



BELGIUM

General Statement

Arms Trade Treaty Fourth Conference of States Parties (Tokyo, 20-24 August 2018)

Mr. President,

Let me start by expressing the full support of my delegation for you, Ambassador TAKAMIZAWA, as President of the Fourth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in the fulfillment of your important duties. Let me also thank the host country, Japan, for organizing this conference and for extending its hospitality to the States Parties.

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.

As the first legally binding multilateral treaty on arms trade, the ATT remains a milestone in the field of arms control. The Treaty is instrumental in preventing weapons being used for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including gender based violence, and in reducing the risk of diversion.

However, as our procedures and working methods gradually fall into place, we have to ensure that the Treaty's objectives remain at the forefront of our endeavors. The road towards achieving our final objectives remains long. The global security environment is tainted by ongoing internal and international conflicts, often fueled by uncontrolled flows of conventional arms and ammunition. In order to improve security and stability worldwide, it is essential that the Treaty's high standards for trade in conventional arms are globally and comprehensively applied.

We need to expand the reach of the Treaty through the promotion of new signatures and adhesions. Not only States exporting arms, but also those importing arms or serving as transit and transshipment States are stakeholders in the success of the Treaty.

Universalization of the Treaty therefore needs to remain our goal. Special attention should be paid to major absentees and to those regions which are currently under-represented.

Realizing the full potential of the Treaty is also dependent on its effective implementation. It is therefore worrying that arrears in the payment of contributions are piling up. A lack of resources can hamper the work of our implementing bodies, but it also raises questions about the continued commitment of States to the object and purpose of the Treaty. This problem bedevils other conventions and organizations as well. Without a structural improvement, the overall framework of arms control risks being severely weakened. We welcome the efforts of the management committee in analyzing this problem, and we hope that we can move forward on adopting concrete measures to address the issue.

Transparency is important to build trust in the Treaty's implementation and to lay the groundwork for cooperation among States Parties. The disappointing rate of submission of annual reports is therefore an issue of concern. A better understanding of the requirements can help ease the burden of reporting. Belgium was happy to contribute to this endeavor by presenting the Q&A document on the annual reporting obligation that was endorsed by CSP3. We also provide a co-chair of the working group on transparency and reporting. We believe that working group discussions led to a number of additional actions that can positively affect the reporting rate. It is also important that the information in the reports is presented in a format that allows for analysis. In this context, Belgium will co-host a side event on transparency and reporting, that is organized by Small Arms Survey, ATT-BAP and UNIDIR. This side event will take place on Wednesday.

Mr. President,

All States Parties are required to take measures to prevent the diversion of arms to the illicit market or their unauthorized end use. Such action needs to be underpinned by a sound understanding of the characteristics of such diversion. Recent research has examined the dynamics of diversion. Belgium will host a side event to present the main findings of these studies, carried out by the Flemish Peace Institute and by Conflict Armament Research. Presentations will be given on firearms acquisition by terrorists, end use control in Europe and on the recent diversion of weapons into the hands of Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. The side event will take place on Thursday at lunch time.