EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

Statement by Dr. Julius T. Rotich, Deputy Secretary General, Political Federation

On the Occasion of 2nd UN Conference to Review the Implementation of the UN Program of Action on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons
27th August – 7th September 2012
Madam President

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me join other delegations in congratulating you and the entire bureau for your election and assure you of the support of the East African Community (EAC) in shepherding this important conference; a task you have already performed astutely during the preparatory process and which I believe you will see to a successful conclusion.

The EAC associates itself with the statements made by the Africa Group and the Partner States of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania.

Since the last RECVCON held in 2006, a lot has transpired in the SALW control arena. Within the context of the EAC the Period has witnessed consolidation of efforts towards full implementation of the UNPoA and the Nairobi Protocol, enhanced cooperation and Partnership with RECSA and robust participation in AU initiatives towards enhancing continental approach to SALW control.

Madam President,

The EAC Region remains an area awash with illegal SALW. Instability in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa continues to impact negatively on the EAC Region. We still witness armed robberies, cattle rustling and ethno political conflicts and insurgencies fuelled by easy availability of SALW. However most profound for the region is the acts of Maritime Piracy and Terrorism both of which have heavily and negatively impacted on the Socio-economic conditions of the people of the region at all levels. The fears and concerns are thus real and practical.
Despite these concerns, the EAC and its Partner States have upscaled efforts towards SALW control. Marking activities pioneered in the region are already showing signs of success with misuse of State owned arms reduced while, access to and possession of arms is stringently regulated to ensure possession only when authorized through better stockpile management practices. Over 100,000 SALW have been destroyed in the region to reduce risks of recirculation along with over 200,000 tones of unexploded ordinance and other remnants of war.

Additional focus has been invested in enhancing stockpile security through designs of model cost effective armories and enhanced use of special steel armoury boxes for far flung field stations.

Substantial progress has been made in providing and harmonizing enabling legislation with regional integration imperatives in sight.

Madam President,

All these would not have been achieved without the support of the development partners, in this case the German Government and the European Union, both of whom within the context of international cooperation have provided immense support to the EAC and by extension it’s Partner States. We would wish to extend our most profound thanks to them. We would also wish to praise the Africa Union for the effort in coordinating continental approach to SALW control and the civil society both south and north for value they have continued to add to the SALW interventions.

The process has not been without challenges. Among them is the delay in responses to international cooperation support through the matching needs and resources process. All the five EAC Partner States have made specific requests through this process but three years down the line, little has been achieved. I would in this vein wish to urge partners who had pledged support to honour the same on time.
Finally Madam President; I would wish to congratulate all States and Organizations that stood by the need for inclusion of SALW and Ammunitions in the Arms Trade Treaty process. I believe that within the context of informal consultations in progress ahead of the General Assembly we will maintain our unity in this respect.

The EAC Region would wish to underscore the need for an ATT that includes all arms in the UN Conventional Arms Register along with SALW and Ammunitions, which from the regional perspective, pose the most potent threat to stability, security and development. Such an ATT must accommodate all aspects of transfers.

The effectiveness of an instrument is largely determined by implementation arrangements in place. In this regard, implementing such an ATT will require inbuilt provisions for broad technical and financial support to States to ensure timely implementation. We also share the proposal to secure a clear role for Regional Integration Organizations in the implementation process, possibly in the sunset provisions, considering the increasing Peace and Security responsibility that these organizations continue to shoulder, based on the existing precedents in respect of other instruments.

Madam President,

Finally may I take this opportunity to pay tribute to civil society for the advocacy work that has been undertaken, through abroad inclusive process that has allowed stakeholders at all levels to contribute to the ATT debate over the last six years. We look forward to sustaining this constructive engagement in the implementation process.

The East African Community remains optimistic that the conclusion of this instrument will radically alter the manner in which Arms as a major security component have been managed to the advantage of enhanced global security, stability and development. The non paper token of remarks you made available to this Conference is well encompassing to set the stage for negotiation of the ATT.

I thank you.