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Arms Trade Treaty CSP5

August 26, 2019, Geneva

Mr. President,

I would first like to express my sincere appreciation to you, Ambassador Janis Karikins for the outstanding leadership you have demonstrated during the preparatory process for the Fifth Conference of States Parties (CSP5). My deep appreciation also goes to the chairs and facilitators of the three working groups as well as the civil society and other stakeholders for their hard work to make further progress in promoting the effective implementation and universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Mr. President,

Over the past six years, the Arms Trade Treaty, with the full support of the States Parties, has made meaningful progress in promoting transparency and accountability in international transfers of conventional arms. In particular, as the first legally binding instrument in global arms trade, the ATT is establishing its own place within the context of the broader international export control regime, by ensuring the proper regulation of the global arms trade.

There has also been considerable enhancement of the universalization of the Treaty. Since the last Conference of States Parties, seven countries have joined the ATT family and we are now achieving triple figures in the number of States. We warmly welcome all new members.

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Mr. President,

Despite such significant steps, we still have a long way to go to realize the full potential of the ATT. Having almost completed the first stage of laying the groundwork to enable the ATT to function effectively, now we need to move forward on substantial issues.

First and foremost, further emphasis should be placed on the humanitarian aspects of the ATT. Considering that unregulated and irresponsible arms transfer fuels arms conflict and human suffering, the ATT holds greater importance.

In this regard, we appreciate the Latvian presidency for leading the thematic discussion on gender and gender-based violence and for submitting the draft decision paper covering the discussions during the preparatory meetings. The first Joint Statement on Gender and the ATT delivered by the delegation of Canada, which we join, is also an important step forward. We firmly believe that such discussions contribute to consolidating the commitment of States Parties to implement the Treaty by reaffirming our respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Second, ensuring full and effective implementation of the Treaty must also be our top priority. As the real success of the Treaty is largely dependent on each State Party's domestic implementation, it is crucial to establish and maintain a solid National Control System through the sharing of best practices.

In light of this, I am confident that documents such as the ATT Universalization Toolkit and the Voluntary Basic Guide to Establishing a National Control System, will serve to promote a common understanding among States Parties and provide practical guidance, thus ultimately contributing to the solid implementation by States Parties.

Mr. President,

As a long-standing supporter of the ATT as well as a party to the four major international export control regimes, the Republic of Korea has been faithfully complying with the obligations laid out in the Treaty in an exemplary manner, and has been exercising rigorous controls over the illicit transfer of conventional weapons to third parties. And such efforts are anchored in an advanced regulatory framework, such as the Catch-All Control for conventional arms and WMDs.

Moreover, for the enlargement of the ATT, the Republic of Korea has actively engaged in outreach activities in the Asia region, which remains under-represented. We held the annual International Export Control Conference in Korea, inviting non-signatory nations and export control experts including the ATT Secretariat. In addition, as part of our endeavors to expand the participation of Asian states in the ATT, we are exerting our efforts for a project to translate the treaty guidelines into about 10 different Asian languages. I believe these initiatives will be of great value in deepening awareness of the ATT and garnering support for its effective implementation

Mr. President,

While such efforts are well recognized by the international community, it is regrettable that politically motivated export control measures have recently been taken against my country by a neighbor in a unilateral and arbitrary manner. We are also concerned that this is a bad precedent misusing the rationale of the export control for imposing trade-restrictive measures.

Clearly such retaliatory trade-restrictive measures run counter to the very essence of international export control regimes and indeed they erode the credibility of the relevant treaties and conventions including ATT. We believe such measures should be withdrawn immediately and relevant matters should be addressed through candid consultations between the two countries.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Korea takes this opportunity to hereby reaffirm its strong commitment to promoting the universalization of the ATT and supporting its effective implementation. We have every confidence that our common efforts will indeed contribute to making the ATT a truly living treaty. Thank you.