STATEMENT BY

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FIRST COMMITTEE THEMATIC DEBATE ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

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(Please check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman

Since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time, let me begin by congratulating you and the members of your bureau upon your well-deserved election. I am confident that under your able leadership, the work of the Committee will see a successful outcome. Let me also assure you of my delegations support and cooperation.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman

The use of small arms and light weapons that are illegally brought into Malawi country, has destroyed many lives and livelihoods, bringing fear, terror and insecurity amongst the people in various ways.

This has in turn imposed enormous costs on the Government, communities and individuals and caused a profoundly negative impact on socio-economic and human development in the country. The Government of Malawi recognizes the linkage between development, peace, security and human rights and its impact on the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

It is in this same vein that we are seriously concerned at the failure to finalize the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in July this year, as the Treaty is aimed at curbing the illicit manufacturing and trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. It is, therefore, our hope that the draft text that was presented at the end of the meeting by the President of the ATT, serve as a basis for further implementation. Against this backdrop, we appeal to Member States to be inclusive enough so as to accommodate the views of other States. We support
the intention to hold a final diplomatic conference in the first half of 2013, in order to reach a commonly agreed result.

Mr. Chairman

Malawi would then like to commend the outcome of the Second Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. The outcome document which was adopted by consensus at the conclusion of the two week conference in August to September this year, is a clear testimony of the effort put together by Ambassador Joy Ogwu of Nigeria.

Although the document may not include everything, it signifies the importance that member states attach to implementation of the Programme of Action. Malawi is confident that this document will become the guideline for concrete actions. Therefore, it is of the essence to mention that full implementation of the Programme of Action requires strengthening international assistance and cooperation to effectively and comprehensively eradicate illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons at national, regional and global levels.

Mr. Chairman

Malawi remains a committed and active nation in the fight against the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. It is for this reason that she has taken a range of measures to address the Small Arms problem including establishment of the National Focal Point on Small Arms control, in 2006, Development of a National Policy on Firearms Control in 2012, development of a Draft National Action Plan on Small Arms Control as well as continued awareness raising on the dangers of illegal possession and abuse of firearms. Malawi has taken all these actions to fulfill its obligations under the various treaties and international agreements that she has signed.
Further to this, through Joint Permanent Commissions on Defense and Security between Malawi and its neighboring countries, issues of cross border crime including proliferation of Small Arms remain a priority.

Mr. Chairman

Although we face several capacity challenges to significantly tackle the problem of illicit Small Arms, Malawi pledges to remain an active participant in the implementation of all international agreements with regard to Small Arms and Light Weapons control.

It is common knowledge that Africa faces enormous problems in relation to proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we ask this Committee to give special attention to the needs of Africa including my country Malawi, as we deliberate on these serious issues.

I thank you for your attention.