



**Eighth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
(Geneva, 22-26 August 2022)
General statement**

Mr. President,

Let me start by expressing the full support of my delegation to you, Ambassador Göbel, in fulfilling your duties as President of this Eighth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. We also want to thank you for your leadership throughout the preparatory process and thank the Secretariat as well for its important daily work. We are particularly pleased to resume our proceedings in person after two CSP marked by the COVID pandemic.

Belgium aligns itself fully with the statement made by the Representative of the European Union and would like to add a couple of points of particular national interest.

Belgium welcomes the emphasis on certain topics put forward by the German presidency. We followed with great attention the panel on post-shipment controls and on-site verifications and welcome the paper dedicated to this topic. Post-shipment controls have a great potential to fight arms diversion and the illicit arms trade. Belgium also commends the efforts of the presidency on universalization of the Treaty through various diplomatic demarches. Finally, the work done on stock taking has been useful as well by bringing new ideas to better implement the Treaty.

As already mentioned in the statement read by my colleague of the European Union, the ATT is the instrument of reference to establish the highest possible common standards regarding the international arms trade. This instrument is precious and deserves our unwavering commitment. Belgium is therefore concerned about the dire financial situation of the Treaty as was presented by the Secretariat in its document "Status of Contributions to ATT Budgets" earlier this month. For this reason, we call on States in arrears to enter a financial arrangement in order to pay their dues in full and to settle their outstanding arrears without further delay.

Belgium is also concerned by the decreasing level of reporting year after year and the rising level of non-public reporting. Reporting is not only a legal obligation under the ATT, it also directly contributes to transparency and confidence-building, two important objectives of the Treaty. Belgium calls on all State Parties to fulfil their obligations on reporting, or, if facing challenges to do so, to take the opportunity of assistance provided by the Voluntary Trust Fund or the future assistance database to be developed by the Secretariat with EU funding.

On a more positive note, this CSP will see the first edition of the Diversion Information Exchange Forum which was postponed several times due to the pandemic. We thank Mexico for its leadership in taking over this initiative. This forum has a great potential to provide practical information to tackle the illicit arms trade and even contribute to the realization of the objectives of other international or regional instruments like the UN Programme of Action or the Firearms Protocol. We hope to see fruitful and constructive exchanges on this topic later this week.

Mr. President,

As States Parties, the full and timely payment of our national contributions as well the yearly reporting on arms exports and imports are two key obligations of the Treaty that bear witness to our collective political commitment to the ATT. It is therefore time to demonstrate that commitment with concrete actions.

I thank you Mr. President.