

**Video message by Izumi Nakamitsu  
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

**Opening remarks at Ninth Conference of States Parties to the  
Arms Trade Treaty (CSP9)**

**21 August 2023, Geneva**

Madame President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

It is a pleasure to send my greetings to the 9th Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

I welcome the opportunity to address this Conference, ten years after the adoption of the Treaty by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2013.

Let me begin by congratulating Ambassador Seong-mee Yoon of the Republic of Korea for assuming the Presidency of the Conference this year. I would like to thank her for her strong commitment, and for all the initiatives undertaken under her leadership to improve the universalization and implementation of the Treaty.

The international security landscape poses increasingly complex and multi-dimensional challenges. This 9th Conference is taking place against a backdrop of heightened tensions, challenges to multilateralism and seemingly unrestrained international arms competition. These developments have been driven by a worrying decline in international trust, the erosion of global, regional and bilateral arms control arrangements, and the seeming lack of any common vision for the role of disarmament in the maintenance of international peace and security.

As a consequence, military expenditures have continued to rise, reaching a new high of 2.24 trillion dollars in 2022. Overall, global military spending grew by 19 percent over the decade of 2013 to 2022. Factoring in the plans announced by some Member States to boost their military budgets even further, it is estimated that the global total for military expenditures will continue to rise sharply in the coming years.

These staggering numbers compel all of us to come together to reverse these trends. To do so, multilateral solutions – such as the ATT - are the only way forward. In this connection, this Conference represents an important opportunity to advance the implementation of the Treaty.

In July this year, the UN Secretary-General presented his policy brief on a New Agenda for Peace. He reaffirmed that, pursuant to Article 26 of the United Nations Charter, we must reverse the negative impact of unconstrained military spending. Toward that end, he called on Member States to commit to reducing the human cost of weapons by moving away from overly securitized and militarized approaches to peace, reducing military spending and enacting measures to foster human-centered disarmament.

This call goes hand-in-hand with the objectives of the ATT to consider humanitarian and human rights perspectives, and to contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability.

Excellencies,

Since its entry into force, the ATT has provided an invaluable platform to foster discussions between all stakeholders involved in the international arms trade. This year's priority theme, the *Role of Industry in Responsible International Transfers of Conventional Arms*, is highly relevant and reflects the willingness of States Parties to take an inclusive approach to implementing the Treaty and ensuring its effectiveness.

Industry can also have a crucial impact when it comes to one of the key priorities of the Treaty: the prevention of diversion. By adopting robust procedures, they can make the transfer chain less vulnerable to diversion.

I hope that your exchanges on this topic will lead you to find concrete options to enhance the role of industry to mitigate risks posed by international transfers of conventional arms.

In the New Agenda for Peace, the Secretary-General once again called on Member States to take concrete measures to address challenges related to diversion, at the regional, subregional and national levels. The prevention of illicit flow of arms and diversion, which is a target under the Sustainable Development Goals, can only be effectively achieved through strong cooperation and coordination by the international community. To this end, I welcome that the Diversion Information Exchange Forum will meet again this week.

Excellencies,

Universalization is crucial for the success of the Treaty, to ensure that the standards that it sets have a global reach. In this vein, I warmly welcome Gabon and Andorra to the Treaty, which brings the number of States Parties to 113. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, as Depositary of the Treaty, will continue to promote and encourage increased adherence to the instrument, and I take this opportunity to call on all States who are still not parties to join the Treaty.

As the ATT celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I truly believe that its significance is even more acute in today's international security environment. This is why the fulfillment of the tenets of the Treaty, namely the maintenance of international peace, security and stability and the reduction of human suffering must be, today more than ever, a concerted effort.

My office and I, alongside the ATT Secretariat, remain committed to supporting you in achieving these objectives.

I thank you for your attention and wish you productive discussions.