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Meeting of Member States Experts of the African Union to Consider the AU Draft Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, and to Elaborate an African Common Position on an Arms Trade Treaty.

Lome, Togo

26-29 September 2011

CONCLUSIONS

1. The meeting of Member States Experts of the African Union was held in Lome, Republic of Togo, from 26 to 29 September 2011, to consider and adopt the Draft AU Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, and to Elaborate an African Common Position on an Arms Trade Treaty;
2. The meeting was attended by the following Member States: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Republic of Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Republic of Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe;
3. The following Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Bodies also attended the meeting: Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA);
4. Representatives of the United Nations, namely, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR); the European Union (EU); representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and Civil Society, represented by the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), attended the meeting as observers;
5. In the opening ceremony, the Chairperson of the Togo National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (NATCOM) thanked the AUC for choosing Togo as the venue for the meeting. The Guest of Honor, Togolese Minister for Public Service and Administrative Reforms, in his keynote speech, called on delegates to ensure that, as an outcome of this meeting, Africa will speak with one voice at the July 2012 UN negotiations on an Arms Trade Treaty, as a testimony of the continent's determination and commitment to curb the illicit proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. The meeting was also addressed by the Director of UNREC and the Head of Defence and Security Division of the Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission.
6. The meeting elected the following Bureau to conduct its business:
 - Chair – Togo;
 - 1st Vice Chair – Rwanda;

- 2nd Vice Chair – Zambia;
 - 3rd Vice Chair – Egypt; and
 - Rapporteur – Republic of Congo.
7. Delegates stressed the need for clear rules of procedure regarding the participation of entities with 'Observer' status in future AU meetings;
 8. The meeting observed a minute of silence in memory of the first President of Cape Verde, Aristides Maria Pereira, who died on Thursday, 22 September 2011, in Lisbon, Portugal; and Professor Wangari Maathai, the first African woman Nobel Laureate, who died on 25 September 2011;
 9. The AUC formally presented the Draft AU Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of SALW;
 10. The meeting took note of the fact that many AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have already developed appropriate and legally binding instruments to combat the illicit proliferation and trafficking of small and light weapons, and that many AU Member States are also signatories to existing UN and other international treaties and conventions on SALW;
 11. The delegates made both substantive and editorial observations to the Draft AU Strategy. The Commission took due note of all the observations and the meeting adopted the Draft African Union Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons;
 12. The meeting recommended that the amended Draft Implementation Plan should be forwarded, within two weeks, to all Member States. The meeting also agreed that Member States Experts have, until 28 November 2011, to submit their comments and contributions to revised Implementation Plan to the AU Commission with a view to improving its quality before it is submitted for consideration by the Executive Council in January 2012;
 13. The meeting also considered the statement and proposals made by Civil Society (CSOs) regarding the Draft AU Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons.
 14. The Director of UNREC gave a concise presentation on the background and status of the negotiations for an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The AUC also presented to the meeting its proposed Common Position on an ATT.
 15. Delegates examined the Draft African Common Position on the proposed ATT and made a number of substantive inputs to the document. The meeting requested the Commission to review the document in light of the agreed amendments and to forward it to the experts for further cross-checking before submission to the Executive Council in January 2012;

16. The meeting resolved that the explicit mention of Small Arms and Light Weapons, ammunitions, explosives and related materials should be included in the African Common Position on an Arms Trade Treaty. However, the delegation of Egypt objected to the inclusion, in the Scope Section of the document of categories of weapons other than the seven categories of the UN Register on Conventional Weapons. It also objected to the explicit reference to 'Small Arms and Light Weapons'. The delegation proposed a more general formulation which, in its view, will take into account the concerns of all Member States. The delegation of Egypt therefore reserved its position on the Draft African Common Position.
17. The meeting expressed its sincere appreciation to the Government of Togo for its hospitality and for the facilities provided to ensure the successful holding of the meeting.