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United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

5-20 July 2001

Summary record of the 9th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 18 July 2001, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Colombia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Message from the thirty-seventh ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity

1. **The Chairman** said that a letter had been received from the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations, requesting the opportunity to address a special message to the Conference from the thirty-seventh ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

2. **Mr. Djinnit** (Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Organization of African Unity) said that the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons was particularly severe on the African continent and was a serious cause of concern for OAU, since it posed a threat to peace, security and stability in Africa and a hindrance to development efforts. OAU and its member States were therefore fully committed to all efforts to promote a collective solution at the regional and international levels for the purpose of stemming the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

3. OAU had meticulously prepared for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and had organized a series of meetings and consultations involving government experts and representatives of civil society and regional and international organizations. Those efforts had culminated in the holding in Bamako from 30 November to 1 December 2000 of the Ministerial Conference on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Africa, which had adopted the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Declaration set forth the concerns of Africa on that question, recommended measures to be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels and called for an international partnership. The African Common Position had been ratified by the sessions of the Council of Ministers and of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU that had just concluded at Lusaka.

4. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government wished to express its belief in the urgent need for a concerted international response and its hope that the opportunity offered by the Conference would be fully seized. It had sent a message, which he read out, and which stated that the Heads of State and Government of OAU reiterated their grave concern at the persistent, devastating consequences of the proliferation, circulation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on the peace, security, and sustainable development of Africa.

5. Aware that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons promoted conflicts within and between countries, gravely impaired international humanitarian rights, created an environment favouring the culture of violence, criminality and contraband, undermined good governance and had deleterious effects on children, women, older persons, refugees and other vulnerable groups, and convinced that the excessive accumulation and the anarchic circulation of small arms was a global phenomenon with economic, political and social consequences that required a collaborative effort on all fronts, by all actors — manufacturers as well as buyers — at the national, regional and international levels, the Heads of State and Government of OAU reaffirmed their commitment to the African Common Position elaborated by the Ministerial Conference held at Bamako in 2000. They applauded the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and looked forward to the adoption of a clear, realistic and feasible programme of action which would focus on the prevention of the illicit trade in small arms, the strengthening of export control measures, the reduction of arms surpluses, and the surveillance of existing weapons stocks. They exhorted the Conference to embrace the African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and to consider ways and means of establishing greater controls across the continent.

6. In addition, they reaffirmed their political commitment to harmonizing, strengthening and consolidating their efforts to establish a global continent-wide African response that would fulfil their ambitions for Africa and for its peoples. They therefore appealed to the international community to contribute all the necessary financial and technical assistance for the implementation, with the participation of

organizations within African civil society, in particular women's and youth organizations, of African regional initiatives and programmes, including the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation, and Manufacture of Light Weapons of the Economic Community of West African States, the programme of action of the South African Development Community on the destruction of surplus and obsolete light weapons, and the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

7. The Heads of State and Government of OAU urgently called for the establishment of a close, long-term international partnership between OAU, the United Nations and the whole of the international community to eradicate the problem of small arms and light weapons on the African continent.

Credentials of representatives to the Conference

(b) Report of the Credentials Committee (A/CONF.192/12)

8. **The Chairman** drew attention to paragraph 13 of the report of the Credentials Committee (A/CONF.192/12) and invited participants in the Conference to offer their comments.

9. **Mr. Issa** (Egypt) said that insofar as Egypt was concerned, the credentials of Israel applied to the State of Israel within international frontiers of Israel before June 1967 and did not include any territories occupied after that date.

10. **The Chairman** said that, if he heard no objections, he would take it that the participants in the Conference wished to adopt the report of the Credentials Committee.

11. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.