



BELGIUM

Agenda Item 5. General debate

Arms Trade Treaty Fifth Conference of States Parties (Geneva, 26-30 August 2019)

Mr. President,

Let me start by expressing the full support of my delegation to you, Ambassador KĀRKLIŅŠ, in fulfilling your important duties as President of this Fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. I also want to thank you for your skilful leadership throughout the preparatory process. My thanks also go to the Secretariat, the members of the Bureau, the Management Committee and the VTF selection Committee, and to the co-chairs of the working groups.

[Belgium aligns itself fully with the statement made by the Representative of the European Union and would like to add a couple of points of particular national interest.]

Mr President, the preparatory process towards this Conference was marked by a dedicated focus on substantive discussions and concrete outcomes.

When I look at the reports and the recommendations of the working groups and the implementation working group in particular, they demonstrate that in this CSP we can tackle difficult issues and can agree on voluntary guidance that assists States Parties in their daily application of the Treaty. These achievements deserve to be highlighted. Obviously, words still need to be transformed into action, but we feel that we are on a good track. My own delegation was very active in discussing the documents that are now presented for endorsement and we will come back with a few more considerations when we discuss implementation [tomorrow] [this afternoon].

In the same spirit, we also welcomed the very practical and detailed exchanges that we had about gender and gender-based violence, both during the preparatory process and during [this morning's] [yesterday's] thematic discussion. We will specifically address the GBV criterion further [tomorrow] [this afternoon].

We also want to explicitly mention the progress that we made in discussing issues concerning diversion of arms. We are pleased that as part of the three-tier approach to sharing information on diversion that was adopted at CSP4, [on Wednesday] [tomorrow] we are holding the first informal meeting among interested States Parties and signatory states to discuss concrete cases of detected or suspected diversion. [Tomorrow we will also have a stakeholders session on this topic.] [This morning we already had a stakeholders session on this topic.] [During lunchtime today we will also have a stakeholders session on this topic.]

Mr President, while we are generally positive about the work that we are doing within the ATT framework, we also have to address the many issues and challenges that we still face.

We all know that the ultimate success of the Treaty depends on its global reach, as *ALL* States are involved in the international arms trade, be it in export, import, transit or brokering. We do note that especially important exporters and importers of arms need to show their responsibility and their commitment to international peace and security, transparency and responsible action by joining this Treaty. In that respect, we welcome Canada's recent accession to the Treaty and we once again call on those States with prominent roles in international arms trade to follow their example. We also recall that a number of States have already indicated some commitment to the Treaty through their signature or their approval of the treaty in the UN General Assembly; they should follow through on their good intentions and become States Parties.

Talking about commitment brings me to other challenges, that concern the ATT framework itself.

Commitment to the Treaty does not stop with ratification or accession; it also requires implementation and compliance with the obligations in the Treaty and in the documents that this CSP adopts. In that respect I refer to the obligations of States to contribute financially to the functioning of the ATT framework and to their obligation to report on their implementation of the Treaty and on their imports and exports of arms.

Concerning the financial obligations, in our general statement at the start of CSP4, we already expressed our concern about the arrears of many States in paying their contributions. We also warned that a lack of resources could hamper the work of this CSP, its subsidiary bodies and the Secretariat. A year later, the situation has not changed

and that is unacceptable. We commend and support your work and that of the management committee to address this problem, and we express the hope that this Conference can be the start of turning around the problematic trend in States not paying what they owe.

Unfortunately, we see the same problematic trend when we look at compliance with the reporting obligations of the Treaty. Although transparency in the international arms trade is expressly included in article 1 as one of the key purposes of the Treaty, too many States Parties have not fulfilled their reporting obligations. Complying with these obligations is an expression of the commitment of States Parties to the Treaty. As co-chair of the reporting working group, my country has striven to develop awareness and support regarding these crucial obligations. Unfortunately, there is still a way to go. We hope that our discussion [on Wednesday] [tomorrow] can help move things forward.

Mr President, on these challenges, there is a lot of work that still needs to be done, starting during this CSP. We look forward to the discussions this week and you can be assured of our support.

Thank you.