



**First Conference of State's Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty**

**National Statement by H.E Ambassador Sonja Hyland**

**Cancún, Mexico**

**24 August 2015**

Mr Chairman, Minister,

It gives me great satisfaction to speak on behalf of Ireland today at this First Conference of State's Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. Ireland has been a strong and consistent supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty Process from its beginning. We regard the Treaty as one of the international community's most successful achievements in recent years, and we look forward to our work this week as the culmination of these years of effort.

I would like to acknowledge the great work by Mexico in providing the Provisional Secretariat to the Arms Trade Treaty in this preparatory phase; for hosting this Conference, and to thank Ambassador Lomónoco and his team, as well as the facilitators, for their dedication and commitment in the preparatory process leading up to this meeting. We would also like to thank the hosts of the preparatory meetings, Austria, Switzerland and Trinidad and Tobago for their contribution and for their offers to host the Secretariat location.

Mr Chairman

I wish to align Ireland with the comments already made by the representative of the European Union and to add these remarks in a national capacity.

Ireland, as one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, was truly pleased with the commitment and many early ratifications which allowed the Treaty to enter into force on 24 December last, enabling this First Conference of State's Parties to take place this week, so much earlier than even the most optimistic of us could have foreseen. To ensure the widest possible representation, Ireland has made a contribution to the UNDPs sponsorship fund for participation

The strength of the movement behind the Treaty reflects the urgency and seriousness of the issues with which it is dealing. Illegal and irresponsible flows of arms and conventional weapons are one of the greatest challenges facing our world today. We have all watched with increasing horror, the descent of regions and countries of our world into civil war and chaos, with the resulting humanitarian tragedies which are almost beyond our collective capacity to handle.

The illicit and destabilizing flows of arms to these regions and countries is fuelling and exacerbating all these situations. As the Treaty also states, minimizing the diversion of human and economic resources that are currently devoted to the arms trade will free up significant resources, and enable the international community to achieve another ambition, the post 2015 sustainable development goals. Who can doubt that a strong, effective and universal Arms Trade Treaty is necessary, a fact reflected by the overwhelming

support for the text of the Treaty when it was adopted by the United Nations in 2013.

Our work this week should complete the groundwork necessary for effective implementation of our Treaty with respect to the broad categories of conventional weapons and associated ammunition, parts and components, which fall within its scope. The structures which we are putting in place will reduce the risk of diversion, improve transparency, and protect civilians by reducing the risks of weapons contributing to breaches in international humanitarian and human rights law including the risk of weapons contributing to gender based violence.

Mr Chairman

The role played by civil society in recent years has been a key element in the successes of the international community in our disarmament and non-proliferation work. Many of the advances made by States in this field in recent times, including the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and now, the Arms Trade Treaty, exhibit a common thread which is the constant engagement, encouragement and cooperation of civil society. These success stories, of which the Arms Trade Treaty is a shining example, are shared successes, an example of what the international community can do with consultation, collaboration and cooperation. Ireland looks forward now to the implementation phase of the Treaty and to continuing to enable civil society to carry out a strong and

effective input into our deliberations. In support of this work we have contributed to the ATT Monitor which is to be launched at this Conference later this week

It is Ireland's firm belief that the structures and measures adopted this week to implement the Treaty should faithfully reflect the Treaty's aims and ambitions. This week, we trust that this huge effort by the international community will be rewarded with the putting in place of strong and robust structures, which will enable the Treaty to live up to the great promise that it offers in regulating the international trade in arms, reducing the illicit trade in arms and thereby to save lives and to provide for a more secure, more peaceful world.

Thank you