



IRELAND

Sixth Conference of States Parties to the

Arms Trade Treaty

Geneva, 17-21 August 2020

General Debate

Written Statement submitted by

IRELAND

President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to add the following remarks in a national capacity.

Allow me first to thank the Presidency and the Secretariat for your efforts in ensuring we were able to facilitate this year's Conference of State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and offer to you Irelands' full cooperation and support. In these challenging times, it is crucial that we ensure the ATT

continues to be fully implemented. Though we are disappointed that we are not able to meet in person, the work of the ATT must continue. There is no evidence that the pandemic has resulted in a decline in the problems the ATT seeks to address and it is vital therefore to find innovative and creative ways to continue our work.

I would also like to acknowledge the work undertaken by the working groups throughout this most unusual preparatory process, and commend the Chairs for their dedication and commitment to facilitating new means of engaging in information exchanges and developing the tools to support States Parties in implementing the Treaty.

President,

Conflict, economic instability and human rights abuses continue to be fuelled by the illegal and unregulated trade in conventional arms. Perpetrators of armed violence often acquire weapons and ammunition through illicit channels, with the vast majority of casualties in armed conflict resulting from conventional weapons. A lack of regulation, inadequately enforced laws and weak control mechanisms at the national and local level facilitate the illegal trade in such weapons. Conflict-affected, post-conflict and fragile settings are particularly impacted.

The ATT, when properly implemented, represents a major step forward in the international community's efforts to regulate the international trade in conventional weapons. Ireland has been a proud support of the ATT since its inception and is committed to its full and effective implementation.

The ATT shares many interlinkages with other key international frameworks which, when supported, can complement our collective efforts against the illicit trade of weapons. Ireland regards the ATT as a vital instrument in the international community's efforts to realise a safer and more secure world, as envisaged in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. This is best reflected in SDG 16.4 which seeks to significantly reduce illicit flows of arms by 2030. However, the work of the ATT contributes across a range of goals, including peace and justice, health and well-being, and gender equality. Ireland is also proud to champion Action 21 of the UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament which seeks to build understanding on the impact of arms on conflict management. This holistic

approach to the regulation of the arms trade is reflected in Ireland's national policy for development – 'A Better World' – which has the reduction of humanitarian need as one of its four priorities. Supporting the implementation of the ATT will make an important contribution to reducing the root causes of humanitarian need.

President,

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Afghanistan, China, the Maldives, Namibia, Niue, and Sao Tome and Principe on joining the ATT this year. With each new State Party to the ATT, our efforts to combat the illicit trade in arms is strengthened, and we hope that these new States Parties can be a model for others in their respective regions. It is incumbent upon States Parties to redouble their efforts to promote the universalisation of this Treaty since international standards are strongest when they are universally applied.

Ireland continues to support the need for cross regional engagement at the Conference of States Parties. Ireland was pleased to once again contribute to the ATT Sponsorship Programme and we look forward to a wide representation of States at next year's Conference of States Parties.

One of the core strengths of the ATT is its multi-stakeholder participation. The engagement of Civil Society and Industry with the Treaty facilitates rich discussions and can broaden our collective understanding of issues.

President,

Transparency in the international trade of conventional arms, facilitated through accurate and timely public reporting, is one of the core tenets of the ATT. We remain concerned that the number of States Parties fulfilling their reporting obligation remains low and that reports are increasingly being submitted privately. These issues relating to reporting are not limited to the ATT, but rather are part of a wider pattern we are seeing in other multilateral fora.

The destruction and suffering caused by the flow of illicit arms will continue unless this Treaty is universalised and fully implemented in an effective and transparent way. Ireland recognises the importance of transparency in the context of the ATT and we support public reporting and the

standardisation of reporting templates for all States Parties. We would like to thank the Working Group on Treaty Reporting for their work in updating and standardising these templates. We also wish to support discussions on examining overlaps between the reporting requirements of the ATT and the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

We also consider the Voluntary Trust Fund to be a vital mechanism which can assist States Parties in the effective implementation of the Treaty. Ireland is pleased to once again be in a position to provide financial support to the VTF.

Similarly, the financial security of the Treaty as a whole is fundamental to its effective implementation. We remain concerned about the financial situation of the ATT. The only sustainable solution to the current financial situation is for all States to comply with their financial obligations. Ireland strongly urges those States who have not yet done so to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time and settle any outstanding arrears as soon as possible.

President,

The ATT is crucial part of a comprehensive legal framework, which, when fully universalised and implemented, will support peace, stability, human security and sustainable development. It must be a priority for all States to ensure that the Treaty lives up to its humanitarian objectives, to guarantee its full and effective implementation, and to commit to the universalisation of the Treaty.

Ireland stands ready to assist in these efforts and hopes that this Conference will agree concrete measures to advance the implementation and application of the Treaty and realise its potential to help create a more secure and peaceful world.

Thank You.

ENDS.