

Ireland - Statement: Thematic discussion on the Role of Industry

ATT CSP9, 21 August 2023

Thank you Madame President

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the Ninth Conference of States Parties to the ATT, and to extend my thanks to the panellists for their thought provoking and engaging presentations.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union, and would like to add the following remarks in a national capacity.

Ireland welcomes the CSP9 thematic focus and the presidency's paper on the Role of Industry in Responsible International Transfers of Conventional Arms. We very much share the President's view that the practical experience of actors in the arms industry and relevant private sector entities would be a highly valuable asset to our deliberations in the ATT.

We echo the arguments found in the paper, including that re-engagement of industry and the private sector can support efforts to prevent the delivery or diversion of conventional arms, in contravention of treaty provisions outlined in Articles 6, 7, and 11, and that engagement should not only ensure responsible international transfers of conventional arms, but also support efforts to identify transactions that undermine the object and purpose of the treaty.

To this end, the recommendations in the paper are valuable, including the proposed awareness raising suggestions and sharing of best practices and policies.

Furthermore, Ireland welcomes the suggestion in paragraph 4 of the Presidency's paper, that the ATT framework corresponds with other guidance regarding responsible business conduct developed at the multilateral level, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and that the ATT complements other efforts to establish robust corporate responsibility practices with regards to the international arms trade, helping to limit or mitigate potential negative consequences.

With this in mind, Ireland, together with Austria and Mexico, is pleased to submit a joint working paper on the ATT and responsible business conduct. Our paper seeks to elaborate on this identified complementarity, in particular between the ATT and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, or UNGPs.

In brief, the paper underlines the mutual objectives found in the ATT and UNGPs, and notes that States Parties, in their ATT obligations and implementation of the UNGPs, and industry, through their responsibilities as outlined in the UNGPs, can mutually benefit from exchanging information and good practice with regard to their respective risk assessment and Human Rights Due Diligence policies and processes. The paper proposes that this exchange be conducted at national and regional levels as well as throughout CSP cycles.

Creating this link could help ATT States Parties implement their Treaty obligations, and help industry respect their human rights responsibilities, and avoid reputational, financial, governance, regulatory, and legal risks.

The paper recommends that CSP9 welcomes the UNGPs, and calls on relevant working group chairs to allocate time in their meetings, as appropriate, to discuss the role of industry in responsible international transfers of conventional arms and report to the CSP; and calls on CSP presidents to dedicate time at the CSP for discussion of the issue.

The intent is to create a space for discussion of this topic within the ATT. The paper does not seek to prescribe the outcome or output of such discussions, but instead offers guidance on what they could entail, and how they can advance our mutual goals.

With your permission, I will read the textual recommendations as they stand now, having incorporated some constructive suggestions, and which we will submit in writing, in consultation with interested delegations.

[read recommendations]

As I mentioned, we invite interested delegations to approach myself, or colleagues from Austria and Mexico, to share their views, before we submit this recommendation in writing.