



IRELAND

General Statement

by

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Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations and Other  
International Organisations in Geneva

at the

Seventh Conference of States Parties to the  
Arms Trade Treaty

Geneva, 30 August – 3 September 2021

President,

Ireland aligns itself with the Statements delivered by the European Union and welcomes the opportunity to submit these written remarks in a national capacity.

In the first instance, I would like to express my congratulations to Ambassador Lansana Gberie on his assumption of the Presidency and to thank him, his team and the ATT Secretariat for their efforts over the past year in ensuring the effective functioning of the Arms Trade Treaty. I can assure you of Ireland's full cooperation and support. I would also like to acknowledge the considerable work undertaken by the Working Groups and commend the Chairs for their dedication and commitment to carrying out their duties. While COVID 19 has presented a number of challenges to the Treaty, and multilateralism in general, your collective efforts and adaptability to virtual methods of working have allowed us to continue to make progress on substantive issues.

In some respects, virtual methods of working have enabled greater participation of experts from capital, the global south, and under-represented groups, without incurring the associated costs or carbon emissions related to travel. While Ireland looks forward to a return to a fully restored format for ATT meetings, including in-person meetings, it is in the interest of the Treaty to learn from this experience and examine how best to leverage the use of virtual or hybrid meetings for some aspects of the Treaty's work in the future.

Ireland regards the ATT as a vital instrument in efforts to realise a safer and more secure world, as envisaged in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. This is best reflected in SDG 16.4 to significantly reduce illicit flows of arms by 2030 and SDG 5.2 to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. However the ATT contributes across a range of goals, including peace and justice, health and well-being and gender equality. Ireland is also proud to champion action 21 of the Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament to build understanding on the impact of arms on conflict management. This holistic approach to arms control is reflected in Ireland's national policy for development – 'A Better World' – which has the reduction of humanitarian need as one of its four priorities. Implementing Arms Trade Treaty will make an important contribution to reducing the root causes of humanitarian need.

President,

The availability of illicit arms is a key contributing factor to conflict, instability and insecurity. The illicit trade in arms illegal trading of such weapons is facilitated by inadequate or poorly enforced regulatory regimes at the national and local level. Conflict-affected, post-conflict and fragile settings are particularly impacted.

The availability of illicit arms is significantly correlated to sexual and gender based violence, community violence, violent extremism, and violent crime, including the trafficking in narcotics and people, and inhibits the realisation of the full range of human rights. The prevention and eradication of the illicit trade in arms has been acknowledged as a key element in conflict prevention, protection of human rights, sustainable development and gender equality.

President,

Since the last CSP, the Treaty has entered into force for Afghanistan, China, Niue, and Sao Tome and Principe. We look forward to working cooperatively with these States Parties in the full implementation of the ATT. It is unfortunate that no new instrument of ratification has been received in the past twelve months but Ireland remains optimistic that this will improve in the coming years. With each new State Party to the ATT, our efforts to combat the illicit trade in arms is strengthened, and we call upon the largest arms exporters in particular to sign and ratify the ATT. It is incumbent upon State Parties to redouble their efforts to promote the universalisation of the Treaty. International standards are strongest when they are universally applied.

Challenges to joining or implementing of the ATT can include concerns around trade, legislation, or regulation. To this end, Ireland was pleased to once again contribute to the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund in order to help support States' implementation efforts. To the best of our ability, State Parties in a position to do so should engage in pro-active outreach and support those States' seeking to join the ATT.

One of the core strengths of the ATT is in its multi-stakeholder participation. The engagement of Civil Society and Industry with the Treaty facilitates rich discussions and can broaden our collective understanding of issues. We recognise the vital work carried out on the ground by researchers and civil society in combating SALW diversion, which makes a critical contribution to implementing the ATT.

President,

Transparency in the international trade of conventional arms, facilitated through accurate and timely public reporting is one of the core tenets of the ATT. We remain concerned that the number of submitted reports continues to decline and that reports are increasingly being submitted privately.

Ireland recognises the importance of transparency in the context of the ATT and we support public reporting and the standardisation of reporting templates for all States Parties. We would like to thank the Working Group on Treaty Reporting for their considered and detailed work in updating and standardising these templates. These updates will help address any confusion on certain aspects of reporting and facilitate greater transparency by States. We are particularly pleased to see that the option for ATT reports to be submitted as reports to the UN Register of Conventional Arms has also been included. This will greatly improve coherence in reporting, reduce the reporting demands on States, and hopefully improve reporting to the UNROCA.

President,

In order to continue our work, it is vital that the Treaty remains financially secure. We remain concerned about the financial situation of the ATT. While the restrictions on activity for the last year has resulted in a temporary buffer, it is in no way a solution. The only sustainable solution to the long term financial health of the Treaty is for all States Parties to comply with their financial obligations. Ireland strongly urges those States who have not yet done so to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time, and settle any outstanding arrears as soon as possible.

The ATT is a crucial part of a comprehensive international regime which, when fully universalised and implemented, will support peace, stability, security, and development. It must be a priority for all States to ensure the Treaty delivers on its humanitarian objects, to guarantee its full and effective implementation, and to commit to the universalisation of the Treaty.

Ireland continues to assist in these efforts. We hope that the decisions taken at this conference will advance the application of the Treaty and realise its full potential to help establish a more peaceful and secure world.

Thank you.