

Arms Trade Treaty Third Conference of the States Parties

Statement of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Agenda item 6 - Treaty Implementation

Thank you Mr. President,

On behalf of the ICRC, let me begin by thanking you, Ambassador Korhonen, for your tireless efforts over the last year, leading us to this 3rd Conference of States Parties.

And let me thank Costa Rica and Switzerland – Ambassadors Whyte and Dallafior – for the very important work they have carried out over the last year in the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation.

The ICRC thanks and commends those States Parties that have taken the floor to share the substantive measures they have taken and efforts made to implement the treaty at the national level, and some of the challenges they face. We also thank the European Union and those States Parties that informed the Conference of the resources and programmes provided to support national implementation of the treaty.

Mr. President,

The ATT aims to effect a fundamental paradigm shift in the arms trade, to ensure responsible arms transfers for the purpose of reducing human suffering. Under the treaty, all States Parties involved in the supply of arms have responsibilities, commensurate with their role in the supply chain.

In this respect, States Parties that authorize arms transfers, and in particular arms exporters, have significant responsibilities under Articles 6 & 7 of the treaty. This reflects the treaty's recognition that, in deciding to authorize the transfer of weapons, States Parties are providing the means by which serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, as well as serious acts of gender-based violence and of violence against women and children may be committed.

Indeed, Articles 6 & 7 are at the heart of the treaty. These provisions are critical to achieving the ATT's humanitarian purpose. As was made clear in the poignant opening statements yesterday, and as experienced first-hand by the ICRC in our field operations, there is an urgent need for responsible arms transfers. ATT States Parties must focus without delay on

how Articles 6 & 7 are being faithfully implemented. This is critical to building the credibility of the treaty in these crucial early years.

The ICRC therefore welcomes the Co-Chairs' proposal to include Articles 6 & 7 as a priority agenda item. The ICRC would welcome exchanges and discussion to share good practices, challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of Articles 6 & 7. By exchanging information and openly discussing the practical implementation of these provisions, and working towards addressing challenges and specific issues in implementation, States Parties can and must strive to attain the highest standards for the responsible arms trade which the treaty aims for.

The ICRC echoes recommendations that the working group be established as a permanent platform to discuss these fundamentally important issues.

Such discussion must also meet the expectation of transparency set out in the treaty and build confidence that its provisions are being implemented to effectively prevent the most egregious acts of violence in armed conflicts and other situations of armed violence.

Thank you, Mr. President.