The Arms Trade Treaty

Statement

by

Ambassador Hellmut Hoffmann

Head of the Delegation of Germany
to the
First Committee of the 67th UN General Assembly

on behalf of
France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden
and the United Kingdom

New York, United Nations, 23 October 2012

Check against delivery
Mr Chairman,

I am speaking on behalf of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

We would like to thank Ambassador van den IJssel for the report on the ATT conference he just delivered.

We would also like to thank in absentia Ambassador García Moritán, first and foremost for his leadership and for his tireless efforts during the whole ATT Process, from its outset up unto leading the Diplomatic Conference on the ATT in July this year. During the four weeks of the conference he again demonstrated his outstanding diplomatic skills, originality, determination and good humor. Without him we wouldn’t have come as far as we did during the July Conference.

We would be happy to see him continue his engagement in the process to bring about the treaty.

Let me also express our gratitude to the Chairs of the Main Committees, Mr Bouchaib El Oumni, and Ambassador Paul van den IJssel, for their remarkable contribution to this process.

Mr Chairman,

At the End of the July conference, together with a total of over 90 countries, our delegations stated: “We are disappointed this process has not come to a successful conclusion today. We are disappointed, but we are not discouraged. ... We are determined to secure an Arms Trade Treaty as soon as possible. One that would bring about a safer world for the sake of all humanity.” We owe to ourselves and to the global community a continuation of our quest for a strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty, and we are determined to bring that process to a successful outcome.

Mr Chairman,

The Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom and the Minister for Trade of Sweden issued a joint communiqué concerning the continuation and finalization of the ATT process on the occasion of the opening week of this session of the UN General Assembly. Delegations will find the text of this communiqué attached to the distributed version of our statement today.

In the communiqué our Ministers maintain that “the world still needs an Arms Trade Treaty – one that has the strength and breadth to make a real impact on the problems caused by the poorly-regulated trade in conventional arms. Millions of people around the world suffer the consequences of uncontrolled proliferation and illicit trafficking. Not only are hundreds of thousands of people killed or injured every year but the economic and social prospects of future generations are also undermined. There is a clear case for governments to act and finish the job started six years ago.”
Our objectives have not changed. We believe that States have a responsibility to ensure that arms are not transferred if there is a clear risk that they could be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. The Arms Trade Treaty should be legally binding, but nationally enforced. It should cover all types of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, and all types of munitions. We also want to see a treaty that seeks to increase transparency and prevent the diversion of arms from the legal market to illicit trafficking networks.

We believe the best way to achieve our objectives is for the negotiation process to continue in the framework of the United Nations, and include all relevant stakeholders. It must build on the progress already achieved in July, taking the latest draft Treaty text as the basis for any future discussions. We would like to see a new mandate from the General Assembly of the United Nations to hold a second conference as early as possible in 2013.”

Mr Chairman,

Our delegations believe that the draft Resolution entitled “The arms trade treaty” contained in document A/C.1/67/L.11 sets out a way forward that matches this vision. We therefore fully support this draft.

At the end of their communiqué, our Ministers called upon governments, civil society, the defence industry and individual citizens to lend us their support for continuing negotiations and agreement on an ATT in the framework of the United Nations. “We want a new round of negotiations as soon as possible. An ATT is overdue and we stand ready to complete our work and bring this process to a successful conclusion.”

Our delegations today call upon all other delegations to also support this draft Resolution, thereby enabling the UN to successfully conclude the ATT process.

Thank you, Mr Chairman
Joint Communiqué
by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom and the Minister for Trade of Sweden

A strong Arms Trade Treaty for a safer world: let’s finish our work

The world still needs an Arms Trade Treaty – one that has the strength and breadth to make a real impact on the problems caused by the poorly-regulated trade in conventional arms. Millions of people around the world suffer the consequences of uncontrolled proliferation and illicit trafficking. Not only are hundreds of thousands of people killed or injured every year but the economic and social prospects of future generations are also undermined. There is a clear case for governments to act and finish the job started six years ago.

In July, we came close to adopting a Treaty that would have tackled these problems. Our countries worked hard at the United Nations Conference in New York to negotiate the first ever comprehensive and global Treaty governing the trade of conventional arms. Good progress was made and whilst we were disappointed that we could not conclude the negotiations, we are by no means discouraged. The reasons to act have not diminished.

Over the past years the overwhelming majority of UN Member States have expressed their commitment to agree an ATT. Their number continued to grow during the negotiations in July, and at the end of the conference over ninety countries supported a declaration urging a swift continuation of the process.

Our objectives have not changed. We believe that States have a responsibility to ensure that arms are not transferred if there is a clear risk that they could be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. The Arms Trade Treaty should be legally binding, but nationally enforced. It should cover all types of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, and all types of munitions. We also want to see a treaty that seeks to increase transparency and prevent the diversion of arms from the legal market to illicit trafficking networks.

During its 67th session, the General Assembly of the UN needs to decide how to finish this work. We believe the best way to achieve our objectives is for the negotiation process to continue in the framework of the United Nations, and include all relevant stakeholders. It must build on the progress already achieved in July, taking the latest draft Treaty text as the basis for any future discussions. We would like to see a new mandate from the General Assembly of the United Nations to hold a second conference as early as possible in 2013.

As some of the largest exporters in Europe we bear a special responsibility in this matter. We want to conclude a strong, robust, effective and legally binding Arms Trade Treaty in order to make the world a safer place and reduce the number of innocent victims of armed violence.

Today, we call upon governments, civil society, the defence industry and individual citizens to lend us their support for continuing negotiations and agreement on an ATT in the framework of the United Nations. We want a new round of negotiations as soon as possible. An ATT is overdue and we stand ready to complete our work and bring this process to a successful conclusion.

Mr Laurent Fabius, Minister of Foreign Affairs (France)

Mr Guido Westerwelle, Foreign Minister (Germany)

Mr Giulio Terzi, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Italy)

Mr José Manuel García-Margallo, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Spain)

Mrs Ewa Björling, Minister for Trade (Sweden)

Mr William Hague, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (United Kingdom)