

Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty  
Geneva, 30 August – 3 September 2021

General Debate

General Statement by Counsellor Renārs Danelsons

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Mr. President,

At the outset, on behalf of the Latvian Government, I would like to express our deep gratitude to you, Mr. President, and your team for the inestimable efforts in organizing this Seventh Conference of States Parties in a hybrid format despite the circumstances. I would like to thank the head of the Secretariat Mr. Dumisani Dladla for tireless efforts in securing all activities under the Arms Trade Treaty in these difficult times.

Mr. President,

The Latvian delegation aligns itself with the statement *delivered/to be delivered* by the European Union and would like to add some remarks in a national capacity.

Latvia ratified the Arms Trade Treaty on 2 April 2014 thus contributing to the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty at the end of 2014. Successful implementation of the Treaty at the national level has always been a priority of the Latvian government. Latvia attaches great importance towards the values of the ATT. In that spirit Latvia exercised function of the President of the CSP5 in 2019. A wide spectrum of measures and activities were put in place under the guidance of CSP5 President Ambassador Jānis Kārklīņš of Latvia to maintain the highest possible standards in control of trade with conventional arms at national level. Our priority was a fight against a gender based violence in arms export. The priority was extensively discussed during the CSP5 and resulted in adoption of the result-oriented plan of action.

Latvia fully welcomes the values of the ATT and has always been ready to contribute to achieve the goals written in the Treaty. Since completing of its duties to serve as a President of the ATT Latvia has offered its services of Ambassador Bahtijors Hasans who is performing his duties as a Vice President of the Arms Trade Treaty. Latvia is also ready to do its utmost in future in order to prevent illegal trafficking of weapons around the globe.

Mr. President,

Your priority to enhance the national control systems in place to regulate the transit and trans-shipment of small arms and light weapons across the borders is the ambitious

goal, but at the same time it is a core of the Arms Trade Treaty. Unfortunately, due to pandemic situation we were not able to hold in person consultations or side events to discuss practicalities with the civil society as regards transit and trans-shipment of small arms and light weapons.

Latvia considers that universalization of the Treaty is a key to a world without violence caused by unsanctioned circulation of arms across the borders.

We welcome new states joining the Arms Trade Treaty – Sao Tome and Principe that has ratified the Treaty and became a State Party on 28 July 2020 and Afghanistan which acceded on 29 July, 2020 and Niue that has become a full-fledged State Party on 4 November of last year.

Latvia shares concerns expressed during the fifth Conference of State Parties in Geneva that despite an increased number of countries who have ratified the Treaty, the Treaty global coverage is uneven. It would be of utmost importance to further promote the Treaty and encourage States to join it, especially in the Middle East and Asia.

Mr. President,

Due to the COVID pandemic, last year we were not been able to conduct our deliberations in person. Nevertheless, this year we are working in a hybrid format which is already a big step forward. I believe that next year Conference of State Parties will return to a normal functioning despite unusual circumstances and it will serve as a good example of cooperation between countries with a common goal to enhance and further promote an effective arms export control worldwide.