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PRESS RELEASE

A SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS MEETING ON THE ARMS TRADE TREATY CONCLUDES IN ADDIS ABABA

Addis Ababa, 29 June 2014: The Commission of the African Union (AU) convened a Senior Government Officials Meeting, at the AU Headquarters, from 25 to 26 June 2015, to discuss issues relating to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The meeting was held within the framework of the relevant AU instruments that aim to support Member States in addressing the illicit proliferation, circulating and tricking of conventional weapons, including Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).

The objective of the meeting was to assist Member States in making informed decisions regarding the ratification and implementation of the ATT, thus contributing to national and regional efforts to address the illicit trade in, and diversion of, conventional weapons. The meeting also aimed to encourage and facilitate active participation of AU Member States that are Parties or Signatories to the ATT in the First Conference of States parties to the ATT, scheduled to be held from 24 to 27 August 2015, in Cancun, Mexico.

The meeting discussed in depth the objectives and provisions of the ATT and how it is expected to contribute to international efforts towards preventing the diversion, the illicit and irresponsible trade in conventional weapons, as well as towards preventing conventional weapons trade from violating international human rights and humanitarian law and United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The meeting also discussed the synergies and complementarities between the existing regional and international instruments and the ATT, acknowledging that there are opportunities to harmonize the implementation of these instruments in cases they provide diverging standards. The meeting stressed that States should aspire to the highest standards enshrined in these instruments, in order to achieve the greatest impact in addressing the problem.

The meeting received detailed briefings from Mexico, in its capacity as Provisional Secretariat of the ATT, as well as from the facilitators and co-facilitators of the working groups created as part of the preparatory process for the First Conference of States Parties. These are France, Ghana and Sweden. These briefings covered a number of issues on the agenda of the Conference,

including the rules of procedure, the structure and location of the Secretariat and financing aspects, as well as reporting pursuant to the ATT.

The meeting encouraged Member States to actively participate in the Conference and related events, to ensure that the views of African States, Parties contribute constructively to the ongoing discussions and that their expectation of the Conference and ATT are met.

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Peace and Security

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