



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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ON

CLUSTER V OF THE THEMATIC DEBATE ON COMMUNICATION

AT THE

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR FIRST REVIEW
CONFERENCE OF UN PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON SALW

NEW YORK, 17 JANUARY 2006

Mr. Moderator,

I have asked for the floor on behalf of the Nigerian delegation to speak on the aspect of Cluster V relating to confidence-building, transparency and the need to engage the civil society especially Non-Governmental Organisations.

Confidence-building measures are critical elements in the fight against illicit circulating of SALW. States undertook under Section II of the Programme of Action to encourage, at regional level, the strengthening and establishing of moratoria or similar initiatives in affected regions or sub-regions on the transfer and manufacture of SALW. They also committed themselves to establish, where appropriate, sub-regional or regional mechanisms, in particular trans-border customs cooperation and networks for information sharing among relevant agencies with a view to controlling movement of illicit small arms across borders. These important provisions, if adhered to, will contribute in building confidence among States in the regions or sub-regions concerned towards the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Our experience in West Africa, where the ECOWAS Moratorium banning the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms light weapons in West Africa has continued to be a useful instrument for coordinated and sustainable regional approach in controlling the illicit proliferation of small arms in the sub-region, is an example of regional efforts in confidence-building. The ban is far reaching, not only on private companies but also on governments of ECOWAS countries who may require special exemption from other ECOWAS governments to import, export or manufacture any small arm or light weapon. In the light of the provisions of the Moratorium, exporting countries have adopted the policy of seeking assurances that exemptions have been granted before authorizing exports to ECOWAS countries. The Moratorium, established in 1998, three years before the UNPoA, is in the process of being transformed into a legally-binding instrument in order to strengthen its capacity to more effectively control the spread of illicit small arms in West Africa. The Moratorium is still in an evolutionary process and may not, in its current form, represent a perfect instrument. The initiative, however, stands out as a model that other affected regions could adopt, and perhaps improve upon, as part of collective endeavour at regional level in promoting transparency and confidence-building in order to seriously address the illicit small arms problem.

Mr. Moderator,

My delegation attaches great importance to the role of the civil society including NGOs in the fight against proliferation of illicit small arms, a role that is recognized by the Programme of Action itself. Over the past five years, the commitment displayed by civil society, in particular NGOs, in this effort has clearly demonstrated the need for strong partnership with them. The best way to assess the importance of NGOs in the fight against illicit small arms is to

imagine the implementation of the Programme of Action without them, an imagination that may likely turn out to be a nightmare. Bearing this in mind, the Nigerian delegation underscores the need for the Review Conference to continue to accord due recognition to the role of the civil society including NGOs in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

I thank you, Mr. Moderator.