



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SIERRA LEONE TO
THE UNITED NATIONS AT GENEVA**

ATT Working Group on Treaty Universalization (WGTU) Second Informal Preparatory Meeting

28 April 2022, 1 – 2 PM CET

Hybrid

Thank you, Mr President,

First, my delegation would like to acknowledge the important work undertaken by the Working Group on Treaty Universalization (WGTU) and thank you and Ambassador Lansana Gberie of Sierra Leone, co-chairs of CSP8 cycle, for the important work you are carrying out to promote universal adherence to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We firmly believe a widely-endorsed and implemented ATT has the potential to evolve into one of the most important normative initiatives supporting global efforts to prevent the illicit trade in conventional arms.

Often weapons legally acquired by States end up being used by forces that they were not meant for. Illicit transfers and diversions from official stockpiles have become significant in conventional arms regulation in many countries in Africa and elsewhere. Many countries in Africa have suffered devastating loss of life and heinous injuries on a vast scale, all as a result of the inadequate regulation of international arms exports. In this context, the importance of universalization cannot be overstated. Universal adherence to the ATT would positively contribute to responsible arms transfers by promoting transparency and accountability in the global arms trade, as well as to global peace and security and create better conditions for sustainable development.

We congratulate and welcome the Philippines for depositing its instrument of ratification and becoming the 111th State Party to the Treaty. We also recall with great interest the announcement made by the Gambia to accede to the ATT as the last ECOWAS member state at the opening session of the CSP7. We encourage the Gambia to finalize the necessary processes to seek approval for accession and to join the treaty by CSP8. To this end, we call on all key implementing partners, including the Voluntary Trust Fund, to facilitate the required resources and technical expertise to ensure the Gambia's timely accession.

While great progress has been made, a lot remains to be done to realize the full universalization of the Treaty. We strongly believe a safe, responsible and transparent global arms trade is necessary for our security and for the security and wellbeing of all States. As such, we call on States to sign and ratify the Treaty.

Sierra Leone remains firmly committed to promoting universalization of the Treaty and welcome the efforts made by fellow States Parties, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and industry to continue to promote the universalization of this Treaty as a priority.

Thank you for your attention!