India participated actively in the negotiations for the Arms Trade Treaty. Underlying India’s participation in the extended ATT negotiations was the principle that member states have a legitimate right to self-defence and our belief that there is no conflict between the pursuit of national security objectives and the aspiration that the Arms Trade Treaty be strong, balanced and effective. This is consistent with the strong and effective national export controls that India already has in place with respect to export of defence items.

India expected that the treaty would make a real impact on illicit trafficking in conventional arms and their illicit use especially by terrorists and other unauthorized and unlawful non-State actors. India also stressed consistently that the ATT should ensure a balance of obligations between exporting and importing states. However, as India had stated in the UNGA session on April 2 at the time of the adoption of the treaty text, the treaty was weak on terrorism and NSAs which found no mention in the specific prohibitions of the Treaty. Besides India had pointed Further that the Treaty cannot be an instrument in the hands of exporting states to take unilateral force majeure measures against importing states parties without consequences.

Since the treaty text did not meet our requirements on these counts India was constrained to abstain in the voting on the General Assembly resolution for adopting the treaty. India is undertaking a full and thorough assessment of the ATT from the perspective of our defence, security and foreign policy interests. Till this assessment is completed India is not in a position to take a final view on the ATT. We have therefore abstained on the draft resolution, L.4.

Our position of abstention on PP6 and PP7 of L.30 is consistent with our approach on ATT outlined above.

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