

General Statement at the Third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in Geneva, 11  
September, 2017

Third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty

General Statement by H.E. Ambassador Michael Gaffey

Permanent Representative of Ireland

Geneva, 11 September 2016

Mr President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your Presidency and to offer you Ireland's full cooperation and support.

I would also like to acknowledge the work undertaken by the various working groups, for their dedication and commitment in the preparatory process leading up to this meeting.

I wish to align Ireland with the statement [delivered/to be delivered] by the European Union, and to add some remarks in a national capacity.

Mr President,

The illicit trade, destabilising accumulation and misuse of conventional arms continue to fuel armed violence in conflict-affected, post-conflict and other fragile settings around the world. Small arms and light weapons claim more victims each year than any other kind of weapon. Many of these weapons find their way into the hands of perpetrators through illicit channels, helped by

inadequate (or inadequately enforced) laws and weak control mechanisms at national and local levels.

Ireland, as one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, has been a strong and consistent supporter of the Treaty. The ATT, properly implemented, can represent a major step forward in the international community's efforts to regulate the international trade in Conventional Weapons. We regard the ATT as a vital instrument in the global community's efforts towards a safer and more secure world, as envisaged in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Ireland is pleased to note that since that since the Second Conference, the number of ATT States Parties has risen to 92. We welcome the number of States that have ratified the Treaty so far and we remain committed to promoting universalisation of the Treaty.

For Ireland, diverse representation at the Conference of States Parties is a priority. Different voices and experiences will help guide our work and ensure that implementation of the Treaty effectively meets the many challenges posed by the illegal arms trade. To this end, we are pleased to have once again made a contribution to the UNDP's Sponsorship Fund for State Participation.

Mr President

The strength of the movement behind the Treaty reflects the urgency and seriousness of the issues it addresses. Further, the link between the effective implementation of the ATT and our global

commitments in terms of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals has been increasingly highlighted and we look forward to the thematic discussion on the relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ATT.

The destruction and suffering caused by arms deals that do not meet the Treaty's strong human rights and conflict prevention criteria will continue, unless this Treaty is implemented by every State as effectively and as transparently as possible. We support public reporting and an agreed reporting template for all States Parties.

We also consider the Voluntary Trust Fund to be a vital mechanism which can assist States in terms of the effective implementation of the Treaty. Ireland, like many States present here today, is pleased to have been in a position to provide financial support to the VTF.

Mr President,

The ATT is the first treaty to recognize the links between the international arms trade and Gender Based Violence (GBV). The inclusion of Gender Based Violence as a consideration in arms transfers has set, we hope, a precedent in arms control.

Ireland has given much thought and consideration to the effective implementation of all of the treaty provisions, in particular the GBV provisions and we are pleased to present, for States consideration, a working paper which seeks to explore ways in which these provisions could be effectively implemented. We intend to introduce our paper during tomorrow's conference session and we will expand on its content further at a side event on Thursday. We look forward to working with you all on this matter.

Mr President,

The contribution of Civil Society to our Treaty cannot be underestimated. Civil Society plays a crucial role in awareness-raising and is a key partner in our efforts to encourage universalization and effective implementation of the Treaty. Ireland looks forward to continuing to support civil society's effective engagement in our deliberations. To that effect we will continue our support to the ATT Monitor, as an important contribution to the Treaty's implementation.

In closing, Mr President,

Today as we meet for the third Conference of States Parties, we may be reminded of the relative youth of the Treaty. While this "youth" undoubtedly brings challenges in terms of universalisation, opportunities also exist. At this week's conference, we have a unique opportunity to engage in terms of the design and implementation of effective modern measures to ensure that this Treaty can realise its full potential and live up to its humanitarian mandate. Ireland stands ready to assist in this effort, and we hope that this Conference will agree on concrete measures that will allow the Treaty to have the fullest impact on providing a more secure, more peaceful world.

Thank you.