



Statement by Iceland
First CFSP of the Arms Trade Treaty
Cancun, 24 August 2015

Mr Chairman,

Allow me to thank Mexico for hosting this first Conference of States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, for its role as its provisional secretariat, its considerable contribution to the ATT preparatory process as a whole as well as to the Treaty negotiations. In particular our thanks go to Ambassador Lomonaco for his leadership and committed efforts.

As an active participant in the negotiations, Iceland warmly welcomed the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the UN General Assembly in April 2013. Iceland was happy to have been the first country to ratify this important Treaty in July 2013 and to apply it provisionally until its entry into force on the eve of Christmas Day last year. Participation in the Treaty by over 70 States already, and signatures by 130 States, at last count, demonstrates that the Treaty is solid and is quickly approaching almost universal acceptance as international law, although admittedly, large exporting States must still be convinced to join. While acknowledging that all States trade in arms, we have all agreed that the international arms trade must be regulated for reasons of international security and the preservation of human rights and human dignity. It is an important addition to humanitarian law as it will diminish the risk of use of arms against civilians, including for the purposes of gender-based violence. The wide application of this Treaty gives it additional weight, including to non-international armed conflicts.

We at this meeting must now take the final steps necessary for implementing the Arms Trade Treaty. There is an urgent need to finalize this process here in Cancun in a practical manner as we decide on rules of procedure and financial rules, on reporting arrangements, the location of the Secretariat and whom should lead it. At the same time we must allow for later adjustments of some these decisions as guided by experience. We cannot expect an immediate, fully formed result on all issues, as when Athena sprang from the head of Zeus.

Allow me to very briefly share some views on outstanding issues, which we will talk about more in our subsequent discussions. I would also like to commend the excellent work by our facilitators on these issues. As to the rules of procedure, the present draft is fine and we can support it. On reporting, our priorities have always been as much transparency as possible while at the same time avoiding duplication or imposing excessive administrative burdens. We feel that our facilitator Ambassador Beijer has done an excellent job and that the present draft should be used by all Member States for the initial reporting phase but allow for possible adjustments in the future. On the institutional and other outstanding issues, which we will come back to, the important thing is finalize all decisions at this conference, as previously emphasized.

Mr. Chairman,

When we have laid the foundation for an effective operation of the Arms Trade Treaty at this Conference, our next task will be to strive for its universal membership, as well as to facilitate its full implementation by all Member States in an effective and cost efficient manner.

Finally, I would like to express Iceland's appreciation to the numerous NGOs that have contributed so significantly to this whole process. As always, Iceland stands ready to do its part to contribute to a successful outcome of this conference.

Thank you.