STATEMENT

BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR SUJATA MEHTA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
TO THE
CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, GENEVA
AND
HEAD OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION TO THE
ARMS TRADE TREATY CONFERENCE

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Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your well-deserved appointment as the President of this Conference. We assure you of our full cooperation in the discharge of your important responsibility. Conscious of your call for us to eschew general statements, I wish to confine my statement to highlighting India’s approach on some key aspects of the proposed Arms Trade Treaty.

Mr. President, we have agreed to work on the basis of the July 26 text even though like many others we believe that it is not a basis for a decision on a treaty. There is still considerable distance to cover before we reach that goal. We hope we will have both the time and the environment to give the negotiating text the serious attention it deserves and reach a positive outcome by consensus. In this regard, we wish to acknowledge your efforts to consult widely. Given the complexities of the issues involved and the need to bring on board all stakeholders it is important that we proceed in a manner that promotes the prospects of a treaty that is practical and implementable and is able to attract universal adherence.

In our view, it is important that some critical deficiencies in the current draft are addressed during the negotiations. I will spell out two of the more important ones.

The ATT should 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. Without such provisions, the ATT would in fact lower the bar on obligations of all states not to support terrorists and/or terrorists acts enshrined in various UNSC resolutions and anti-terrorism Conventions. We cannot allow such a loop hole in the ATT.

While the ATT should ensure a balance of obligations between exporting and importing states, the current draft tends to tilt the balance further away from importing countries. The ATT should not be an instrument in the hands of exporting states to take unilateral force majeure measures against importing states parties without consequences. Such a loop hole in the Treaty would have the affect of strengthening the hands of a few exporting states at the expense of the legitimate defense and national security interests of a large
number of importing states parties. To correct the imbalance, rights of importing states should be elaborated and further strengthened. Any other outcome would not only be not acceptable to a large number of countries, but also underline the irony of a multilateral process involving all UN members if in the end it is sought to be used for the benefit of a few.

India remains committed to engaging actively and constructively for a balanced and implementable ATT, which recognizes that arms trade as a legitimate activity for defense, national security and foreign policy interests and in which national implementation and domestic jurisdiction are fully respected. We have a strong stake in such an outcome as one of the largest importers, as a State whose security interests have been affected by illicit transfers of weapons and as a State that has always exercised the highest degree of responsibility in conventional arms transfers. We look forward to working with all delegations to enhance the prospects for a viable and effective treaty of universal acceptance involving all the main producers, recipients and users of conventional weapons.