



## **The Arms Trade Treaty – Implications for Countries that are not Major Producers or Exporters**

Remarks

by

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Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me first to thank the Permanent Mission of Sweden for organizing this event on the occasion of the visit of Her Excellency Madame Margot Wallström to New York. I am honoured by your invitation to join you here today.

Today's topic is an important one, because the Arms Trade Treaty (the ATT) has been – rightly, I might add – held up as one of the bright lights in recent multilateral arms control and disarmament. Only one and a half years after its negotiation, the ATT entered into force on 24 December 2014. As depositary, the United Nations has received 130 signatures of which 61 have deposited their ratification.

In the world of multilateral instruments, that is a truly remarkable achievement and underscores the importance with which the vast majority of States view the need to regulate and bring transparency to the global arms trade.

At the outset, I want to seize this opportunity to commend the States that have already signed the ATT, especially those whose expeditious ratification made it possible for its entry into force.

It would be remiss of me if I did not also give the credit that is due to the many civil society organizations, from all regions of the world, that have worked tirelessly to promote the ATT and to ensure its early entry into force.

States from all regions have signed and ratified the ATT. Dividing the 130 signatory States into the United Nations' regional groupings, we see that 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.

In terms of ratifications, the Western European and Others Group leads with 20 ratifications, followed by the Latin American and Caribbean Group with 16, the Eastern European Group with 16, the African Group with 7 and finally the Asia-Pacific Group with 2.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Achieved in such a short period of time, these numbers are very encouraging and will go a long way to achieving the goals of the ATT. However, given the global scope of the treaty, its complete benefits can only be realized through universal participation.

This is especially relevant for the major arms exporters and importers. China, the Russian Federation and India have not signed the treaty. The United States signed the treaty but has faced a difficult domestic political environment in ratifying it. I do, however, trust that the United States will honor the goals of the treaty and cooperate with States Parties.

Yet the importance of signature and ratification is not limited to the major exporters and importers. Signature and ratification by all States is equally important, because all States have a stake in the success of the ATT.

Let me explain why I think this is the case.

On a daily basis we are reminded of the widespread human suffering caused by the uncontrolled spread of weaponry in conflict regions and the devastating effects on civil populations who are on the receiving end of the misuse of arms.

The killing, wounding and rape of civilians, including children; the displacement of people within and across borders; the recruitment of child soldiers and their engagement in extreme acts of violence; and the endurance of extreme insecurity and economic hardships by those affected by armed violence and conflict.

These are but some of the concrete manifestations of the human cost of the poorly regulated global trade in conventional arms.

Because without adequate regulation of international arms transfers to guide national decisions on arms transfers, it becomes easier for arms to be diverted to the illicit market for use in armed conflict, criminal activities and violence.

Where did Boko Haram acquire the weapons to kidnap nearly three hundred young girls last year? Where does ISIS procure the weapons with which it continues to wage war on the people of Syria and Iraq, with devastating humanitarian consequences? Sadly, these separatists often rely on the illicit arms market that is rooted in the legal arms trade.

This illicit trade is the result of diversion that may occur as a result of a transfer without proper controls, unauthorized retransfers, thefts from poorly secured stockpiles, hand-outs to armed groups, or barter with local security forces involving natural resources.

As an international community, this should be of concern to all of us.

The ATT can play a major role in preventing access to this illicit trade in conventional arms. With the ATT in place, all actors involved in the arms trade must be held accountable and must be expected to comply with internationally agreed standards. The ATT requires exporting States Parties to be more diligent in ensuring that their arms exports are not going to be used, for instance, to violate arms embargoes or to fuel conflict. Importing States Parties will have to exercise better control over arms and ammunition imports in order to prevent diversion or re-transfers to unauthorized users.

As the Secretary-General said, the entry into force of the ATT last month marks the opening of a new chapter in our collective efforts to bring responsibility, accountability and transparency to the global arms trade.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Beyond its States Parties, this treaty is also important to the work of the United Nations. For many years, flows of arms and ammunition into conflict and post-conflict situations have impeded the United Nations from fully discharging its mandate to assist governments and populations, particularly in Africa.

Be it maintaining international peace and security, promoting social and economic development, supporting peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding efforts, monitoring sanctions and arms embargoes, delivering food aid, protecting civilians and in particular children, promoting gender equality, or fostering the rule of law – the United Nations is facing serious challenges and setbacks that ultimately can be traced to the consequences of the unregulated or poorly regulated arms trade.

There is a financial cost to the United Nations as well. Between July 2013 and July 2014, UN peacekeeping efforts, funded by States, carried a price tag of around USD 7.83 billion. In stemming the flow of arms into conflicts and post-conflict situations, the UN could save significant money.

More importantly, there is a human cost to the United Nations, because the illicit arms trade poses a direct threat to our personnel.

Moreover, threats or actual attacks against United Nations staff and those of other organizations are among the leading causes of non-delivery of life-saving humanitarian and similar emergency operations.

A universal ATT will help create a more conducive environment for us to carry out our mandates in the areas of humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding and the promotion of the Millennium Development Goals. It will also enable a safer environment for UN staff and humanitarian actors operating in volatile areas across the globe.

Ladies and gentlemen:

For many States Parties, the task of putting in place the measures needed to ensure compliance with the ATT can be daunting. Under the ATT, even the smallest and less developed State Party will be bound by the same obligations as the largest arm-producing State Party. They will need to establish effective export and import control systems, including reliable processes and tools for certifying end users and end uses. Relevant authorities will need to have a clear understanding of the implications for them and for the country in general. Furthermore, the sometimes imprecise language of the treaty text itself may be challenging when it comes to implement the treaty.

This is a rather long laundry list.

However, one of the key elements of the ATT is the provision of assistance and cooperation. It focuses exclusively on assisting ATT States Parties to implement the treaty, including through the use of UNSCAR, the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, a flexible funding mechanism designed to, among other things, mobilise

resources to support the ratification and implementation of the ATT, and to which our host, Sweden, has been a generous donor.

In other words, joining the ATT does not require a government to already have all the relevant regulations in place. Rather, a government's decision to become a Party to this treaty is a solemn declaration of intent, which will make available the cooperation and assistance to enable any country to put in place adequate administrative provisions to ensure that imported weapons and ammunition will not be misused or diverted.

The United Nations remains ready to work in partnership with all States as well as international, regional and civil society organizations, to assist in further capacity-building efforts for the effective implementation of the ATT.

I do hope this is of some encouragement for those States who already find their administrative and regulatory burdens overwhelming.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am fully aware that the ATT is not a magic wand, one wave of which will suddenly ensure that all future weapons transfers will be responsible and transparent.

I am also aware that the treaty's impact will not be felt overnight. Its implementation will pose many challenges and will require many years of continuous hard work by governments as well as by the international, regional and civil society organizations that are expected to support and keep a watchful eye on implementation and compliance.

A universal ATT has the potential, when implemented faithfully, to become a beacon for State responsibility and improved international security. Universality also does not happen overnight, but it will not happen at all if individual States fail to recognize the benefits provided by this historic treaty and neither sign nor ratify.

Thank you.