STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GERT ROSENTHAL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GUATEMALA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE ARMS TRADE TREATY
(New York, 6 July 2012)

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to extend my delegation’s congratulations to you on presiding over this important Diplomatic Conference, as well as our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. We are sure that under your able leadership, we will be able to achieve our objective for the Diplomatic Conference: the adoption of a robust Arms Trade Treaty text that can make a difference for millions of people around the world. I would also like to reiterate Guatemala’s commitment with this process.

In addition, my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished delegation of Mexico on behalf of a group of like-minded States.

Mr. President,

Guatemala has always been a strong promoter of a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty. We supported and co-sponsored all the relevant United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on this issue, and we consider that the Treaty must be a mechanism that considerably reduces the human cost associated to arms proliferation at a world level, preventing arms providers from taking advantage of the weakest link in the legal weapons trade in order to divert to the illicit market, by establishing the responsibilities of each of the actors involved. The Treaty must guarantee that all weapons exporters work under the same regulations and it must serve as a weapon to combat the illicit arms market.

Hoping that these three weeks result in a strong and legally binding agreement, we believe that, in order to ensure its applicability and its universality, it must be acceptable to the majority of countries. This agreement should be negotiated on the basis of non-discrimination and transparency, establishing international, common standards for the import, export, and transfer of weapons.

Mr. President,

I would like to highlight some of the points that my delegation considers essential to be included in the aforementioned Treaty:

Firstly, with regard to scope, it should be broad so as to cover all the weapons included in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Also, it must include small arms and light weapons, their parts or components including ammunition, man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and technology specifically designed for the manufacture of weapons and their components. We consider that there should not be any exceptions to any of the aforementioned categories, and that in order to be effective,
the Treaty should cover all weapons transfers, including re-exportation, and include complete regulation on intermediaries in order to avoid the diversion of weapons to the illicit market. Moreover, it should establish provisions for the standardisation of export licenses and other end-user certificates.

Second, it is important that it be established, within the Treaty, that the adoption of decisions relative to the authorisation of transactions shall remain a matter of State competence.

Third, it should also include provisions for the marking of weapons, their parts and components and ammunition, during their manufacture, import, and when being confiscated by relevant authorities, for the purpose of tracing and supervising.

Fourth, it is necessary for the treaty to include a body that can assist States in the implementation of the Treaty, and that would serve as a supervisory mechanism on compliance, in order to foster the mutual trust and coherent implementation of the Treaty.

Fifth, the Treaty should create a mechanism for information exchange among States in order to ensure transparency in the implementation of the Treaty, and it should include information regarding approvals and denials. Furthermore, it should include a system for annual reporting in order to allow States to communicate regarding implementation and, as a means of ensuring transparency, those reports should be made available to other States.

Finally, Guatemala considers that, in compliance with General Assembly Resolution 64/48 and the rules of procedure adopted by this Conference, our work should be carried out in an open and transparent manner on the basis of consensus. However, my delegation hopes that during the Conference the rule of consensus should not be utilized as a de facto veto right in order to paralyse the adoption of the Treaty. For Guatemala, consensus should be an inclusive practice created to address the different positions of Member States, and not a way to exclude all options for debate, thereby altering the negotiating mandate of the Conference.

Mr. President, we have to make the most of this historic occasion and the spirit of consensus and our commitment to the goal of preventing armed violence, in order to achieve an agreement that will result in a robust and significant Arms Trade Treaty.

Thank you.