Statement
by
Ambassador Paul Beijer
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden
at the meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Arms Trade Treaty
United Nations
New York
16 February 2012
Mr Chairman,

Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement made earlier this morning by the European Union.

We will would like to take the opportunity to highlight some of the positions we will be working on at the upcoming conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Sweden, like many others, assesses that a future ATT will not have the desired impact on the consequences of illegal trade unless both SALW and ammunition are included in the scope of the treaty.

As a producing and exporting country, we also emphasize the importance of including parts and components and technology in the scope of an ATT. This must be so because otherwise it becomes all too easy to circumvent export controls on the final product. There is no intention to negatively affect the possibility of technology transfer through such an inclusion. All the main technology holders already exercise such controls, so we are not really adding anything new. Also, it is our experience that industrial and commercial factors ultimately play a much larger role than export controls in determining which tech transfers take place. That being said, we think an ATT will actually have a beneficial effect on tech transfer, because the receiving country’s export controls are an important factor in assessing permits of this kind.

Mr. Chairman,

We think your draft paper covers all the activities that need to be included in an ATT, but that the activities list you have suggested will need to be tweaked to provide the clarity necessary for a treaty text.

That being said, we will be looking for a much clearer structure to the treaty than that provided by our discussions so far. Your draft, Mr. Chairman, admirably sets out obligations on the control of exports. But the ATT is not an export control treaty, and the many countries that do not produce arms or export them in any large quantities but who will be contributing to the fight against the illegal trade in arms by controlling imports, transit and transhipment, should be given parity with exporters in the treaty text by the inclusion of separate headings clearly setting out obligations in relation to these activities. We don’t think lists of criteria are appropriate for controlling imports, and for transits only the obvious ones of UN or regionally agreed sanctions need be applied, nor should there necessarily be licensing systems. But there should be an obligation to have the necessary legislation and administrative capacity in place to prevent the diversion or arms to the illegal market or the shipment of such arms.

Mr. Chairman,

We have heard at this meeting and at previous PrepCom meetings strong sentiments expressed that exports to non-state actors should be banned outright. We share the concerns related to the destabilizing potential of such exports, but must point out that in many producing countries industry is also a non-state actor. Since cross-border
industrial cooperation is so important today and likely to increase even further, we need to be careful when drafting rules about non-state actors in order not to hamper legitimate industrial cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

These are some of the issues we will be raising at the forthcoming ATT conference. Our aim is to be an active and constructive partner in the important work that will be undertaken in July, with the aim of fulfilling both the task set out for us by the UN General Assembly, and the associated timetable which directs us to finalize a treaty text by the end of the four-week period.

In this context I would like to reiterate the appreciation we have felt for the manner in which you have guided our efforts in the Preparatory Committee phase, and express the hope that you will be continuing to do so during the conference itself.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman