**Izumi Nakamitsu**

**High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

**Opening Statement at Eleventh Conference of States Parties**

**to the Arms Trade Treaty (CSP11)**

***(to be delivered by Ms. C. Mélanie Régimbal, Chief of Service, ODA Geneva)***

**Monday, 25 August 2025, Geneva**

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

I am honoured to deliver remarks on behalf of the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, to the Eleventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Carlos Foradori of Argentina for his able leadership of the ATT process, and to commend his efforts to promote the universalization of the Treaty.

Excellencies,

We continue to witness unacceptable human suffering caused by armed conflicts and violence, driven by the proliferation and misuse of weapons and ammunition. The scale of the human toll is staggering, with entire communities and generations bearing the ultimate cost. When dialogue and cooperation stall, peace, security and development come to a standstill.

Restraint in the international arms trade is an urgent humanitarian imperative.

At a time when we are witnessing highly regrettable withdrawals from humanitarian disarmament treaties, it is more urgent than ever to uphold and strengthen disarmament norms that save lives and preserve humanity. The Arms Trade Treaty, together with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, forms a critical part of the humanitarian disarmament architecture. To this end, the Secretary-General recently launched a global campaign to accelerate mine action as an enabler of human rights and sustainable development, and to advance the vision of a mine-free world.

Excellencies,

The Arms Trade Treaty serves as a vital instrument to prevent arms diversion and misuse, enhance transparency, and reduce the human cost of weapons. Every exporting State has a responsibility to exercise the highest degree of diligence in assessing the risks posed by the arms and ammunition transfers they authorize. Key to this responsibility is the obligation to deny arms and ammunition transfers where there is an overriding risk that these could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian law or human rights law. I urge States to apply these obligations with rigour, consistency and political resolve. Political interests or economic gain must never outweigh humanitarian considerations.

In his upcoming study on the impact of the global increase in military expenditure on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, mandated by Member States in the Pact for the Future, the Secretary-General highlights a stark reality: when military spending grows unchecked, it often comes at the cost of investments in health, education, climate action, and good governance. This imbalance undermines the very foundations of peace and sustainable development. The study calls for a shift toward a human-centered approach to security—one that puts people first and aligns military priorities with the needs of our planet and its communities.

Transparency in arms transfers is a key confidence-building measure that helps reduce tensions and ambiguities among Member States. It also plays a crucial role in promoting accountability ensuring that arms transfers comply with international law and do not contribute to human suffering. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), together with the UN Register of Conventional Arms, are essential in advancing these objectives.

Full implementation of the ATT is paramount. I welcome the focus on practical implementation issues in your ongoing discussions, including import controls, national control lists, inter-agency cooperation, and the role of industry in responsible international arms transfers - particularly their due diligence responsibilities under international humanitarian law.

I must note that the risk of conventional weapons being used to perpetrate gender-based violence and violence against women and children remains a pressing concern.

On the latter point, I welcome the potential adoption of concrete measures - such as improved methodologies, risk assessment indicators and the establishment of gender-focal points - within the framework of the ATT. These efforts align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reflect both the text and spirit of the Treaty.

Excellencies,

The Treaty grows stronger with the addition of every new State Party. I am delighted to welcome Colombia as the 116th State Party to the Treaty. But we cannot rest - 53 States have yet to join the ATT, and adherence remains uneven across regions.

This makes Argentina’s Presidency theme of “Universalization as a priority” especially timely. I commend the Argentinian Presidency, ATT States Parties, and the ATT Secretariat for their outreach to non-States Parties, as well as the vital contributions of regional organizations, civil society, and NGOs. Mobilizing youth as advocates of the Treaty is equally essential—bringing fresh energy, innovation, and urgency to the universalization agenda. Such collective efforts are crucial to overcoming barriers to ratification and keeping the ATT high on political agendas.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, as Depositary of the Treaty, and the Office for Disarmament Affairs will continue to promote the Treaty’s universalization. I urge all States not yet party to join the ATT without delay. Universal adherence is not only possible—it is necessary to realize the Treaty’s full potential.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs contributes to these efforts, through projects funded by the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund and related activities by our Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

In closing, I recall the Pact for the Future, adopted last year, in which all Member States reaffirmed the crucial importance of exercising control over the international transfer of conventional arms and military equipment. The Pact makes clear that the ATT is a cornerstone of our shared efforts in conventional arms control and disarmament.

Let us therefore recommit to fully implementing the Arms Trade Treaty, ensure it delivers on its humanitarian promise, and act with determination to advance our shared vision of peace, security and sustainable development.

I thank you for your attention and wish you productive discussions this week.