

Statement by H.E. Basat Ozturk
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Head of Delegation of the
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Revised as of 25 August 2015

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

I would like to join those who have spoken before me and congratulate Ambassador Lomonaco on his election as President and commend him for the tireless efforts in the preparations leading to the First States Parties Conference of the Arms Trade Treaty. Without these efforts, we would not be standing where we are today.

I should also like to express our deep appreciation to the Government of Mexico, for taking the lead in the preparations, assuming the task of provisional secretariat and of course for hosting the first ever States Parties Conference in the beautiful Mayan Riviera, not to mention the generous hospitality accorded to my delegation.

All of us here today are witnessing an historic occasion. After years of hard work and lengthy negotiations, the Arms Trade Treaty is now finally coming into being. I salute all delegations and experts who have contributed to this major achievement.

Mr. Chairman,

The Treaty will fill an important gap with regard to transparency and code of conduct concerning global arms trade, as it defines the highest common international standards governing conventional arms exports. It is also important to note that the Treaty aims at placing transparency as well as international law and human rights at the focal point of arms transfers.

We are all aware that the static security threats of the Cold War period have now been replaced with more complex set of new threats and risks including hybrid warfare which we witness being implemented in the very regions surrounding us, with very destructive effects, undermining regional security and stability. Terrorism, ethnic and religious fundamentalism, organized crime, trafficking of human beings, drugs and weapons, environmental disasters, and, lastly, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means have also become more relevant in the current security environment.

Risks associated with the use, spread and illicit trafficking of conventional weapons continue to pose the most common form of danger to human life as well as to economic and social welfare of the international community at large. Terrorism, which continues to cause many sufferings remains a key challenge to peace and stability and constitutes a very real menace in every aspect to all nations on earth, regardless of any national, ideological or religious affiliation.

The threats posed by the ongoing conflict in Syria and the presence of terrorist groups across our borders continue to challenge not only the national security of Turkey and the countries of the region at large, but has also claimed the lives of at least 300,000 Syrians to this day. 158 of our citizens have also lost their lives due to terrorist attacks that originated from Syrian territory.

Additionally, half of the population of Syria is now displaced either internally or have become refugees abroad, with Turkey hosting close to 2 million Syrians who were forced to flee their country.

The situation in Iraq, another neighbour of Turkey, is also highly precarious. The whole region is thus suffering from the brunt of terrorism as well as various forms of internal conflicts which take toll on humanitarian, economic and social domains on a grand scale.

Consequently, Turkey is among those countries that have been most affected by uncontrolled transfers of arms and is a country best placed to appreciate what the Arms Trade Treaty has to offer in terms of transparency and curbing illicit transfers of arms.

Mr. Chairman,

While Turkey is a signatory to the Treaty, it is not yet a State Party. The procedures for its ratification have been underway. However, as a new Government could not be established following the last elections on 7 June 2015 due to the failure in forming a coalition, new general elections are now to be held on 1 November this year. With the election of new Members of Parliament, we shall be in a position to submit the Treaty for a speedy ratification.

Although Turkey does not at this time have the right to vote, we believe that there are important steps to be taken by the States Parties in order to fully functionalize the Treaty arrangements and procedures.

States Parties need to agree on crucial matters which will shape the future of this Treaty and facilitate its effective functioning. The first step will be to determine the seat of the Secretariat, the Head of the Secretariat and of course to finalize the financial aspects of the ATT, here in Cancun.

While doing this, we should also continue to work for the universalization of the Treaty, which should be a collective endeavour.

Turkey expects to ratify the Treaty and become a full State Party at the earliest possible date.

Thank you.