



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Statement of the Netherlands

to be delivered by

H.E Robert in den Bosch

at

Ninth Conference of States Parties to

the Arms Trade Treaty

General Debate

Geneva, 21 August 2023

General Debate

Let me start by thanking you, ambassador Yoon, and your team for the excellent work done in preparation of this Conference. We are confident that under your able leadership, we will have a productive discussion on how to enhance the functioning of the ATT.

The Netherlands aligns itself fully with the statement delivered by the EU and I would like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Madame President, allow me to reflect a moment on the tragic consequences of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine. We strongly condemn this armed attack, in which Russia uses, amongst others, conventional weapons against civilians, which has led to numerous alleged war crimes and human rights violations.

The international community must ensure that arms are used in a responsible way and are not diverted for undesirable end-uses. That is the primary objective of the ATT. With this and the EU's arms embargo against Russia in mind, we urge all States Parties to refrain from any transfers to Russia, including of parts and components, in line with Article 6 para 3 of the ATT.

Madame President,

Regarding the substantive work in the ATT, the Netherlands has three priorities:

1. First, the practical implementation of the treaty. We note with satisfaction that the proposal from the management committee focuses on the practical implementation of the treaty, which links in well with the future work plan of the WGETI as well as with the presentations to be given during the *Diversion Information Exchange Forum*. My delegation also supports the overarching goals of the management committee's balanced proposal, although we would appreciate some clarification regarding the functioning of the other two working groups in congruence with the WGETI. With this in mind, we would like to see an evaluation of this trial by the end of the 10th cycle to ensure we are making progress on the goals set in the paper's preamble and recommendations.
2. Our second priority is transparency. Transparency on arms exports and imports is one of the central pillars of the Treaty. To have an informed and substantive discussion, we need to know what arms are transferred where. We therefore strongly urge those States Parties who have not yet submitted their reports to do so. We also call on all States Parties – especially on the major arms exporters that have a special responsibility here – to make their reports publicly available. We applaud Spain's and Portugal's decision to

make their reports publicly available. We recognize the challenges for transparency brought about by the decision of some States Parties, including the Netherlands, to supply arms to Ukraine in order to help exercise its right to self-defence under article 51 of the UN charter. State Parties may have legitimate reasons to limit their transparency due to national security considerations, but our collective ambition, in line with the Treaty, requires us to be as transparent as possible and to submit our reporting publicly. The Netherlands is firmly committed to this and we call on all others to do the same.

3. Our third priority is the financial situation of the Treaty, which unfortunately continues to deteriorate. We welcome the positive news that some States Parties that are in arrears are close to making a payment plan with the Secretariat [under rule 8.1(d)] and we encourage all States who are in arrears because of financial difficulties to do the same. We look forward to discussing concrete options for tackling this problem and we call on all other States Parties to meet their financial obligations in full and on time.

Madame President,

Before concluding, let me also recall the ATT was the first international agreement to recognize the link between the arms trade and Gender Based Violence. Having said that, there remains work to be done, for instance by looking at what additional tools and information we could use in risk assessments to prevent Gender Based Violence.

Madame President,

We look forward to continuing constructive dialogue with all participants in this Conference. I thank you for giving me the floor.