

**STATEMENT**

# **Statement by the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC) at the 11th Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT CSP11)**

President,

My name is Armelle Ndongo and I am the Africa Regional Focal Point for GENSAC, based in Cameroon. I am honored to speak on behalf of the representatives of the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC), a broad and diverse network of women peacebuilders, security officials, grassroots civil society and women's rights groups, and disarmament experts. GENSAC seeks to highlight the importance of ensuring a gendered perspective as related to the trade and transfer of arms to ensure they do not exacerbate the large - and differentiated - impact of small arms and light weapons on women and girls.

We meet at a time when the global commitment to gender equality and human rights in arms control is facing a worrying backlash. Now, more than ever, States must demonstrate political will to uphold the ATT's principles, including Article 7.4. This provision requiring assessing GBV risks must not remain aspirational—it must be operationalized through concrete measures, resources, and accountability. We applaud the proposal by Mexico to establish gender focal points, and urge all states parties to support it.

## **STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CAPACITIES**

Implementation of the ATT remains uneven. In many contexts, there are significant knowledge and capacity gaps among national actors, not only in specialized transfer authorities, but also within the judiciary, security sector, intelligence services, armed forces, and police. Building national capacity is critical to ensuring that all actors involved in arms transfer decisions understand their obligations under the Treaty, including in areas such as transit, transshipment, and brokering. This is especially critical, given the way the diversion of arms from the licit to the illicit market puts lives in danger.

## **POLITICAL WILL AND TRANSPARENCY**

Building the ATT is not just a technical exercise—it is a political commitment. States must show leadership at the highest levels of government by:

- Increasing transparency and timely public reporting on all arms transfer decisions/initiatives;
- Raising public awareness of the Treaty's importance for reducing human suffering, improving governance, and advancing sustainable development;
- Investing in training and awareness-raising programs that reach beyond capitals to communities most affected by armed violence.

## **THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

International cooperation and assistance under the ATT must recognize and include the vital role of civil society in promoting Treaty norms and monitoring compliance. Greater investment is required to train advocates in the fundamentals of the ATT, and to ensure the full, equal, meaningful and effective participation of women and other underrepresented groups in decision-making.

## **REGIONAL AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE ACTION**

- Drawing on the experience of our members, we stress the need for:
- Systematic integration of gender-based violence risk analysis in all arms transfer assessments;
- Inclusive national monitoring mechanisms involving women's and community-based organizations;
- Sustainable funding and technical support for local civil society in the Global South to monitor ATT implementation;
- Equal representation of women in official delegations, ATT decision-making bodies, and follow-up mechanisms.

Chair, the ATT has been ratified by over 100 States and holds great potential to reduce the humanitarian impact of the arms trade. To fulfill that potential, we must close the implementation gaps, safeguard gender provisions, strengthen capacity at all levels, and ensure that political will matches the urgency of the moment.

GENSAC remains committed to working with States, the ATT Secretariat, and our civil society partners to advance a Treaty that saves lives, protects human rights, and promotes peace and security for all.

Thank you, President.

