

7TH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

30 AUGUST 2021, GENEVA

Statement by H.E. Mr. Sheik Omar FAYE, Minister of Defence, Republic of the

Gambia

Opening Session

H.E. Professor David J. FRANCIS, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Republic of Sierra Leone, **H.E. Lansana Gberie**, the President of the Seventh Conference of States Parties (CSP7) to the Arms Trade Treaty, **H.E. Mme Marie-Gabrielle INEICHEN-FLEISCH**, State Secretary for Economic Affairs, the Swiss Confederation, **H.E. Ms. Izumi NAKAMITSU**, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, **H.E. Mr. Gilles CARBONNIER**, Vice-President, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), **Mr. Eugene NGALIM**, Executive Director, Cameroon Youth and Students Forum for Peace (Control Arms)

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning, afternoon, depending on where you are.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of the Gambia, I am honoured to address this seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty on behalf of my President, His Excellency President Adama Barrow. Early this year, President Barrow received a letter from his brother, His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone, inviting the Gambia to join the Arms Trade Treaty. This invitation reminded us immediately that our country was the only one in West Africa that has not yet signed or ratified the treaty. So let me thank you, Mr President, for your efforts to expand the membership of the ATT in these challenging times.

Though we have not formally joined the treaty, Gambia has been a strong supporter of the work of the ATT. We have made important progress by formally establishing a national commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons because the Gambia fully

appreciates the importance of international cooperation in furthering efficiency of export control procedures both domestically and internationally.

The Gambia fully embraces the main goal of the ATT, which is to regulate the international trade in conventional weapons to enhance global peace and security. We also support the theme of this presidency, which is regulate the movement of small arms and light weapons to prevent diversion. Illicit transfers and diversions from official stockpiles have become significant in conventional arms regulation in many countries in Africa and elsewhere. Many African countries and other countries in other parts of the world, including Latin America, the Pacific and South-East Asia have suffered and continue to suffer the scourge of armed violence, arms conflicts, wars and internal disturbances partly as a result of the inadequate regulation of international arms exports.

In this context, I would like to thank the CSP7 President for choosing to focus on efficient stockpile management as a tool to contribute to the effective implementation of the Treaty, particularly preventing and mitigating diversion of conventional weapons from licit to illicit markets.

Mr President, ladies, and gentlemen, let me conclude by conveying to you, with great pleasure, His Excellency, President Barrow's decision to accede to the ATT and become a state party. The Gambia looks forward to formalising the accession and subsequent ratification process and becoming a trustful and cooperative member of the ATT community.

Finally, I wish to convey my government's appreciation for the collaborative spirit and leadership of our two Ambassadors (Ambassador Kah of the Gambia and Ambassador Gberie) and their delegations at Geneva. We encourage their efforts to strengthen their collaboration with the ATT activities and community.

I wish you all a successful conference.