



The HALO Trust statement

General debate

Thank you, President.

As this is the first time The HALO Trust is taking the floor, we would like to congratulate you on your presidency and convey our appreciation for your leadership. We also thank the ATT Secretariat for their continued support.

As a humanitarian NGO working in over 30 countries and territories affected by conflict, HALO's mission is to protect lives and restore livelihoods through the clearance and safe management of weapons, ammunition, and explosive remnants of war. Our activities, including weapons marking and registration, safe and secure storage, and the destruction of obsolete or surplus stockpiles, directly support the effective implementation of the ATT. These activities help States Parties in regions such as the Sahel, the Western Balkans, and Central America, to prevent diversion, reduce the risk of illicit trafficking and armed violence, and create the conditions for both conflict prevention and recovery.

Despite the efforts of national authorities, humanitarian operators, and international partners, the global proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons continues to rise. The humanitarian consequences are stark, with the widespread availability of small arms and light weapons driving instability, armed violence, and displacement. At the same time, funding for long-term weapons and ammunition management is increasingly constrained. This leaves prevention activities under-resourced, even though sustained investment is essential to reduce diversion, illicit trafficking, and renewed cycles of armed violence. Continued political will, international cooperation, and resource mobilisation will therefore be essential to realising the full potential of this Treaty.

Mr. President,

We commend Mexico for its proposal to establish Gender Focal Points within the ATT framework. HALO strongly supports this initiative. From our work within the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, we have seen that the appointment of, and the engagement with, Gender Focal Points has been a positive step: strengthening gender-sensitive implementation, fostering inclusion, and ensuring that diverse perspectives are reflected in policy and practice. Whilst there is still a lot of work to be done, the progress made since 2019 has been significant.

To further said progress, HALO actively promotes women's leadership in weapons and ammunition management, a field traditionally dominated by men, through our Women Managing Weapons programme. We believe that inclusive approaches to arms control not only strengthen operational effectiveness but also contribute to broader peace and security outcomes.

We have also seen the positive impact of the appointment of gender focal points within national SALW control institutions, for example within the Nigerian National Center for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW). These roles help to integrate gender perspectives across arms control

interventions, ensuring that policies and programs are more inclusive, responsive to diverse community needs, and ultimately more effective.

In many of the contexts where HALO operates, the risks associated with weapons proliferation disproportionately affect women and girls. Integrating gender perspectives into arm control policies is therefore essential, not only to prevent gender-based violence, as outlined in Article 7(4) of the Treaty, but also to ensure that the benefits of disarmament and security are equitably shared.

We encourage States Parties to consider the role of weapons and ammunition management in supporting the Treaty's implementation, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings. HALO stands ready to share its technical expertise and field-based insights to support the work of Gender Focal Points and to contribute to more inclusive and effective arms control practices.

Mr. President, HALO reaffirms its commitment to the humanitarian goals of the Arms Trade Treaty. We look forward to continued collaboration with States Parties, other civil society organisations, and international partners to ensure that the Treaty delivers on its promise to reduce human suffering and promote responsible arms governance.

Thank you.