STATEMENT BY

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DURING THE UNITED NATIONS FIRST COMMITTEE
THEMATIC DEBATE ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS,

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Mr. Chairman, since this is the first time I take the floor during this debate on disarmament, let me express my heartfelt appreciation to you and the bureau for leading these deliberations successfully. You can count on full cooperation of the delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania. My delegation associates itself with the statement of Africa delivered by Nigeria and welcomes that of the CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY delivered by Trinidad and Tobago on 17 October 2011; in support of the inclusion of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Mr. Chairman,

Whereas the government of the United Republic of Tanzania fully supports the disarmament of nuclear weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction as expressed in our previous statement thereon, we do wish to state in no uncertain terms that people in my country and neighbouring countries suffer on daily basis from indiscriminate misuse of conventional weapons, including Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) in all their aspects. Delegates here present and Members of the International Community must have heard or witnessed through various ways, the horrendous wars and criminal activities occasioned by Conventional Weapons including SALWs on the populations – in the Great Lakes Region of Africa in particular.
and the African continent in general. Foreigners including tourists were not spared of the horror and death.

Mr. Chairman,

Conflicts, Transborder Crime, Terrorism and Piracy have, besides human interests, been exacerbated by the use of conventional weapons including SALWs. The UN, Africa and its sub-regional organizations have had to spend resources to combat those vices. Only recently has the UN spent money which it needs most, on mediation processes in eastern DRC. The African Union has had to include the provision of a stand-by Brigade in its peace architecture. All other regions in the World are forced to spend financial resources to deal with menacing actions orchestrated by various human elements that expel peace and security from their countries with concomitant losses of lives, property and money. In all the conflicts we can recall, the use of Small Arms and Light Weapons have been a common occurrence. Our people therefore, consider Conventional Weapons including SALWs as the Weapons of Mass Destruction!

Mr. Chairman,

The United Republic of Tanzania does not wish to see continued loss of lives, property and money at the hands of conventional Weapons and SALWs. I do not believe that you Mr. Chairman, or anyone else here present wish to see continued loss of lives, property and money in that way. It has happened and happens to others but it can also happen to any of us or our dear ones. So together we must stop it.
Mr. Chairman,

It is our conviction that, in addition to human greed, poverty and the need for political aggrandizement, the denial of fundamental freedoms and rights constitutes a major cause of the use of Conventional Weapons and Small Arms and Light Weapons. Disarmament should take into consideration all the aspects. This calls for closer cooperation and collaboration of the first committee and others. I believe all of us want the next generation of humankind to enjoy full peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

Next year - 2012, besides the envisaged ATT in July (2012), we will see several activities all of which focus on disarmament. In particular my delegation calls on this Committee and the international community to render full support to Nigeria in hosting and co-Chairing the UN PoA Review Meeting. We equally welcome the outcomes of the previous ATT Preparatory Conferences chaired by Ambassador Moritan of Argentina and that of the Governments Group of Experts chaired by Ambassador Jim McLay of New Zealand.

Disarmament is within our reach, we only need to muster the requisite political will and make it happen. The United Republic of Tanzania pledges to play its part.

I thank you.