STATEMENT BY
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REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE ARMS TRADE
TREATY

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In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election to preside over this important Conference and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

After several years of discussion on a possible Arms Trade Treaty, we have now entered a new and serious phase in considering this highly sensitive, complex and controversial subject.

In this Conference, and through deep consideration of all aspects of the subject, whether a universal recognition exists regarding the need for developing a Treaty or other document with different status will be put to the test.

Indeed, the international community has already considered some of the challenges related to international arms transfer and, through developing a number of regional and international instruments, in particular the Programme of Action to Prevent,
Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In all its Aspects, established proper frameworks for addressing such challenges.

While agreeing that international arms transfer in all its aspects deserves serious consideration by the international community, the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with a considerable number of other States, has already expressed its reservations about the advisability of developing an Arms Trade Treaty at this juncture. However, the Iranian delegation engaged constructively in the discussions of the open-ended working group and Preparatory Committee and will continue to do so in this Conference.

The discussions during the Preparatory Committee clearly demonstrated the existence of a wide difference on a real need for such a Treaty and also extremely diverging views regarding issues such as objectives, principles, scope and especially parameters.

In such a situation and in the absence of an acceptable text as a starting point for negotiating this very complex Treaty, preparation of a compilation of concrete proposals of Member States is very crucial for facilitating the negotiations.

Mr. President,

In our view, the only purpose of a future Treaty shall be “to prevent the diversion of conventional arms into the illicit market.” Accordingly, it shall ensure legal trade in conventional arms and respect and protect the right of each State to freely participate in the international transfer and trade of conventional arms, which is essential in ensuring the realization of the inherent right of States to security and self-defense.

In the same way, a potential Arms Trade Treaty shall also fully respect the inherent and inalienable right of each State to acquire -- including from outside sources -- manufacture, produce, retain, export, import and transfer conventional arms, their parts and components, and all technologies, know-how, services, equipment or material related to their manufacture, maintenance, use or import and export.

Moreover, based on the principle of sovereign equality of all States, a future Treaty, instead of protecting the rights and interests of merely major arms-producing and exporting countries, shall strike a balance between the rights, obligations and interests of arms-exporting and arms-importing countries.

Likewise, in accordance with the principle of non-intervention and non-interference in any manner in the internal affairs of any country and matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States, a future Treaty shall fully respect the inherent right of each State to freely determine its defense policies and to individual or collective self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.
As has been stressed by almost all delegations during the Preparatory Committee and this Conference as well, to regulate and have control over the domestic production, import, export, and transfer of conventional arms without any external pressure or interference of any kind is the sovereign right of each State and exclusively its own responsibility. This crucial principle needs to be explicitly reflected in the text of a potential Treaty.

In the context of an eventual Arms Trade Treaty, States Parties shall also reaffirm their obligation to refrain from taking any action whatsoever, inter alia, imposition of restrictions or application of unilateral coercive measures, to undermine the inherent security rights, needs and interests of any State.

In our view, a well-defined and universally accepted scope for a potential Arms Trade Treaty would be a determining factor in the acceptance of its provisions. In this regard, we are not in favor of the inclusion of missiles, Small Arms and Light Weapons and ammunition in the scope of the Treaty. More importantly, the Treaty shall not include parts and components of conventional arms, and related technologies, know-how, services, equipment or material.

The Treaty shall also ensure that, as a result of its implementation, the international transfer of equipments, technologies and know-how for civilian purposes shall not be restricted or denied in any manner.

In terms of activities to be covered by a potential Treaty, we agree only with the inclusion of *import* and *export*. My delegation may also show some flexibility regarding *transit*, if the role of transit country can be defined at the minimum possible level.

In regard to the possible parameter in the Treaty, we believe that they ought to be objective, measurable, applicable, non-discriminatory, and extremely resistant to any political exploitation and different interpretation. In the same vein, setting some parameters that are contentious and lack a globally agreed definition should seriously be avoided. We also believe that the politically motivated decisions of some international bodies on imposition of arms embargo have no place in a potential Treaty.

I would also like to stress that an effective Arms Trade Treaty requires universality. Therefore, formulating a treaty that is capable of securing the ratification of the largest possible number of countries, including key arms-exporting and arms-importing States should be a main objective in our negotiations. Therefore, entry into force of the Treaty shall be subject to its ratification, among others, by 10 major arms-exporting and 10 major arms-importing States.
Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to stress that although there is a wide-ranging divergence of opinion on many issues, but in tackling with the task ahead of us which is extremely challenging and complicated, let's set aside rhetoric and ambitious ideas; adopt a realistic approach; apply the principles of rule of law, transparency and inclusiveness; and instead of prejudging the outcome of the Conference, work with the spirit of cooperation and compromise. At the beginning of our negotiations, let’s agree on one principle that the outcome of the Conference should be a document, which, regardless of its nature, size and format, is in the interest of all participating States and in general acceptable to them.

I thank you Mr. President.