

Sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
Geneva, 17-21 August 2020

General Debate

General Statement by Counsellor Renārs Danelsons

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Mr. President,

At the outset, on behalf of the Latvian Government, I would like to express our deep gratitude to you, Mr. President, and your team for the inestimable efforts in organizing this Sixth Conference of States Parties despite the circumstances. I would like to thank the head of the Secretariat Mr. Dumisani Dladla for tireless efforts in securing all activities under the Arms Trade Treaty in these difficult times.

Mr. President,

The Latvian delegation aligns itself with the statement *delivered/to be delivered* by the European Union and would like to add some remarks in a national capacity.

Latvia ratified the Arms Trade Treaty on 2 April 2014 thus contributing to the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty at the end of 2014. Successful implementation of the Treaty at the national level has always been a priority of the Latvian government. Latvia attaches great importance towards the values of the ATT. In that spirit Latvia exercised function of the President of the CSP5 in 2019. A wide spectrum of measures and activities were put in place under the guidance of CSP5 President Ambassador Jānis Kārklīņš of Latvia to maintain the highest possible standards in control of trade with conventional arms at national level. Our priority was a fight against a gender based violence in arms export. The priority was extensively discussed during the CSP5 last year and resulted in adoption of the result-oriented plan of action.

Mr. President,

Your priority to enhance transparency and information sharing and to prevent and eradicate diversion of conventional weapons to the illicit market is a vital issue in the modern arms export. Unfortunately, due to pandemic situation we have not been able to hold consultations or side events to discuss practicalities with the civil society as regards prevention of diversion of conventional weapons.

Latvia considers that universalization of the Treaty is a key to a world without violence caused by unsanctioned circulation of arms. Working hand in hand with you, Mr. President, Latvia has co-chaired Working Group on Treaty Universalization.

We welcome new states joining the Arms Trade Treaty - Namibia that has ratified the Treaty and became a State Party on 27 July and Maldives which deposited its instrument of ratification on 27 September, 2019 and China that will become a full-fledged State Party on 4 October of this year.

Latvia shares concerns expressed during the fifth Conference of State Parties in Geneva that despite an increased number of countries who have ratified the Treaty, the Treaty global coverage is uneven. It would be of utmost importance to further promote the Treaty and encourage States to join it, especially in the Middle East and Asia.

Mr. President,

Due to the COVID pandemic, this year we will not be able to conduct our deliberations in person. Nevertheless, I am confident that this Conference of State Parties despite unusual circumstances will be a good example of cooperation between countries with a common goal to enhance and further promote an effective arms export control worldwide.