Mr Chair,

I am seizing the opportunity to make some general points on the ATT, and some points on the final provisions, in addition to the EU statement pronounced earlier today.

1. Having listened carefully these days, a worldwide denial exchange system might seem a bridge to far. However, transparency in arms transfers - not on a voluntary but on an obligatory basis - remains a key element to a valuable ATT. We hope and expect your new draft to continue to reflect this key element.

2. On final provisions, more in particular on entry into force, we have always seen the main value of an ATT as an instrument that addresses the quality of arms transfers, not its quantity. Its aim should not be to limit or restrict responsible transfers. We are not discussing a ban on transfers here. The aim of an ATT is to prevent irresponsible transfers. It is not the 10, 100 or 1000s of responsible transfer we are concerned about, it is the prevention of that one, two or three irresponsible transfers that matter in the context of an ATT.
Therefore we do not see the reason of having a qualitative threshold whereby the ratification of specific countries (large exporters or importers) would be considered more relevant than that of others. As for the number of ratifications needed for the enter into force of an ATT, we do not yet have a fixed position. But for the Netherlands it is clear that there is a relation between the volume of this number on the one hand and the robustness of the treaty on the other hand.

Furthermore, for us the issue of dispute resolution – paragraph 61 in your draft paper – should not be aimed at disputes on denials. Apart from the many practical problems if settling disputes on denials, it is our firm view that nothing in the Treaty should establish an obligation to supply arms.

3. Finally, in your draft proposals on final provisions you point to the PrepComs of Review Conferences as being the forum where State Parties agree on cooperation with NGOs. The Netherlands believes that it is rather obvious that the participation of NGOs in Review Conferences in itself is of great benefit to all, and would therefore not necessarily be subject of discussion in a PrepCom, but rather a self evident part of any future Review Conference. The modalities of NGO participation in the Review Conferences might however be addressed in those PrepComs.
The Netherlands once again commends you for the way you lead us through this process and is looking forward to reading the revised draft paper that you will distribute, convinced of the high level of ambition maintained in it.