



SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT TO THE FIFTH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

26 August 2019

[Check against delivery]

Thematic discussion on Gender and Gender Based Violence

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset allow me to thank the panel for sharing their thoughts on gender and gender based violence within the framework of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). It has been 19 years since the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 and the subsequent resolutions that build upon it, including resolution 2242, which formally acknowledged the changing nature of warfare in which civilians are increasingly targeted and women continue to be excluded from participation in peace processes. These resolutions addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women. They also stressed the importance of women's equal and full participation as active participants in the peace and security milieu.

Mr President,

South Africa is committed to contributing to the implementation of Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions. My country's history illustrates the important role that women play in achieving and maintaining peace and security in a post-conflict environment. South African women have been at the forefront of driving our transition and transformation as well as developing and advancing responsible policies and legislation to advance the role of women in our society. As South Africa, through our own liberation struggle, we know first-hand the importance of incorporating women into peace processes and the benefits that accrue to nations as

a whole from their inclusion. Furthermore, as a member of the African Union, we are committed to Agenda 2063 as the core of which is Silencing the Guns to achieve peace and prosperity.

Mr President, we welcome your draft decision on gender and gender based violence presented to this Conference of States Parties for consideration. South Africa supports the call for delegations to strive to have gender balance in their delegations to ATT meetings. With regard to having a better understanding of the gendered impact of armed violence in the context of the ATT we note the proposals made, although we are a little apprehensive regarding some elements. The work on elaborating and exploring gender terms has and is being done in other fora and we should guard against a duplication of work, or the possibility to have different definitions or to import issues of disagreement into the ATT. In addition, certain aspects fall within the purview of national governments and we should not be encroaching on issues of sovereign decisions.

Mr President, concerning how gender based violence can be taken into account for risk assessments, we observed a misalignment on how we decide on the mandate for the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation (WGETI). Furthermore, the recommendations from the WGETI take a broader view of Articles 6 and 7 and are not restricted to just Article 7.4. South Africa supported this broader view for the WGETI mandate which looks at all sub-items and advocates that this decision should be in alignment with the WGETI discussions and recommendations. Additionally Mr President, we note the proposal related to a question on GBV being included in a future discussion on the templates, whenever this is opened for review. In South Africa's view this would be difficult to include in view of Article 13.3 of the ATT which obliges States Parties to report on authorized or actual exports and imports. Nevertheless Mr President, we welcome your draft decision and trust that our comments would be considered.

Mr President,

We agree with the sentiment that much more needs and must be done on gender and gender based violence. The contribution of women and girls to peace building processes remains undervalued and under-resourced, leaving a vital tool regarding

transformative change and sustainable peace underutilised. South Africa continues to encourage empowering women, including through capacity-building efforts, as appropriate, to participate in the design and implementation of efforts related to the field of international peace and security. We trust that these discussions will contribute to a better understanding of gender based violence within the framework of the ATT.

I thank you.