

Opening Remarks by H.E. Park Jin
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea
At the Ninth Conference of States Parties
of the Arms Trade Treaty
(August 21, 2023, Geneva)

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am Park Jin, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea.

It is my great honor to kick off the Ninth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Today, we are living in a poly-crisis world.

Extreme weather events, pandemics, supply chain disruptions, food and energy crisis are posing multi-faceted challenges to humanity.

The unceasing aggression against Ukraine.

The recent outbreaks of armed violence in the Sahel region.

These are stark reminders that conventional conflicts remain ever present in today's world.

Such conflicts also underscore how civilian casualties and human rights violations escalate when weapons fall into the wrong hands – when they are not properly regulated.

Ten years ago, the ATT was adopted to establish common international standards for regulating trade in such arms.

It also aims to prevent illicit trade in conventional arms and their diversion.

The purpose is to contribute to international and regional peace, security, and stability, while reducing human suffering.

But today, our efforts to achieve those objectives are being tested.

Recently, North Korea invited a certain foreign delegation to its weapons exhibition and hinted at weapons exports.

Such moves should be condemned as they are highly problematic.

As you all know, the ATT prohibits conventional arms transfers that violate obligations under UN Security Council resolutions.

Arms transfers both to and from North Korea breach multiple UN security Council resolutions, and thus the ATT as well.

Furthermore, North Korea has been financing its unlawful nuclear and missiles programs through illicit weapons sales.

Since last year, the DPRK has launched over 100 ballistic missiles, all in violation of UN Security Council resolutions.

If North Korea's illicit arms deals are left unchecked, they will further advance its unlawful WMD program, thereby posing greater threats to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and beyond.

The ATT community cannot afford to overlook grave challenges that undermine the letter and the spirit of the ATT.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This conference must catalyze greater solidarity and cooperation aimed at the faithful implementation of the ATT.

Full and effective implementation of the ATT requires the following actions:

First, each country must establish a solid domestic export control system.

Second, there must be greater engagement by all stakeholders – not just governments, but also non-governmental organizations and industries.

Third, the membership of the ATT must be expanded and made more universal.

During its presidency from 2022 to 2023, the Republic of Korea has been focusing on these priorities.

In particular, Korea has been paying special attention to the relevant industries that operate at the forefront of the arms trade.

For instance, the ROK led the thematic discussion on “The Role of Industry in Responsible International Transfers of Conventional Arms”.

Furthermore, Korea has been actively engaging in outreach activities in Asia, where treaty representation remains relatively low.

This year, we hosted a workshop in Jakarta, inviting both signatory and non-signatory states in ASEAN, as well as all States Parties in East Asia and the ATT Secretariat.

Korea's presidency will come to a close at the end of this Conference of States Parties.

But Korea will continue to be steadfastly engaged on export controls and nonproliferation efforts, including through the ATT.

For Korea aspires to become a Global Pivotal State that contributes to upholding the rules-based international order, as well as to freedom, peace, and prosperity around the world.

The ROK will also continue to exercise leadership in establishing responsible practices on arms transfers.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank all delegates for

their support and cooperation for Korea's presidency during the Ninth Conference of States Parties cycle.

It was an honor and pleasure for the ROK to fulfill this role.

As the ATT celebrates the 10th anniversary of its adoption, we are moving toward a new stage.

Making the ATT a vibrant treaty calls for our collective will and efforts.

You can continue to count on the Republic of Korea's firm commitment to promoting the universality of the ATT and supporting its effective implementation.

I extend my very best wishes for the success of this Conference.

Thank you.