Statement by

H.E. Ms. Anne Anderson
Permanent Representative

United Nations Diplomatic Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty

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Mr President

As this is the first time that my Delegation takes the floor, I would like to express my appreciation to you for your tireless efforts to date and our gratitude that you have agreed to guide us as we complete our negotiations.

I will be brief in touching on some of the key points of interest and concern for my delegation at this Conference. We will return in more detail to these and other issues at the appropriate time. Ireland also associates itself fully with the Opening Statement made by the European Union.

Mr President

The aim of our negotiations here must be to agree a robust Treaty that sets the highest common international standards to regulate the legal trade in conventional arms.

My delegation will be seeking:

- A Treaty, universal in its application, that sets the highest common international standards for the transfer, including export, re-export, import, transit, transhipment, loans, leases and gifts, of conventional arms.
- A Treaty with common standards that will prevent the illicit transfer, production and brokering of conventional arms and their diversion into the illicit market.
- A Treaty that will contribute to and promote the goals and objectives of the United Nations Charter and enhance international peace and security by preventing transfers of arms that could facilitate serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.
- A Treaty that underlines the obligations of States under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and stresses that disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control are essential for the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation believes that an ATT should cover all conventional arms and related technology, with appropriate language to cover future technical and technological developments. Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) must form part of the Treaty as must all ammunition and other munitions, including explosives designed for military use.
We believe that the criteria to be applied in considering an application should include:

- Compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions on arms embargoes and sanctions or restrictive measures;
- Compliance with other legally binding arms embargoes, sanctions or restrictive measures adopted by regional or sub-regional organisations to which individual States are party;
- Compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law;
- Compliance of the recipient state with international norms and standards, in particular with regard to terrorism, organised crime, and the non-use of force;
- The risk of adverse effect on regional security and stability, including impact on existing or potential inter and intra-state conflicts;
- The risk of diversion to unintended and unauthorised end-users or to the illicit market, including risk of re-export that is not authorised by the country of origin; and
- The likely impact on the sustainable economic and social development of the receiving country and/or region, in particular with regard to terrorism and organised crime.

We would also strongly believe that the impact of arms transfers on gender-based violence, including sexual violence in conflict, should be fully taken into account in decision-making.

Decisions on the authorisation of transactions must remain the competence of the individual transferring State. We support an information-sharing mechanism designed to ensure transparency in the implementation of the treaty, encompassing both approvals and denials (though not on individual applications). In order to promote mutual confidence and consistency in application, there should be robust monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Unduly cumbersome requirements should, however, be avoided.

Mr President

We understand that there may be concerns for some that a new treaty might be unreasonably burdensome. In that context, my delegation can support provisions on international cooperation and assistance where States Parties can offer or receive assistance, on a voluntary basis, bilaterally or through the UN system, related to implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.
We also see a role for an effective and focused Implementation Support Unit in both the implementation and application of an ATT; without such a standing support unit the ATT is not likely to be effective.

Mr President

Universalisation of an Arms Trade Treaty will be crucial to its success. Given the role that some regional organisations currently play or could play in the future in regulating arms transfers in several regions of the world, Ireland believes that the Treaty should also be open for signature to relevant regional and international organisations. The UN Firearms Protocol is a good example of this practice.

Mr President

Our efforts this month will be watched very closely. We are not conducting our negotiations in a vacuum. There has been an exceptionally high level of interest and engagement shown by parliamentarians, civil society, NGOS and the public at large in many UN Member States. There is strong support in Ireland for a robust and legally-binding Arms Trade Treaty from all political parties and parliamentarians from all parties have signed the Parliamentarians for Global Action Declaration on the ATT. We have also engaged extensively with NGOs and civil society on the ATT process. The need for a strong and legally-binding instrument that can regulate the arms trade by setting the highest common international standards is self-evident. We owe our best efforts to those outside this room to achieve this.

Thank You