

## **Second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty**

**High-Level Segment, August 22, 2016**

### **Statement by Mr. Samuli Virtanen, State Secretary, Finland**

Mr President, Ministers, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to speak on behalf of Finland today at the Second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. I also had the privilege to attend the Conference last year in Cancun and now here we are in Geneva, at the Seat of the ATT Secretariat.

Let me start by thanking you Mr. Minister, as well as Ambassador Imohe for your hard work and dedication during the past months and weeks and for the close cooperation my delegation has had with you in the process leading up to this Conference. I would also like to thank the Government of Switzerland for their valuable contribution in hosting this Conference and the ATT Secretariat.

I wish to align myself to the statement by the European Union to be given later and add some remarks in my national capacity. Let me highlight briefly the priorities of Finland for this meeting and beyond.

Illicit and irresponsible flows of arms and conventional weapons are one of the greatest challenges that we face. Many armed conflicts know no borders. Civilians including women and children are increasingly targeted. Finland attaches great importance to the humanitarian dimension of the Arms Trade Treaty. However, the consequences of uncontrolled flow of conventional arms go far beyond the immediate human impact of violence. It also seriously hampers any attempts for economic and social development and growth.

We have many important issues that need to be addressed and resolved in order to achieve success.

First -the real challenge ahead lies in the effective implementation of the Treaty. All States Parties must establish a national system for the control of arms. This consists of strengthening laws and regulations and enforcement mechanisms. At the same time we need to take into account different situations and problems in different parts of the world. As far as implementation is concerned, exporting countries and importing countries may have different priorities. I hope that

discussions here would be consensus oriented and provide further input on how to take the matter forward.

Second— we are still in the beginning of a process. Many countries have not joined the Treaty. So far there are 87 countries that have done it. This is good when bearing in mind that the Treaty is less than two years old. But if the Treaty is to be truly universal, the level of ratifications should be increased. We need to discuss how to create momentum for more ratifications.

Third — we should complete the groundwork necessary for effective implementation of the Treaty. This includes the consolidation of the Secretariat so that it can be fully operational and fulfil its mandate effectively. In addition we need to develop reporting on arms trade towards more standardized format by making different national reports comparable with each other, more transparent and easier to use. We should also decide on the ATT Trust Fund. This is urgent for substantial and practical reasons. The Trust Fund is an important tool to support the implementation of the Treaty. Some State Parties including my country have already this year also reserved funds for the ATT Trust Fund activities.

Finally, I would also like to pay tribute to civil society for their valuable contribution during the whole ATT process.

Mr Chairman

Finland was one of the original co-authors for the ATT, so this Treaty plays a special role in our foreign and security policy.

During the period between the First and Second Conference of State Parties Finland has been working as one of the Vice-Presidents of the ATT. We are willing also in the future to be an active supporter of the ATT. This is why we have presented our availability for the incoming Presidency and I hope that you would support the Finnish candidate, Ambassador Klaus Korhonen.

Finland is convinced that this Conference will be successful and we will do all we can to contribute to that goal.

Thank you