

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

Fourth Conference of States Parties

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Statement by

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Minister

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Mr Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me sincerely thank Japan for generously hosting this meeting and commend our chair, Amb. Takamizawa, as well as the Head of the Secretariat, Mr. Dja Dja, and their respective teams for the excellent work they have done in preparing the Fourth Conference of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty. Our thanks also go to the chairs of the three working groups, the members of the Management Committee and the chair and the participants of the Voluntary Trust Fund.

Austria strongly favours gender equality - therefore, we would be very happy if one of the upcoming Conferences of States Parties would be chaired by one of our distinguished female colleagues. After all women are especially vulnerable to the irresponsible and illegal transfer of weapons and the Arms Trade Treaty puts forward the concept of gender based violence.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Arms Trade Treaty is a milestone for the international community for it sets for the first time ever legally binding standards for the international transfer of conventional weapons. Furthermore, the Arms Trade Treaty is a success story given the fact that it entered into force so quickly. The tally of ratifications and accessions as well as the number of signatures as just outlined by the representative of the UN Secretary General is indeed impressive. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new States Parties that have recently joined the ATT family. We are also encouraged that so many observer states are present and Austria certainly hopes that we will see many more countries accede to the ATT.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Austria as a staunch and traditional supporter of ATT stands ready to contribute to the successful development of the ATT. Mr. President I would like to give a couple of key considerations which guide the Austrian delegation:

- Firstly, we believe that implementation and universalisation are mutually reinforcing processes. The national implementation of ATT that aims at fulfilling the highest possible standards is a measure to build confidence. An environment of international trust will encourage more States to accede to ATT. I just repeat here what we said two years ago at CSP 2 and this is ever more pertinent in a world where multilateralism seems to be under attack from various sides. Therefore, we are more than pleased that the working groups

on implementation and transparency have added so much substance to our discussions. For instance, the ATT family has recently done important work on tackling the issue of diversion. In addition to this Austria feels that all ATT stakeholders should look at ways on how the humanitarian approach of the ATT could be better realised in day-to-day business of transfer controls. The Voluntary Trust fund as well as individual donors such as the EU have provided programmes in order to help States that are in the process of developing their export control system. The welcome pack suggested by the working group on implementation is a timely initiative in this respect. Based on this we do hope that other regions will join Africa, Latin America and Europe in embracing ATT.

- Secondly, the role of civil society has been crucial in bringing about and shaping the ATT. Civil society will remain crucial in our quest for the implementation and universalisation of ATT. Representatives of civil society, therefore, should have access to all meetings and be able to contribute to all topics. We are more than pleased that civil society representatives are actively involved in projects financed by the VTF and individual donors. Austria very much welcomes the massive presence of civil society at CSP 4 which has been made possible by the generous support by our Japanese hosts. We are looking forward to discussing with civil society and we take note that civil society has prepared a whole range of interesting side events.
- Thirdly, Austria believes that we should avoid with ATT something that has marred other international treaties, namely the shortfall in funds for keeping the institutions of the ATT working. The financial obligations are as mandatory on States Parties as other requirements such as running a control system and doing an assessment of transfers. There may be reasons for the exceptional delays in providing funds, yet if such delays should persist it would be utterly regrettable if the suggestion that we have on the table to cut down on meetings of subsidiary bodies would have to be implemented. This certainly would impact on the overall quality of ATT implementation and the scope of ATT universalisation and thus hamper the deepening and widening of ATT.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding, I would like to associate Austria with the statement that just has been delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Thank you for your attention