First Conference of States Parties

Arms Trade Treaty

Netherlands Statement

[Introduction]

Let me start by thanking the United Mexican States for taking the initiative to host and organize this important first Conference of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty in such a positive and pleasant atmosphere. Also, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to ambassador, Lomónaco, for his leadership and endurance to bring the preparatory process to where we are today.

[Netherlands role]

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is proud to have been an active participant in the drafting of the Treaty. We signed the Treaty on 3rd of June 2013, only 1 day after the Treaty was adopted and we ratified in December 2014 thus belonging to the first group of ATT States Parties. In the meantime the ATT community has grown. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is proud of being a State Party to the Arms Trade Treaty and will strive for making it universal.

[Importance 1st CSP]

In the Netherlands view, the success of the Arms Trade Treaty will ultimately be determined by a number of factors:

- first, the degree to which States Parties have been successful to implement the Treaty and to set up a national export control system;
- second, the universalisation of the Treaty, as currently a large number of the major arms exporting and importing States are not a party to the Treaty;
- third, the amount of transparency, only transparency will lead to more mutual trust and reduced unwanted arms trade;
- and fourth, the ability of the Treaty to adjust itself to future needs and developments.

[Netherlands position]

- The Netherlands urge all States Parties to show ambition, as well as flexibility with respect to the negotiations that will further take place this week. We cannot afford this Conference of States Parties not to be a success and we sincerely hope that we will all succeed in finding common ground.
- The NGO community played a vital role and we owe them gratitude for that role. In our view it remains important to maintain an open atmosphere and inclusiveness. The participation of
all stakeholders is therefore vital: NGO’s, industry, international organizations and states, representing all shades of opinion.

- The Treaty cannot be successful without a solid national implementation by its States Parties. The ATT community has to have a clear focus on that condition.
- Reporting is one the most important achievements of the Arms Trade Treaty. To have a significant impact, the Treaty and its reporting needs to be transparent. The Netherlands is of the opinion that the reporting under the treaty should be public in principal.
- It is of utmost importance that the Treaty will have a proper functioning secretariat that will be operational shortly after this Conference of States Parties. Article 18.3 of the Treaty sets out the boundary conditions: a secretariat with a minimized structure, focus on core tasks, being responsible to the States Parties.
- A crucial condition for a properly functioning secretariat shortly after this CSP is the appointment of the first head of secretariat. A decision needs to be taken this week.
- Financial decisions should be taken as a decision of a matter of substance. Consensus should be the basis for all decisions, but for those circumstances, in which consensus would paralyze the development of the Treaty, or drastically reduce the efficiency of the treaty, it should be possible to vote.

[Netherlands support of Trinidad & Tobago candidature]

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is proud to inform the ATT community that, only after careful consideration of the candidatures for the seat of the ATT secretariat, the Kingdom will support the candidature of Trinidad and Tobago for the location of the ATT permanent secretariat. Though all offers were very competitive, Trinidad & Tobago’s candidature has clearly most to offer:

- The location of the ATT Permanent Secretariat in Trinidad & Tobago strongly supports the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty;
- The ATT Permanent Secretariat would be located in a region where the impact with respect to the purpose of the Arms Trade Treaty is most meaningful;
- Trinidad & Tobago has shown great commitment and has a very competitive financial offer;
- And finally, let us not forget that the Kingdom of the Netherlands is also part of the Caribbean region.

[Conclusion]

In summary, the current challenge is to effectively implement the Arms Trade Treaty and work towards its universalization. The Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore calls upon all States Parties
and signatories to the treaty, as well as all other stakeholders, to show flexibility and make the first Conference of States Parties a success.

I thank you.