

GOBIERNO DE MÉXICO



Statement by the Government of Mexico to the Sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

August 17-21, 2020

The Government of Mexico welcomes the decision and trust of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to hold this Sixth Conference through procedures and decision making processes that reaffirm our mutual understanding and flexibility, due to the unprecedented situation generated at the global level stemming from the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this challenging juncture, Mexico reaffirms its commitment to the ATT as well as with its effective implementation. Mexico also call upon all States that are not yet Parties to their prompt adherence to this Treaty that seeks to improve the regulation of international trade in conventional arms and reduce human suffering.

Universality

Mexico welcomes the States that since the Fifth Conference have joined the Treaty: Afghanistan, China, Maldives, Namibia, Niue, and Saint Thomas and Prince.

Their involvement as Parties to the ATT encourages us. We will continue to support the efforts of the presidencies to maintain the pace of accessions and move towards the universalization of the Treaty. Only in this way will we be able to eradicate the illicit arms trade that damages societies.

Human dimension of the ATT

Although numbers vary, it is estimated that approximately 1 billion weapons are in active possession worldwide, both legally and illegally. More than 75% of these are in the hands of civilians. Around a thousand people die every day because of the use of small arms and light weapons. For this reason, the human dimension, present in the origins of the ATT, is more relevant than ever.

At the regional level, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Mexico in particular, have registered in recent years rates of violent homicides that are above areas in armed conflict. It is estimated that around 75% of homicides in this region are committed with a firearm, which goes hand in hand with a surge in violence against women and other sectors of the population considered vulnerable.

Given the magnitude of this problem, Mexico underlines that the ATT was adopted to establish common standards for the international trade in conventional arms, in order to reduce the terrible humane consequences caused by the illegal and irresponsible transfers of such arms.

The relevance of transparency and the exchange of information

Of the greatest importance is "The role of transparency and the exchange of information in the prevention of diversion", which constitutes the central theme of this Sixth Conference. Mexico welcomes the impulse given by Argentina, as President of this Conference, to transparency in ATT processes and the exchange of information to prevent diversion of weapons. Transparency is an essential element for building confidence and collaboration on these issues, which by their nature are sensitive.

Better controls and greater transparency lead to prevent illegal transfers and diversion within trade and, therefore, to prevent and counteract illicit trafficking in firearms and ammunitions. Diversion and illicit market have contributed so much to the generation of violence, to empower criminal organizations, and in the end, to the upsurge of dire effects on social cohesion and development opportunities.

In addition to the economic and human crisis that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused, unfortunately there is also a set of equally pressing problems, such as the upward dynamics of the illicit market of small and light weapons.

Gender perspective

A relevant outcome of the last Conference of the Parties was the consideration given to the impacts of illicit trafficking and diversion of arms on women and girls, a topic to which our country gives the greatest relevance. The effects for women are not only direct in relation to gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and violence in the home, but are also indirectly in the family environment, where girls or women are forced to take care of the victims of armed violence. For this reason, Mexico will continue to support all efforts to include the gender perspective in the different areas of the ATT. We also appreciate the contributions of civil society organizations in this discussion, which have made it possible to enrich the discussion and strengthen the implementation of the Treaty.

Diversions

Every year more than 200 thousand weapons enter into Mexican territory illegally, the vast majority through the northern border of Mexico. The increased illegal traffic corresponds to large-caliber weapons and weapons intended for the exclusive use of the armed forces. Because of this reason, our country will continue to rely on the legally binding nature of the ATT to find better answers and to reverse these trends.

Mexico welcomed the decisions submitted for consideration by this Sixth Conference, in particular the one related to the establishment of a diversion information exchange forum.

Mexico highlights the importance of the new forum and is committed to its effective implementation. It is a space to promote cooperation and communication, under constructive parameters -not confrontational- that promote the exchange of practical and operational information on concrete cases of diversion, thus helping to close spaces to illicit traffic. In the best spirit of collaboration between States Parties and signatories, Mexico will seek to share its experiences at the first opportunity.

Effective implementation of the ATT

Timely compliance with the decisions of this Sixth Conference should contribute to the effective implementation of the provisions of the Treaty. In this regard, Mexico welcomes the initiative to extract key concepts on exports and export assessments, which will shed light on the understanding and practice of States regarding export controls.

Mexico also welcomes the working plan of the transit and transshipment subgroup, as these are very relevant topics for the Latin American and Caribbean region, which have not been addressed in their appropriate dimension, partially due to the complexity derived from the participation of multiple actors and dynamics.

The downward trend in the submission of initial and annual reports should be a cause for strong concern and a call to consider the recommendations and initiatives that have been proposed within the framework of the ATT to comply with this obligation. We should impede this trend to be accentuated and then to avoid sending a very negative message to the States that are not Parties yet, regarding compliance with the obligations of the Treaty.

Mexico reiterates its commitment to transparency in the implementation of the Treaty and is pleased to inform that it has submitted its national report for this year, in what constituted an important inter-agency coordination effort at the national level, in spite of the difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic to the normal operation of government agencies.

The Government of Mexico supports the efforts to update and improve the reporting templates, the use of technological tools that now allow submitting reports online, the possibility of providing disaggregated data in the reports, as well as the initiatives of cooperation and technical assistance on reporting.

Mexico also calls for greater efforts to improve the implementation of the provisions established in Article 7, regarding the assessment that States Parties must conduct on possible arms transfers that could undermine peace and security, or that could serve to commit or facilitate an act constituting an offence under international conventions or protocols relating to transnational organized crime.

Today more than ever, international cooperation, mutual legal assistance and the principle of shared responsibility are needed to face the challenges posed by illicit transfers, diversion and illicit firearms trafficking.

Finally, as an element to be considered while preparing the route for the consolidation of the Treaty regime towards the Seventh Conference, Mexico would like to reiterate the importance of deepening synergies, complementarities and understanding among international and regional instruments and fora that address the different moments or problems related to small arms and light weapons, as well as the importance of creating convergences between different stakeholders: governments, civil society, academia and the private sector.

By aligning efforts from the respective mandates of international instruments such as the ATT, UNPoA and the Protocol against Trafficking in Firearms of UNTOC, we will be able to better advance in the efforts to accomplish SGD 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda.