**Statement 1: Importance of Appointing Gender Equality Focal Points within ATT Framework**

**Introduction to Working Group on Effective Implementation of Treaty**

Thank you, Mr. Facilitator,

Field experiences have shown that irresponsible arms trade directly contributes to the perpetuation of gender-based violence, particularly against women and girls, in contexts of armed conflict and communities affected by insecurity. In many countries, civilians—especially women—face horrific levels of sexual violence related to conflict, exacerbated by the uncontrolled influx of arms to armed groups, non-state actors, and human rights-violating regimes.

The situation in Sudan stands out as a stark example of this reality, where the transfer of arms to Rapid Support Forces has sustained armed conflict across the country since April 2023. This has contributed to a disturbing rise in cases of gang rape and sexual violence against women and girls, leading to severe humanitarian tragedies, including suicides linked to social stigma and fear of shame.

These violations underscore the importance of the effective implementation of Article 7, Paragraph 4 of ATT, which pertains to the necessity of assessing the risks of using arms in committing gender-based violence. A thorough assessment of these risks is a crucial step in preventing arms transfers that could exacerbate these violations or facilitate their perpetration.

In this context, Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights expresses its full support for the proposals of several States Parties regarding the appointment of coordination entities or national focal points on gender equality within the treaty's implementation mechanism. We propose that these focal points undertake the following tasks:

1. Effectively integrate a gender perspective into arms transfer risk assessment policies, in line with Article 7(4).
2. Provide guidance and capacity-building for government officials, particularly those working in licensing authorities, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of gender-based violence and its implications within the arms trade context.
3. Support collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data, including information on proliferation of arms and their impact on women and girls, while enhancing the use of this data in policy-making.
4. Develop tools and guidelines to assist States Parties in incorporating gender considerations into their arms transfer assessments.
5. Promote the full and equal participation of women in decision-making processes related to ATT, including within relevant national and international mechanisms.

We believe that these focal points can play a pivotal role as platforms for sharing information, best practices, and lessons learned, forming a link between national authorities, UN bodies, civil society, and women's organizations, thereby enhancing the treaty's effectiveness in reducing gender-based violence.

In conclusion, the commitment to integrating a gender perspective into ATT is not only a legal obligation but a humanitarian necessity dictated by field realities and our ethical responsibilities to protect civilians in conflict settings.

Thank you.