Explanations of vote on draft resolution L.38. Norway

My delegation takes the floor to explain its vote on draft resolution L.38, entitled "The Arms Trade Treaty".

My delegation voted in favour of this resolution on the basis of our commitment to, and support for, a strong legally binding Arms Trade Treaty. It is of utmost importance that negotiations result in an ATT that effectively regulates trade of all conventional weapons. This is vital to achieve a relevant ATT that makes a real difference on the ground. An ATT must, in our view, include strong provisions on International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights and obligations regarding cooperation and assistance, including recognising the need to support victims.

We are encouraged by the increased interest and support for starting negotiations on the part of the Member States and welcome their public commitment to achieve a strong and robust ATT. We will, in partnership with other states, engage constructively in both the preparatory process and at the UN Conference in 2012.

We encourage the involvement of civil society and relevant UN field organisations in the ATT process. An open and transparent process requires the active participation and critical involvement of civil society. The fifth operative paragraph of L.38 refers to the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty being "undertaken in an open and transparent manner, on the basis of consensus, to achieve a strong and robust treaty". We are concerned that the requirement of consensus could negatively affect the negotiations and reduce the quality of the outcome. Deciding that all states have the right to veto and block the end result from the outset of a negotiating process will seriously undermine the credibility of the process.

In conclusion, we believe that every effort should be made to reach general agreement on matters of substance. Broad support strengthens the end result and will be important for the efficient implementation of a future ATT. We are, however, of the view that operative paragraph 5, as drafted, should not be interpreted as imposing a requirement that decisions are made on the basis of consensus only.

Thank you.