Check against delivery

Statement by Her Excellency Ms. Marisa Morais
Interior Minister
of Republic of Cape Verde at
Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider 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, 16th June 2014
Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to add my voice to the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the Fifth Biennial Meeting on small arms and light weapons. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to others Bureau Members on their election to lead this important meeting.

The delegation of Cabo Verde aligns itself with the statement made delivered by Indonesia on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement, by Liberia on behalf of African Group, and by Mali, on behalf of ECOWAS Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

The Agenda of the meeting is encouraging for those of us coming from regions where human security and development efforts are threatened by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The dangerous and unacceptable situation of illicit proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons is globally known. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is an overt threat to peace, socio-economic development, and security of our countries and perhaps the most disturbing aspect of it is its close connection with terrorism, organized crime, drugs and human trafficking.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Cabo Verde considers the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), on 2nd April 2013, which the country endorsed, a landmark in disarmament and international security agenda.

This important treaty, if widely endorsed by UN Members and fully implemented will lead to an effective regulation on arms trade and will have significant impacts on armed conflicts, mainly in Africa. The regional organizations have a vital role to play in this regard.
Mr. Chairman,

Through the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects, other Regional Protocols and Conventions have been established. These interventions, especially in West Africa, under the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms, and through actions undertaken by National Commissions and civil society, have played a significant role where as their absence could have, otherwise, enhanced the escalation of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, the fact has to be acknowledged and we must recognize the progress made although we have not reached yet the desired goal.

Mr. Chairman,

Cabo Verde, a small island developing state in the west African region, in the main crossroad between Africa, South America and Europe), although the country has not been thrown into a situation of open conflict and widespread armed, is affected by easy access to Small Arms and Light Weapons in the region. The illegal transfer of Small Arms and Light Weapons through porous borders, leakages from stockpiles and to some considerable local production of SALW by artisans have facilitated unfortunate incidents.

Indeed, this fact led to an increasing of urban violence, a driver that can threaten our goal in building and fostering peaceful and non violent society.

In this regard, Cabo-Verde is fully committed to the implementation of the UNPoA and the ECOWAS Convention, which came into force in September 2009, engaged to address these challenges and continues to spare no efforts in fighting against the dissemination of SALW.

Legislation wise, Cabo Verde had reviewed the laws and regulations on SALW, their control, policies and initiatives to harmonize them with international conventions and protocols.

What remains still to be done now is technical and financial assistance to implement programmes on Marking and Tracing, Stockpile Management,
Brokering, on improving border surveillance and policing, and we shall remain focused to achieve it. This is one area that Cabo Verde hopes to benefit from technical and financial support from its international partners.

Being a SIDS, the notorious issue of boarder control and maritime surveillance poses a great challenge at this stage.

We are aware of the long road ahead in this area and would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the call to the international community, in particular traditional partners in this endeavor, mainly United nations System, to continue to provide the necessary support for the achievement of the goals set for the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

I thank you for your attention.