Remarks

by

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United Nations

Presented
at
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First Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
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Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, allow me to thank the Government of Austria and the Provisional Secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty for inviting the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to participate in this informal meeting.

The Arms Trade Treaty entered into force on 24 December 2014, and currently, we have 130 signatories and 66 ratifications. Since the last update presented in Trinidad and Tobago two months ago, there has been no change in the number of signatories; but four States have ratified the Treaty since: Côte d’Ivoire, Belize, Chad, and Paraguay (in the chronological order of ratification).

The current regional breakdown of signatures and ratifications is as follows:

The African Group leads with 37 signatures, followed by the Latin American and Caribbean Group with 28, the Western European and Others Group with 27, the Eastern European Group with 19 and finally the Asia-Pacific Group with 19.

With regard to ratifications, the Western European and Others Group leads with 21 ratifications, followed by the Latin American and Caribbean Group with 18, the Eastern European Group with 16, the African Group with 9 and finally the Asia-Pacific Group with 2. Overall, two years since the adoption of the ATT, about 34 per cent of United Nations Member States have ratified it.

In relative terms, about 72 per cent of the countries in the Western European and Others Group have already ratified the Treaty. The Eastern European Group follows with 70 per cent, the Latin American and Caribbean Group registers about 55 per cent and approximately 17 per cent of the members of the African Group have ratified. With only two ratifications, the Asia-Pacific Group lags behind as less than 4 per cent of its member States have ratified the Treaty.

Despite the ATT’s record pace of ratification, there are still 64 signatories that have not yet ratified the Treaty. With the first Conference of States Parties taking place in just four months from now, these signatories may wish to expedite their internal ratification processes if they wish to participate in the Conference as full States Parties. As provided for in the Treaty, the Treaty will enter into effect for those States 90 days following the date of deposit of its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

I also encourage those States that have not signed the ATT to consider acceding to it in the near future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is heartening to see the States Parties taking the Arms Trade Treaty process forward. We have had already two informal meetings in 2014, Mexico City and Berlin, and the First Preparatory Meeting in Port of Spain earlier this year. I am also encouraged by the various informal consultations that have been undertaken in New York and Geneva by the facilitators on key issues. Some important outstanding issues should be settled soon, particularly with
regard to the rules of procedure, the Secretariat of the ATT, reporting and the financial arrangements for the conferences of States Parties and the Secretariat. We remain available to contribute to this process, by participating in the meetings, and by providing advice whenever requested.

In this regard, I would like to briefly touch upon our Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, or “UNSCAR”. This is a flexible, multi-donor funding mechanism designed to fund projects aimed at supporting the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (PoA), including South-South cooperation on assistance.

Thanks to the generous contributions of ten countries, UNSCAR was able to fund a total of eight projects through the 2013 call for proposals and eighteen projects through the 2014 call. In addition, two special circumstances projects were funded in 2013 and 2014 to address emergency situations. These projects are proposed and implemented by a variety of civil society organizations as well as regional, sub-regional and international organizations often working in synergistic partnerships. Details on the 2015 call for proposals will be announced next month on UNODA’s UNSCAR website.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all those States that have contributed to UNSCAR and to call on others to also consider contributing to it. This is yet another example of how we can all work together to provide practical support to the States Parties of the ATT in their efforts to ensure that this Treaty will live up to its expectations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The United Nations Secretariat has actively supported the ATT from the inception of its process, including the substantive servicing of the two Diplomatic Conferences by our Conventional Arms Branch in New York. Our Branch in Geneva, our office here in Vienna and our three regional centres have also assisted the ATT in various ways. We stand ready to provide further services if requested.

I wish you a very successful meeting.

Thank you.

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1 The donors of UNSCAR are Australia, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

2 Overall, since its inception in 2013, UNSCAR funded 28 projects for a total of approximately US$4 million.