

ATT CSP2 - General Statement Sweden

Check against delivery

Mr President,

The ATT has been an extraordinary success story in the field of arms control and security policy. I deliberately refer to security policy in this context, because the production and trade in arms has significant security implications not just for countries afflicted by armed violence and conflict, but for every country. In accepting norms for the transfer of arms and a degree of transparency, each State Party to the ATT has struck a balance between narrow national security interests and the need to address a problem which, ultimately, could affect any of us. A short-term tradeoff for long-term benefits. It sounds simple, but in political terms, it never is. More than half of the UN's Member States have not yet achieved this particular leap of imagination.

So as we move into the more substantive parts of our work at this Conference, it might not be a bad idea to remind ourselves of four factors that have helped to bring us to this point, and which Sweden believes will continue to be central for the success of this effort.

The first factor is the extraordinary political momentum that helped us complete negotiations for a security policy sensitive Treaty in record time. We need to maintain that political momentum by showing results in our work, by making tangible progress in the tasks that we set for ourselves.

The second factor is related to the first. A shared concern has made it possible for us to work together across the boundaries of the traditional regional groupings of the UN system. This is a delicate flower that we need to continue to nurture, lest it wither and die. Because if it does, the ATT will be just another Treaty, conceived with good intentions and then lost again to the strictures of political correctness.

The third factor is that we have been able so far to maintain a consensual approach. Our continued ability to find solutions that are acceptable to countries in very different circumstances will determine the ultimate effectiveness of the Arms Trade Treaty.

The fourth factor is that we have been able to work constructively with civil society in an area where that relationship, for producing countries at least, has traditionally been adversarial. Such a constructive relationship brings many benefits in terms of the effective implementation and universalization of the Treaty. Because civil society can significantly complement the resources that governments can mobilize for implementation assistance. And in a sense, the same applies to universalization, because, simply put, grass roots organizations can go places and do things that Governments cannot.

That being said, a constructive relationship is not a one way street. Civil society too needs to work to maintain this relationship for the benefits that it brings to our shared goal of better controlling both legal, illegal and unregulated flows of arms. Advocacy is the lifeblood of civil society, but it is most effectively conducted at the national level, where the ATT is implemented by each State Party in its own way. Because that is how the ATT was constructed. This is not an easy balance for civil society to achieve, it goes beyond traditional patterns of thinking. But if that balance is not achieved, both sides lose.

So, Mr President, as we move into the substantive phase of our work and immerse ourselves in the detail of different topics, there are underlying values that we need to keep in mind. These are values that may feel like limitations in the heat of the moment, but they are the factors that Sweden believes will ultimately give us the progress that we all want to achieve in this important but difficult area.

Thank you, Mr President