



Mr. Chair, Madame Vice-Chair, distinguished delegates,

My name is Mabel Adinya Ade, and I am the Executive Director at Adinya Arise Foundation, a member of the West African Action Network on Small Arms - Nigeria chapter. It is a great honour for me to convey this message on behalf of my organisation.

In 2016, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimated that of the 10 million illegal small arms in circulation in the West African Region, about 70 percent of those weapons were in Nigeria. The availability of these weapons has fuelled acts of religious and ethnic crisis, terrorism, farmer-herder conflicts, kidnapping and armed robberies, causing the loss of thousands of lives. Sometimes small arms and light weapons are also misused for acts of excessive and abusive use of force by security forces against civilians – acts which tend to drive up demand for illicit weapons according to a research study by the United Nations Development Program.

In July 2018, officials of the Nigeria Customs Service – NCS – intercepted a truck loaded with ammunition along the Wawa-Babana area of Niger state, a border town with the Republic of Benin with about 200,000 cartridges. The ammunition was reportedly smuggled into Nigeria from the Benin Republic. Around the same time period, the NCS also intercepted ammunition at the Tin Can Island Port in Lagos State where they recovered over 150 rounds of live ammunition among other things.

The control of firearms flows and trafficking has remained particularly difficult for Nigeria, Lake Chad and the West African region overall. SALW and their ammunition have been trafficked by gangs illegally across the Sahel from poorly guarded stockpiles in Libya. SALW ammunition from Sudan has also been found to be used by armed opposition groups in West Africa, as has ammunition from Iran. The need for improved collaboration between various agencies in Nigeria and neighbouring countries responsible for border management (land and sea ports) is crucial to control the influx of illicit small arms and light weapons that undermine peace and security in the region.

The most precise set of rules applicable to Nigeria and to other states in the Economic Community of West African States – ECOWAS – is the 2005 ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, in which, among others, States agreed to promote trust between member states through concerted and transparent action on the control

of small arms and light weapons within ECOWAS, and to promote the exchange of information and cooperation among member states.

The safe and secure management of ammunition would benefit from increased international cooperation in the areas of pre-transfer risk assessments and diversion monitoring.

I thank you.