

CSP3 Universalisation: UK Statement

Mr. President,

1. I would like to support the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States and add a few comments in a national capacity.
2. To begin I would like to commend the work of yourself and Ambassador Imohe as co-chairs of the Universalisation Working Group. As noted in my opening statement we are also grateful for the emphasis you have placed on Universalisation in your role as President of CSP3.
3. Clearly good progress has been made – with the number of States Parties reaching 92. However perhaps now is the time to reassess what we mean by prioritising universalisation. While there is general agreement that universalisation is one of the key priorities, and that the Treaty is strengthened by the accession of new States Parties, we need to clarify how we measure success. Are we focussing on quantity – in which case should we set a target for membership levels by CSP4 or 5. Or are we focussing on quality – in which case which are our major targets and should we be looking at specific states or regions?
4. Some countries are very unlikely to join the ATT in, at least, the medium term. Rather than discounting them we should expend resource to, at the very least, persuade them to adopt a neutral rather than negative stance towards the Treaty. As part of this process there would be value in developing a common script to deploy against the most common criticisms levelled by those who do not support the Treaty.
5. There is further work to be done around analysing the obstacles to ratification or accession. Factors which need to be considered include the bureaucratic challenge, political concerns around self-defence and defence industries and the views of other countries in the region. A clearer understanding of the issues will help us to develop a clear script and strategy to address them.
6. As part of promoting Universalisation we should remain willing to raise the ATT at every opportunity and seek to emphasise synergies with other treaties or conventions. This will not always be a universally welcome message and will often trigger strong debate. However we should not shy away from this and not avoid difficult conversations in multilateral fora. If we believe in the importance of Universalisation then we should be robust in promoting the Treaty and explaining why it matters.