Final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty
General Exchange of Views

18 March 2013

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Thank you Mr President,

Let me start by congratulating you upon your election as President of this important conference. Over the last months you and your team have already done an outstanding and tireless job to bring us to where we are today and we are truly grateful.

We are indeed very close to our goal of a global, legally binding and robust treaty that will regulate international trade in all types of conventional weapons, including ammunition, parts and components.

Throughout the process, Denmark has been a committed supporter of such a treaty. But so, I sense, have most of the countries represented in this room. We are now so close to our goal because we share the basic purpose of the work that is in front of us for the next two weeks. And because we are all sensitive to the hope and trust that so many people in this world living under the appalling consequences of illicit and unregulated arms trade have placed in us today.

Still, during this conference, national positions will have to be aligned, opponents’ arguments accepted and concessions made. Denmark stands ready to work this way, to seek common ground and to make the necessary compromises to get us all, and particularly the major arms exporters of this world, on board. The task is simply too important not to. You can count on our full support under your able leadership, Mr President.

As a European Union Member State, Denmark aligns itself with the positions that will be presented during the conference by the EU, including the wish for a Regional Integration Organisations clause in the Treaty. From our national perspective we particularly attach importance to the following three principles.

Firstly, this treaty is about the victims of the armed violence and conflict that follow from illicit and unregulated arms trade. The centre of our attention should be their rights and plight. Hence, the golden rule with robust transfer criteria ensuring respect for human rights and
international humanitarian law must be maintained. Criteria about risk of corruption, diversion to unauthorized end-use and gender-based violence are equally important.

Secondly, while the implementation of this treaty will be a sovereign national responsibility, the treaty should function as an interactive framework for developing common norms and principles for authorizing arms transfers. This process should involve all participating states as well as civil society and the general public. Hence, national control lists and regular reports on authorizations or actual exports should be shared among the states and indeed made public.

And finally, Mr President, agreeing and signing this important treaty is only half of our job. Afterwards states have to introduce national legislation and establish efficient arms trade control mechanisms. Sanctions and penalties in case of violation must be introduced. Here international cooperation and assistance will be important. I am therefore pleased to announce that the government of Denmark has allotted 1.6 million dollars to assist developing countries with administrative capacity-building to meet their obligations under the treaty.

Mr President,

We have worked on this treaty for almost six years now. The groundwork has certainly been done. Time is now of the essence. This is the final conference. Indeed failure is not an option.

So let us reach out. Let us work hard and fast. Let us finish the job.

Thank you for your attention.