**UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

**ARMS TRADE TREATY –**

**TENTH CONFERENCE OF STATE PARTIES**

**19-23 AUGUST 2024**

STATEMENT ON ATT @10 CELEBRATION

Monday 19 August

I would like to thank the President for convening this special session. We are pleased to have this opportunity to celebrate this milestone in the history of disarmament and arms control. It is a testament to what can be achieved when governments, civil society and industry unite behind a common cause.

The UK is especially honoured to have been asked to speak as a State from the Western European and Others Group. Membership of the ATT amongst this group of States is almost universal, and we will continue to engage amongst our group to encourage others to accede to and fully implement the ATT.

The UK’s commitment to the Arms Trade Treaty goes back nearly 20 years. We were engaged in early discussions, and in 2006, as part of a regionally diverse group of states, we co-sponsored the General Assembly Resolution which paved the way for the creation of the Treaty.

Instead of relying on traditional power groupings, the UK focused on creating a shared narrative. Our negotiating team brought the ideas of NGOs and industry together. They recognised the power of collaboration as a force for change. And we are thrilled that representatives from a diverse range of States, industry and civil society organisations are here today and continue to be engaged in the Treaty.

But the Arms Trade Treaty did not emerge overnight. While an early convert to the cause, the UK came on board following years of hard work from civil society. For ten years, campaigning was driven by civil society; activists and leaders who recognised the detrimental impact that an unregulated conventional arms trade was having on often the most vulnerable in society. Civil society’s role in the ATT remains vital, providing crucial analysis, information and advocacy to improve the way the ATT works and is implemented.

We also recognise the constructive role played by international and regional organisations, and the vital role of industry in ensuring the Treaty could be implemented effectively. Without their input, expertise, and collaboration too, agreeing the ATT would have been an even greater challenge, and we should continue to find ways to include them in our deliberations today.

The negotiations towards the ATT were not straightforward: States approached it with a wide range of perspectives, and there was no guarantee that the negotiations would result in a treaty capable of securing broad support. Many were not keen on universally binding regulations, others wanted to narrow the scope, or did not want international standards to play a role in controlling arms transfers. Despite this, representatives from nearly every corner of the globe were willing to unite in the belief that regulating arms was not only possible, but necessary. And they succeeded in negotiating a robust, effective, legally binding treaty with strong provisions on international humanitarian law and human rights. It also broke new ground by recognising the risks of conventional arms being used to commit or facilitate gender-based violence.

Ten years on, the Arms Trade Treaty stands as a testament to the power of rallying around a shared goal. The ATT has grown in strength with soon to be 115 States Parties. Others are working towards ratification or taking action to implement its provisions through their national legislation. The Treaty has helped create a more secure world by reducing the risk of arms being diverted and building confidence through increased transparency – all while creating a level playing field for industry.

Whilst we celebrate the success of the Treaty’s negotiation and progress over the past 10 years, we shouldn’t brush over the Treaty’s challenges. The Arms Trade Treaty’s obligations are complex. Implementation can be daunting. So, in the decade ahead, we must work together towards universalisation and supporting each other to implement its obligations effectively.

The 10th anniversary of the ATT’s entry into force is an opportunity to renew our commitment to the Treaty, to celebrate its successes, reflect on its challenges, and to consider how we ensure its next decade is a success. We should also consider how the world has changed since the ATT entered into force, in particular the challenging geopolitical situation we face. Significant numbers of international and intra-state conflicts continue to be fought with arms within the scope of the ATT, causing widespread human suffering.

To this end, as we enter the ATT’s second decade, we should continue with the same vigour that we displayed from the outset; reaffirming our commitment to the full implementation and universalisation of the treaty and reflecting on ways to improve our delivery. This is why we have worked with many of you here on a Political Declaration, which we will introduce in the next item, as well as supporting the Stimson Center’s project which I’m sure Rachel will talk about in a minute.

The UK is proud to celebrate ten years since the ATT’s entry into force with everyone here today. To close, let me recall the statement the UK gave on signing the ATT in 2013, noting that we came together “for the innocent, caught up in conflict instigated by the wickedness of others, for lives needlessly lost, in the hope that by making it more difficult for illicit arms to cause misery, an extra chance may be allowed for peaceful resolution of conflict”.