**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT MISSION OF BURKINA FASO TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE AT THE TENTH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ARMS TRADE TREATY**

**19 TO 23 AUGUST, 2024**

**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**DRAFT**

**STATEMENT BY THE AFRICAN GROUP AT THE TENTH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ARMS TRADE TREATY**

**DELIVERED BY BURKINA FASO 19 TO 23 AUGUST, 2024, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**Thank you, Mr President, I have the honour to deliver / I’m delivering this statement on behalf of the African Group.**

At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the African group, to congratulate you on your election as the President of the Tenth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. Be assured of the optimum support of the Group, as you preside over our work in the next coming days.

First of all, we would like to express our sincere condolences on the death of Mr. Stefan OTT.

Allow me to also take this opportunity to extend profound gratitude to you and your team, including members of the Implementation Support Unit, for their hard work and ensuring timely meetings during the intersessional period.

**Mr President,**

The African has remained one of the most negatively impacted regions of the continuous proliferation, circulation and illicit transfers of conventional weapons. Indeed, the movement and transfers of illicit small arms and light weapons, in particular, remains a major security threat to lives and livelihood across the length and breadth of the Continent.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the African region has continued to redouble efforts to combat the illicit trafficking and unregulated trade in conventional weapons, including the blockage of supply routes to terrorist and criminal organizations, through appropriate weapons transfer control measures. In this regard, we wish to take this opportunity to urge states of the African region that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Treaty. We welcome and congratulate the Gambia and Malawi for having recently ratified the Treaty and becoming the 114th and 115th States Parties to the Treaty respectively.

We commend the concerted efforts for the implementation of the Treaty throughout the ninth conferences of States Parties so far held. We are hopeful that this 10thCSP would usher in renewed commitment by States to promote the universalization of the Treaty and its effectiveness through the existing Working Groups as the Working Groups provide an opportunity to robustly engage with experts from other States to understand existing challenges and share best practices.

**Mr. President,**

The African Group wishes to reiterate the importance of universalizing the Treaty as a core principle that promotes global regulation in the context of imports and exports of conventional arms. In this regard, allow me to also take this opportunity to inform that the aspiration of the African Group, within the context of the ATT, is hinged on its Universalization and the strengthening of international cooperation, as well as the provision of technical assistance to State parties who require such expertise. We wish to therefore also seize this opportunity to encourage the continued fulfilment of regular transparency reporting obligations.

The African Group wishes to further reiterate the importance of technical assistance to State Parties as a vital mechanism that could play a major role in providing the required assistance and expertise needed to fulfil the Treaty obligations. Such assistance may include, but not limited to: reinforcement of capacities in post-shipment control, detection of irregularities, control against fraud, shipment tracing, as well as the identification of appropriate end-user documentation.

**Mr President,**

Cognizant of the dual use potential of technology in the context of information sharing and communication related to arms transfer, the African Group welcomes the immense contributions of rapidly developing technologies to facilitate efficient arms trade and monitoring. However, we are also concerned about the challenges posed by these technologies in the fight against the trade in illicit arms, particularly the opportunities it provides for cyber infiltration by non-state actors. While this remains worrisome, we welcome concrete dialogue aimed at establishing preventive measures in this regard.

**In conclusion, Mr. President,**

The African group wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the ideals of the ATT and remains resolute in its quest to rid the Continent of the scourge of illicit arms transfers. Noting the negative impacts of unregulated weapons trade and illicit arms flow on the African Continent, the Group assures you of its firm support, as you steer our work towards concrete outcomes at this Tenth Conference of States Parties.

**We thank you.**