

**Statement by Dr. Natalie Goldring  
International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)  
"Enhancing efforts to control small arms and light weapons."**

27 August 2019

*This is the full statement. Because of time limits, the delivered statement may be abridged.*

Thank you, Mr. President.

I'm speaking again on behalf of the International Action Network on Small Arms, IANSA. We are a global network of NGOs working to reduce armed violence, and are also the official coordinator of civil society in the UN small arms process.

**The ATT is a baseline, not a ceiling**

The Arms Trade Treaty has the potential to significantly decrease the carnage caused by the unregulated trade in conventional weapons – from small arms to major conventional weapons.

This is an appropriate time to remind ourselves that the ATT presents a set of minimum standards – it's a floor, not a ceiling.

Governments can choose to go beyond these baselines, and should do so. Later in this talk I give specific examples of how to do this for ammunition.

**First and foremost, States must meet their obligations under the treaty**

This includes paying attention to the international human rights and humanitarian law obligations and the obligation to prevent diversion.

States must also meet their reporting obligations. We note that even some well-resourced States have failed to meet the Treaty's reporting standards.

**In moving forward, we need to better integrate work across relevant agendas**

The Arms Trade Treaty does not contain definitions of key terminology. Key concepts and good practice measures mentioned in the Treaty can be understood with reference to other relevant international instruments and policy agendas. These include the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Firearms Protocol, the Programme of Action, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

We don't have the time or resources for all of these efforts to be completely independent of each other.

As IANSA has documented in its research and analysis, key opportunities exist for synergies between the PoA and the ATT.

In turn, the Sustainable Development Goals are important for the objective assessment of export risks under Article 7 of the Treaty, especially in relation to tackling the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

Countries can work across the instruments even if the instruments themselves are not explicitly connected.

### **The importance of improving the control of ammunition in all its aspects**

Enhancing ammunition controls is also critically important, because of the continued high levels of production and excessive accumulation of weapons (especially small arms and light weapons), in conflict-prone and armed-violence-affected countries.

The results of the third Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Small Arms suggest some ways forward on this issue.

Advocates seeing the need for stricter regulation of ammunition succeeded in getting two paragraphs on this key problem into the Outcome Document. That text was supported by almost all participating States at the RevCon. Unfortunately, a tiny minority of states blocked total consensus on this issue.

Declaration paragraph 16:

“16. We welcome the process established by General Assembly Resolution 72/55, adopted by consensus, with a view to identifying urgent issues pertaining to the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus on which progress can be made.”

Part II paragraph 18:

“18. To acknowledge that States that apply provisions of the Programme of Action to small arms and light weapons ammunition can exchange and, as appropriate, apply relevant experiences, lessons learned and best practices acquired within the framework of other relevant instruments to which a State is a Party, as well as relevant international standards, in strengthening their implementation of the Programme of Action.”

Positive aspects of this result:

1. We achieved a strong commitment on ammunition in the outcome document.
2. These are substantive provisions and can be built upon.
3. The conference voted on the paragraphs, and the process didn't fall apart.
4. The proponents of a strong PoA convincingly explained why they chose the more substantial text, and refused attempts to weaken the language.

The text from paragraph 18 is relevant, and the process under General Assembly Resolution 72/55 on ammunition will be applicable to the implementation of the ATT as well.

### **We also need to address capacity and funding issues**

Communities affected by irresponsible arms trading need to be in the room.

Civil society's experts need to be in the room as well.

The experience and knowledge of civil society's researchers and advocates is a crucial asset in the constructive development of the ATT regime internationally and its implementation at national and regional levels. But the bottom line is that to secure the input of key civil society actors, donor States need to increase their financial assistance.

**This is a critically important time**

Armed conflicts and violence outside conflicts are being fueled with unregulated arms transfers. The ATT and its implementation must be improved. As part of that effort, we need to be looking toward CSP6 and considering amendments that could clarify and strengthen the treaty six years after its entry into force.

Thank you.