



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

**General Statement by H.E. Ambassador Patricia O'Brien  
Permanent Representative of Ireland**

**Geneva, 22 August 2016**

Mr President,

At the outset allow me to congratulate you for the hard work you have undertaken and to offer you Ireland's full cooperation and support.

I wish to align Ireland with the statement *delivered/to be delivered* by the European Union, and to add some remarks in a national capacity.

Ireland, as one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, has been a strong and consistent supporter of the Treaty since its inception. We regard the ATT as a vital instrument in the global community's efforts towards a safer and more secure world, as envisaged in the ambitious 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. We firmly believe that a strong and universal Arms Trade

Treaty can effectively regulate the trade in conventional arms and ammunition and eliminate illegal arms transfers.

We welcome the number of States that have ratified the Treaty so far, and we remain committed to promoting further ratification of and accession to the Treaty. Universalization of the ATT is key to strengthening international arms trade norms. This Conference is a further step towards achieving universalization and effective implementation of this important new instrument.

For Ireland, diverse representation at the Conference of States Parties is a priority. Different voices and experiences will help guide our work and ensure that implementation of the Treaty effectively meets the many challenges posed by the illegal arms trade. To this purpose, we are pleased to have once again made a contribution to the UNDP's Sponsorship Fund for State Participation.

Mr President,

The strength of the movement behind the Treaty reflects the urgency and seriousness of the issues it addresses. The destruction and suffering caused by arms deals that do not meet the Treaty's strong human rights and conflict prevention criteria will continue, unless this Treaty is implemented by every State as effectively and as transparently as possible. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that the potential offered by the ATT is utilised to its fullest extent.

Concrete measures are needed in order to reduce the risk of diversion of conventional weapons and ammunition; to improve transparency; and to prevent the contribution of arms trade to breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law, including the risk of weapons contributing to gender based violence.

This Conference offers a unique opportunity to set the tone for future meetings, and it is my sincere hope that the focus of this meeting will be on substantive matters. In this respect, Ireland appreciates the efforts undertaken by colleagues in designing a reporting framework which will facilitate States Parties' compliance with their reporting obligations. Ireland has submitted both an initial and an annual report for 2015, and we would urge all States Parties to increase mutual trust and transparency by submitting completed returns and by making them public. We look forward to the adoption of agreed reporting templates this week and to a commitment to public reporting by all States Parties to the Treaty.

Mr President,

The contribution of Civil Society, in particular in terms of advocacy, cannot be underestimated. Civil Society plays a crucial role in awareness-raising and is a key partner in our efforts to encourage universalization and full implementation of the Treaty. Ireland looks forward to continuing to support civil society's effective engagement in our deliberations. To this purpose, we have again made a financial contribution towards the ATT Monitor, a significant project of Control Arms that tracks the implementation and impact of the ATT through independent research and analysis.

In closing, Mr President,

It is a priority for us all to work together to ensure that the ATT lives up to its humanitarian mandate. Ireland stands ready to assist in this effort, and we hope that this Conference will agree on concrete measures that will allow the Treaty to have the fullest impact on providing a more secure, more peaceful world. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Finland for putting itself forward for the onerous duty of steering the ATT in this important task.

Thank you.