

Transcript of the Opening statement

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany

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Opening Ceremony

Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trades Treaty (CSP-8)

22. August 2022

Excellences,
Distinguished guests,
Members of delegations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is challenging the rules-based international order. In these difficult times, it is more important than ever to strengthen international norms to ensure security and stability.

I am glad that we are coming together today – in Geneva and on our screens around the globe – to strengthen one important instrument of our security architecture: the Arms Trade Treaty.

The ATT is the first legally binding instrument that regulates the international trade in conventional arms. It sets common standards for arms exports and it aims to counter illicit trade in and diversion of arms.

And we all know why this is necessary. Illicit arms trades endanger the lives of men, women and children every day.

For example, small arms and light weapons often end up in the hands of criminal gangs. The violence and damage that is done with these arms threatens entire neighbourhoods, entire cities. It causes massive suffering among civilians – not just in times of war: also when we look at domestic violence, we see the devastating pain caused by weapons which are too readily available.

And all too often the victims, again, are women and children.

Sometimes this violence threatens the stability of entire states. That is why the ATT makes the prevention of diversion of arms a shared responsibility for all of us.

In our presidency, we set three priorities for our work in the ATT:

First, the universalisation of the ATT. The more states join the ATT, the more effectively we can regulate international arms transfers.

Therefore, we need all arms exporting countries to become signatory states or States Parties to the ATT.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome the Philippines as a new State Party in the ATT family. We hope that the Philippines' ratification will inspire other countries to follow its example.

Second, in order to make the ATT more effective, we need to begin to take stock of achievements and challenges in the implementation of the Treaty.

One important challenge remains the reporting of arms transfers and diversion.

Unfortunately, by mid-July only 54 States Parties had submitted annual reports for 2021. Only 36 of them are publicly available.

Let us remember that transparency is a core component of the Treaty!

Third, we need to get better at guaranteeing that arms don't fall into the wrong hands after being delivered.

To this end, we see post shipment controls as one of the most suitable means to prevent diversion of arms, enshrined in Article 11.

We therefore developed a "toolbox" which can help states to control the use and the whereabouts of arms after they have been transferred to another country.

I would like to thank Switzerland, Mexico, the think tanks and representatives of the industry, who supported the development of the toolbox.

I firmly believe that if we become better at controlling the use of arms after shipment, we will make the implementation of the ATT more effective. If we do this, we will save lives – lives of ordinary citizens: mothers and fathers, daughters, sons and friends.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The end of this year's Conference of States Parties will also mark the end of the German presidency.

What will not end, however, is Germany's steadfast commitment to our common objective: to further strengthen the Treaty's implementation.

It is our shared responsibility to reduce the suffering that is caused by illegally traded arms every year.

I wish you all a successful Conference!