

Check against delivery
Arms Trade Treaty Third Conference of States Parties (Geneva, 11-15 September 2017)
Transparency and reporting. Statement of the Kingdom of Belgium

Mr President,

My delegation is very pleased to discuss the key issue of transparency and reporting here at this Conference of States Parties, in particular concrete proposals that can truly contribute to facilitate compliance with all of our reporting obligations and commitments.

In that regard allow me to first and foremost express the gratitude of my delegation to the Co-chairs of the working group, for their relentless efforts to ensure that this working group is now able to present several deliverables to this Conference. My delegation is in support of all of them.

As the Co-chair explained in his report, Belgium proposed and provided the initial draft of the 'FAQ'-type guidance document on reporting exports and imports as a tool to improve compliance with the mandatory annual reporting obligation of the Treaty. In this exercise, we very much appreciated the input and comments of States Parties, the Secretariat and civil society alike. We were tremendously pleased with the all-embracing support for the document and its adoption as a document of the working group.

As it is now submitted for consideration by the Conference, it should be our ambition to give this document the right place within the ATT framework, in order for it to best support States Parties with their mandatory annual reporting obligation.

In that respect, it is important to us that the Conference as a whole subsequently expresses itself on the status of working group documents, both in general as in this particular instance. The Conference is indeed the body that finally considers issues and adopts recommendations and a decision.

In view of the broad support, we therefore call on the Conference to effectively endorse the document, in a way that respects its nature as an informative and open-ended reference document that is under permanent review. The language for this could read as follows:

"The 3rd Conference of States Parties endorses the Working Group Document "Reporting Authorized or Actual Exports and Imports of Conventional Arms" as an informative and open-ended reference document for States Parties when preparing their mandatory annual report. Proposals for alternations and additional questions and answers may be made at any time and should be considered in the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting. The Conference also instructs the Secretariat to make the document available to all States Parties and publishes it on its public website."

In our opinion this text reflects the strong support for the document and at the same time makes it very clear that the document is informative and does not put any legal obligations on States Parties other than those that are clearly established in the Treaty.

Mr President, as said before, with this initiative Belgium aims to contribute to accurate and effective reporting by all States Parties. In the same regard Belgium looks forward to continuing work within the working group on transparency and reporting on the important tasks set out in the proposed mandate. The incoming co-chairs shall be assured of our full support.

Thank you, Mr President.+