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**Arms Trade Treaty Third Conference of States Parties (Geneva, 11-15 September
2017)**

Thematic discussion on ATT and SDGs. Speaking points.

Mr President,

My delegation welcomes this thematic discussion on the relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ATT, with particular reference to Goal 16-the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies-and one of its associated Target,16.4- a significant reduction in illicit arms flows by 2030.

As expressed in April during our preliminary exchanges on this issue, Belgium is of the view that both combating illicit arms flows and promoting a high standard of control on the legal arms trade can play a positive role in order to achieve the SDGs 5 (Target 5.2) and 16 (Target 16.4).

The responsibility to achieve the objectives of the ATT, and hence to contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability and to reduce human suffering, is shared among exporting States, transit States and importing States. Full cooperation between States Parties to the ATT is therefore key for the realization of the aforementioned SDGs.

When reflecting on the synergies between the SDGs and the ATT, we have to consider the obligation for exporting States Parties in article 7 of the Treaty to assess the potential impact of the export of conventional arms in terms of undermining peace and security or facilitating serious violations of international human rights law but also the obligations for import and transit States, such as the provision of relevant information. Furthermore, there is a broader obligation on all States Parties in article 6 of the Treaty to abstain from participating in transfers that would violate their relevant international obligations under agreements to which they are a Party and in article 11 of the Treaty to take measures to prevent diversion of arms.

In conjunction with these articles, target 16.4 of SDG 16 could also be understood as not only to prevent and reduce *illicit/unauthorized* arms flows, but also to consider *not authorizing* arms flows that could undermine the SDGs in general, for which the ATT then provides the tools, such as: 1) the obligation on exporting States to refuse licences or consider risk mitigating measures, 2) the obligation on importing States Parties to provide appropriate and relevant information to exporting States Parties and 3) the obligation on all States Parties involved in the transfer to take measures to prevent diversion.

There is undeniably also a strong link between article 7 of the ATT and SDG5 including Target 5.2. This aspect is an important point of attention in the export assessment in Belgium and is explicitly included in a number of its relevant legal instruments.

Furthermore, next to the direct contribution to the achievement of these development goals, the impact of the implementation of ATT on other relevant SDGs also merits attention, as arms transfers should not undermine the SDGs in general, for example SDG1 on ending poverty, SDG3 on health and SDG4 on education.

In that sense Belgium supports a further exchange of views within the ATT framework on how the Treaty could be further operationalized in order to prevent arms transfers and arms diversion, that undermine the relevant SDGs. The working group on effective treaty implementation is probably the most appropriate body for this.

I thank you.++