PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

828 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • TEL. (212) 953-9130 • FAX (212) 697-1970

(Please Check Against Delivery)

STATEMENT

BY

JOHN EJINAKA

DIRECTOR, FIRST UNITED NATIONS DIVISION

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ABUJA, NIGERIA.

AT THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

NEW YORK, TUESDAY 28 AUGUST 2012.
Madam President,

The delegation of Nigeria is honoured to identify with you, and wishes to congratulate you on your election as President of the Second Review Conference of the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. We believe in your ability and dedication as an impartial arbiter and to transparently midwife this noble process.

We are encouraged by your efforts so far. In particular, we are reminded of your several and often strenuous informal consultations which have crystallized in your four zero drafts and the draft outcome document you have provided as the basis for further negotiations during this Conference.

Be assured, therefore, of our readiness, preparedness and full commitment to support you in the realization of the objectives of this Review Conference - the evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action and to highlight identified gaps towards the effective realization of the objectives of the 2001 Programme of Action. My delegation also seizes this opportunity to congratulate the distinguished members of the Bureau, facilitators and the Secretariat for their efforts and contributions.

Nigeria aligns itself with the Statement made yesterday by Indonesia, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group and the statement by Vote d’ Ivoire on behalf of ECOWAS. Having said this, do permit me, Madam President, to speak in my national capacity.

My delegation wishes to place on record, its recognition
of the significance of the Programme of Action and the ITI in view of the devastating impact of illicitly acquired small arms and light weapons and how these weapons have been used to achieve maximum impact in mostly developing countries, including the territories of Africa, in particular, the growing impact in the Sahel region and ECOWAS. We therefore recognize the imperative for the provision of a positive roadmap to arrest the numerous problems.

While we underscore the irreparable danger posed by illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the challenge from illicit brokering which constitute the source of weapons used by criminal groups, to prosecute armed robbery and other forms of banditry, piracy, kidnapping, acts of anarchy and terrorism still remain daunting.

The abuse of these weapons impact negatively in our rural areas, sub-urban and urban regions, including our inner cities across the world. We lose men, women, teenagers, boys, girls and children to the unmitigated actions of illicit trade in SALWs. Unfortunately, women and children including young boys and girls remain most victims of these violations.

The challenges before us are therefore enormous and they remain daunting. But they surely are not insurmountable. They combine to make the realization of the objectives of the PoA and the ITI more desirable and noble by preventing the acquisition of illicit firearms. The most noble task should be to limit the trade of such quantities and quantum of weapons to Governments, constituted authorities or entities duly authorized by Governments.

At the level of the ECOWAS sub-region, Nigeria has continued to provide leadership in partnership with other member states, to ensure the effective implementation of the
provisions of PoA. The Sub-region today has the most
detailed model protocol to address the menace of illicit trade
in small arms and light weapons, through the mechanism of
The ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light
Weapons has proved to be an enduring road map, with
ample guidelines for dealing with the problems identified by
the PoA as well as enhancing the goals of the UN PoA and
the ITI. In our view, the modest success story of ECOWAS
has remained one of the many positive signposts of the PoA
and ITI. Further collaboration at the sub-region include joint
capacity building programmes among law enforcement
agents of member states including the establishment of joint
border patrol unit to control illicit movement of arms across
the frontiers.

Nigeria on its part has taken various steps to curb the
flow of small arms and light weapons, especially, in states
with considerable record of militancy. The institution of an
Amnesty Programme by Government provided the platform
for consultation between the government and the leadership
of the various militant groups which resulted in the surrender
and forwarding by the militants of various types of
ammunitions illegally in their possession. As at May, 2011, a
total of 3,779 arms and ammunitions were voluntarily
surrendered by the militants out of which 1,981 have been
publicly destroyed. The remaining quantities would be
similarly destroyed after undergoing appropriate verification
and processing.

Furthermore, The Nigerian government has committed
huge resources towards the rehabilitation of the demobilized
militants along with a reintegration training programme for
their immediate absorption into the Nigerian community as
responsible citizens.

Other measures are in the form of collaboration among
the various arms handling agencies, to ensure a common approach in securing stockpiles, including adequate record keeping of weapons at their disposal. Similar process is being adopted by different paramilitary agencies that have arm bearing units in their formation.

It is therefore in view of this that my delegation calls on member-States to ensure that past setbacks are avoided and to send a strong signal that failure should not again be considered an option. We need to ensure a strong and credible review of the PoA and ITI Implementation - one that clearly delineates the challenges faced by member-States in the areas of technical, financial and human resources. This is more so because many of the implementation challenges, as member States have demonstrated in the last two days, are at the respective national levels, which in many cases are too complex for developing states to overcome on their own.

The last two Biennial Meeting of States (BMS3 and BMS4) and the 2011 MGE have, however, demonstrated that we could incrementally work together to lay a solid foundation for the future through this Review Conference. As stakeholders, therefore, we look forward to a successful conclusion.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to highlight the global efforts on cooperation and assistance and believes that notwithstanding these past endeavours, more of such would be needed to enhance the effectiveness of existing arrangements.
Madam President,

Nigeria remains firmly committed to the ethos of the Programme of Action. We are encouraged by the assurances and renewed efforts of member States to make this Review Conference a success. My delegation promises to collaborate with excellencies and delegates at this Conference to provide an assured legacy fit for the sand of time.

I thank you for your kind attention.