, she called for the delegates to place humanitarian concerns at the forefront of all efforts toward this Treaty.

ABIODUN RICHARDS ADEJOLA (Nigeria) said that the pains of devastation, destruction and inhumanity caused by the transfer and misuse of conventional arms and small arms and light weapons had been demonstrated through the statement by the President of Liberia. Nigeria and other countries in the West Africa region had borne the cost of the unnecessary wars and mayhem resulting from the illicit arms trade. His country restated that small arms and light weapons should be unambiguously included in the scope of an arms trade treaty. In that regard, the international community could not afford "a slip back to the dark days".

JOSÉ IKONGO (Democratic Republic of the Congo) called for consensus on the treaty so that a robust instrument that represented the highest standards in the international community would be ensured. To that end, the treaty needed to regulate the supply of arms in conflict-affected regions. The establishment of such rules and common principles were timely and of utmost importance. His country was currently "suffering from the scourge" and he believed that such a treaty would help ensure States acted responsibly. Further, the treaty needed to be universal so that it could be adopted by the greatest number of States.

Further, to bring States to norms that were transparent, he encouraged the adoption of national systems of export, among others. He urged that the treaty include limitations on munitions and parts in zones of instability, and called for transparency in the transferring of weapons. Civil society needed to be included in the negotiation of the treaty, as well, and that a dialogue with manufacturers of arms would also benefit efforts. Concluding, he expressed hope that the treaty would be effective in alleviating the suffering of populations in various areas of the planet affected by the use of such weapons.

Mr. SANGARE (Mali) said that his country loved peace and had, for a period of 20 years, done everything to achieve it. Mali had not forgotten defence, however. Two months before presidential elections in the country, everything had changed and there had been an occupation of two thirds of its territory by rebels. That chaos had revived "old specters". Timbuktu, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, had been destroyed. That "black page" in the country's history was the result of events following the Arab Spring whose ultimate outcome had been the current situation in his country. Mali, therefore, wanted to see a solid arms trade treaty.

KODZO ALABO (Ghana) echoed the President of Liberia's call for the inclusion of small arms and light weapons in the arms trade treaty, stating that it was a very important and necessary part of the scope of the final instrument.

ALI NADJOMBE (Togo) said that ending the proliferation of arms was part of the pacification of the African continent which would bring stability and make Africa secure. Regulation contributed to this goal and he stated his full support for concluding and adopting a treaty that would make it possible to regulate the arms trade. However, objectives needed to be clearly defined so that future application would be smooth. There were populations in parts of the West African region that were “distressed” because of uncontrolled weapons movement. To that end, the treaty would be incomplete if the regulation of small arms and light weapons not be included.

Rights of Reply

The representative of Syria, making a statement in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of the United States had used the Conference as a forum to cast doubt on the process of electing its officers. He had also made allegations and unacceptable remarks that did not conform to Syria’s position, and had attacked the President of Syria. The United States should be the last country to talk about morality in the arms trade, he said, pointing out that it had been providing non-State parties and separatist organizations with weapons in several parts of the world. In addition, it had provided Israel, over the decades, with arms that had been used, and were still being used, to kill Arabs and occupy Arab lands. Furthermore, cooperation between the United States and Israel in the military nuclear field was a flagrant violation of the former’s obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, he said.

The representative of Iran said the United States delegation had made totally irrelevant allegations against his country, but he would not dignify them with a response. Rather he was seizing the opportunity to ask whether it was Iran or the United States that was a peace-loving nation. There was no record of aggression in Iranian history since 350 years ago. United States history, however, was replete with aggression in all parts of the world, the latest having taken place in the Middle East. Iran was proud of having defended its territory in the war imposed on it by Saddam (Hussein), including with chemical weapons and with support from the United States. Iran had not sent its weapons to kill people to any part of the world, but the United States sent weapons to enable Israel to kill Palestinians, for example. The Israeli regime relied on its big patron, the United States, to commit all kinds of war crimes, he said, adding that Iran was proud of having toppled its own United States-backed dictator.

Reports by Committee Chairs

BOUCHAIB ELOUMNI (Morocco), Chair, Committee One, said his Committee was ready for negotiations, and he had already received proposals from delegations in the form of treaty language. That would help move forward to preparing a text. However, such was not the case for all chapters and sections, he cautioned. The Committee was moving at different speeds on different chapters, but there was cause for confidence that the Committee would be able to move forward on negotiating treaty language, and that it would be starting tomorrow on goals and objectives.

PAUL VAN DEN IJSSEL (Norway), Chair, Committee Two, said that body had discussed all assigned topics and it was fair to say that, in general, it had not been able to bridge certain gaps and different views. Some had converged but many had not yet done so. Stating that it was now necessary to “move into a higher gear”, he said he would be preparing documents on each topic that would reflect the different views of States parties. In that process of condensing, the Chair would seek a convergence of views, he said, noting that many delegations had helped by sending in specific treaty language. He added that he sensed that the Committee wished to negotiate and believed it would succeed.

Statement by Conference Chair

ROBERTO GARCIA MORITAN (Argentina), Conference Chair, noted that despite the encouraging spirit of the process, the reports reflected that the dynamism needed to carry out tasks as

mandated had not been fully achieved. “The outcome of our work depends solely on our efforts,” he stressed, urging delegations to translate those efforts into sentences and concepts that would allow an accommodation of differences. It was necessary to show flexibility if a shared vision was to be achieved. The future in the Arms Trade Treaty was “here and now”, he emphasized, encouraging delegations to “really get down to work”. He also underscored the need to set doubts aside and focus on the concrete matters at hand. “With too many doubts, at the end of the day we condemn the future,” he said.

Discussion

Several representatives questioned the methods by which each Committee would engage to develop the “rolling text”, expressing concerns that the procedure for developing such a text must be consistent in both Committees. The representative of Syria said “this is a single conference adopting a single document”, while his counterpart from Cuba questioned whether the text would reflect the views of the Committee Chair or proposals from various delegations.

The Conference Chair responded by stating that since each Committee was charged with different topics, each Chair would discuss with his Committee the manner in which a rolling text would be developed. Their guidance would bring such a text into negotiations and deliberations would proceed from there. Furthermore, it seemed that the topics had not matured as hoped, he noted, adding that it would, therefore, be premature to refer to a rolling text at the present point. However, there was cause for full confidence that the Chairs would be talking with their Committees as to how best to proceed as discussions matured. It was difficult to know the direction until that happened, he said, likening the process to “a puzzle”.

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* The 8th Meeting was not covered.

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