STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO REVIEW PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

NEW YORK, 19 MARCH 2018

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation congratulates you on your election. We have great confidence in your experience and ability to steer our deliberations to a successful outcome. We also congratulate members of the Bureau on their election. Nigeria aligns itself with the Statements of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group.

2. A significant portion of the global population, including many in my country, have experienced the tragic consequences of the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons in the hands of criminal gangs, terrorists and armed militants. These weapons continue to undermine otherwise peaceful societies, cause internal displacement and strife, and are responsible for hundreds of deaths each day.

3. In this regard, my delegation commends the renewed efforts of all States and welcomes the adoption, by consensus, of the outcome document of the 6th Biennial Meeting of States in June 2017, and hopes that this meeting builds on the gains of BMS6, BMS5 and the conclusions of the Second Meeting of the Group of Experts.

4. My delegation also welcomes the successful outcome of the Third Conference of States Parties to the ATT held in Geneva, in 2017, and reiterates the need for a robust and effective implementation of numerous instruments already in place to regulate the global transfer of small arms and light weapons. We therefore urge States, particularly weapon producing and exporting States, not yet parties to the ATT, to ensure timely accession.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Nigeria considers this meeting as a platform to take stock of our achievements and shortcomings in the years under review, to enable us engage in constructive and collaborative discussions, in order to forge a clear path to addressing the menace of the illicit flow of SALW. This will in
no small measure, assist in the creation of conducive environment for peace and security, and the socio-economic development of our peoples, in concert with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063.

6. Nigeria has redoubled efforts at strengthening its national borders as well as its alliances across the West African sub-region and beyond. Our commitment is further demonstrated by the signing and ratification of relevant international, regional and sub-regional instruments, and legal regimes such as the ATT and the UNPoA, as well establishing and sustaining robust partnerships with the AU, the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and other relevant organisations.

7. We also continue to support and advance the cause of regional and sub-regional initiatives such as Bamako Declaration (2000), the AU Constitutive Act and the Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU (2002), and the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy in Sirte, in 2004, the ECOWAS Convention (2006), the African Union Agenda 2063, the Initiative of Silencing the Guns in Africa by Year 2020, and other relevant initiatives aimed at addressing the threat of the illicit flow of SALW in Africa.

8. In addition, a Presidential Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PRESCOM) was set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria in April 2013. That Committee has been involved in activities geared towards stemming the tide of the proliferation of SALWs. It has organized capacity building programmes for security agencies, and carried out an initial baseline assessment of the SALWs situation in Nigeria, including a comprehensive national survey on small arms and light weapons, comprehensive national weapons marking programme, the establishment of database on SALWs, and a review of Nigeria's firearms law, among other things.
9. PRESCOM has also formally launched the Nigerian Component of the ECOWAS-EU Small Arms Project, in February 2017, and under this initiative, Nigeria in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), will implement the Practical Disarmament Component of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework. To that end, full implementation of the Community Weapons Collection Project is to commence imminently.

Mr. Chairman

10. In conclusion, be assured that my delegation will actively participate in all processes geared towards decisively confronting the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons. In doing so, it is important to stress that all outcomes should reflect the interests of the vulnerable people that are suffering from the effects of the illicit flow of SALWs.

I thank you.