Explanation of Vote of the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
On Draft Resolution:  
“The arms trade treaty”  
At the 67th Session of the First Committee  
New York, 7 November 2012  
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In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to explain the position of my delegation regarding draft resolution on “The arms trade treaty” as contained in document: A/C.1/67/L.11.

We voted against operative paragraph 2 of this draft resolution since it merely points out to the “elaboration” not “negotiation” of the Arms Trade Treaty as the mandate of the Conference due to be held in next March to negotiate ATT as an international legally binding Treaty.

This paragraph can be used as a pretext to avoid real negotiations during the Conference, as it was the case at the July Conference.

While recalling all efforts that exerted during the ATT Conference to avoid real negotiations and to put delegations under extreme pressure, including through disrespectful behaviors such as holding consultations in a very uncomfortable situation in one of the UN corners, we stress that as such practices were counterproductive in the past, their continuation in the upcoming Conference will also be a futile exercise.

Indeed, resumed session of the ATT Conference can be a success, only if all proposals are accorded equal importance, security concerns and interests of all States are duly taken into account, decisions on all issues are made by consensus, and above all, delegations are fully respected and allowed to conduct real negotiations.
As a country which has constructively participated in the UN Conference on ATT and its preparatory meetings, we stress once again that this process should not be aimed at pursuing narrow national agendas or regional policies.

We also voted against operative paragraph 3 of this draft resolution which decides that the paper prepared by the President of the July Conference to be "the basis for future work on the Arms Trade Treaty."

President's paper, as he himself has mentioned clearly, “Is prepared under his own responsibility and without prejudice to the position of Member States.” Therefore, it is not the product of negotiations that can be the basis for the negotiations in the upcoming Conference.

This paper is very vague, confusing and full of loopholes. For instance, the proposed parameters in that paper are extremely subjective, open to different interpretations, and therefore highly abusable.

Those parameters explicitly allow arms-exporting State to export, as much arms as they want, to any country or region, merely if only in their “views” it can “contribute to peace and security.”

Despite the fact that excessive accumulation of conventional arms in certain sensitive and volatile regions of the world, including in our own region, the Persian Gulf and Middle East, is the direct result of such wrong assumptions of western arms-exporting countries, it is regrettable that the President’s paper intends to legalize and legitimize such dangerous practices.

Taking into account the bitter fact that the stability and security of many regions are extremely endangered at the price of so-called “commercial interests” of arms-exporting countries, surprisingly the President’s paper gives preeminence to such commercial interests and completely neglects the security concerns and interests of other countries and regions.

A possible ATT should serve as a tool for promoting peace, security and stability in different countries and regions, not as an instrument to ensure the commercial interests of major arms-exporting countries that in many cases are illegitimate.
While a potential ATT is expected to clearly prohibit the transfer of conventional arms to aggressors and foreign occupiers, unbelievably and surprisingly, the reference to "commit or aggravate an act of aggression or foreign occupation", as a criteria to prevent and prohibit the transfer of such arms to aggressors and occupying forces has been deleted from the current version of that paper.

The worst is that, according to the paper, the Treaty shall "not apply to the international transfer of conventional arms" by States outside their territories, while such transferred arms in many cases in the past, including in our region in the Middle East, has been used to commit the acts of aggression.

Moreover, the President’s paper does not encompass any reference to the most relevant and internationally agreed principle, that is the inalienable right of all peoples under foreign occupation to self-determination and to take legitimate actions to realize this inherent right.

These disappointing cases had happened simply because of the opposition of a certain country which is a staunch ally and a big patron of an occupying regime.

Such essential international principles were disregarded merely to reward aggressors and to appease and satisfy foreign occupiers, while a possible ATT is highly expected to be a strong tool in preventing aggression, uninspiring foreign occupation and discouraging invading other countries.

Theses and other cases have disqualified the paper of the President of the Conference to serve as "the basis" for negotiations of a possible ATT.

In our view, along with the compilation of the concrete proposals of the Member States, President's paper can be considered only one of the documents of the upcoming Conference and not the only basis for its work.

In this connection we would like to underscore the right of delegations to put forward any proposal during the next ATT Conference.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.