Last week, seventy-four countries jointly expressed their view that the only way to meet the mandate set in UNGA Resolution 64/48 to establish “the highest common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms” is to have a Treaty with meaningful scope and criteria.

We acknowledge the tireless efforts of the President to try and bridge divergent positions. However, for us, certain central aspects of the draft Treaty text circulated on Tuesday do not meet our expectations. We highlight now those of particular concern to us.

Its scope is too narrow. Significant items such as ammunition are not included, or at least not in a meaningful way. And the definition of those items which are included can be left to the interpretation of individual States; for example, it is not clear whether grenades fall within the scope of this treaty. Significant types of arms transfers such as gifts, loans and leases appear now to be excluded from the scope.

The current text does not frame the criteria as if they were for universal implementation. It leaves open the possibility of circumventing internationally recognized standards by weighing their application against other considerations.

We need this Treaty to prevent the authorization of transfers of conventional arms where there is a substantial risk that those weapons would be used for, or facilitate, serious violations of international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, or that they will be diverted to the illicit market and to unauthorized end-users.

The issues we’ve raised above are not the sum total of our concerns with regard to the current draft Treaty. But we see these as the minimum necessary to produce a Treaty which lives up to the expectations which the General Assembly so clearly expressed in UNGA 64/48.

We are hopeful that sufficient time still remains to enable us to secure the improvements to the text which will deliver on the promise of UNGA 64/48.

We look forward to continuing to work constructively with all Member States, and with our President, to address these concerns.