

Minister Tuomioja's speech in the High Level Event on Arms Trade Treaty

**The Arms Trade Treaty: "Towards entry into force"-
High Level event 25 September 2013
- the UN General Assembly**

**Statement of the Arms Trade Treaty co-authors by
Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland**

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to address you on behalf of the seven ATT co-authors Australia, Argentina, Costa-Rica, Finland, Japan, Kenya and the United Kingdom.

We have gathered here at the General Assembly's ATT High Level Event at a moment of great significance. The Arms Trade Treaty finally exists after a long and complex diplomatic process in which all participants showed exemplary negotiating skills, flexibility and the necessary political will without which no such international undertaking would have been possible. Our special thanks go to Ambassador Moritàn from Argentina who paved the way to the success of the final negotiating phase which was in turn led so eloquently by Ambassador Woolcott from Australia.

Besides all States that participated in the negotiation process, we also pay tribute to the international and regional organizations and the UN Secretariat that brought additional perspectives on the worldwide consequences of irresponsible arms transfers. Finally, we also owe a great debt to the representatives of civil society who played an active role throughout the ATT process helping and pushing us in finding solutions on various issues.

The Arms Trade Treaty is the first ever binding instrument to regulate international transfers of a wide range of conventional arms from battle tanks to small arms and light weapons, ammunition, parts and components. It is a landmark Treaty and serves as a testimony of the United Nations' successful normative work during the past years. We all know that unregulated access to arms has caused worldwide human suffering. In requiring states to display responsibility and transparency in arms transfers with greater respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law, the ATT will have an impact on lives of millions of people, men, women and children.

Like any other international instrument, the Arms Trade Treaty is not perfect. It, however, fulfills our main negotiating aim being a robust Treaty setting the highest possible international standards for regulating transfers of conventional arms. But it does not suffice that we have adopted the Treaty text. The ATT should enter into force as soon as possible. We are pleased to note that already over 100 states have signed the Treaty and six ratified it. We thank all of them for setting good examples to others.

50 ratifications are needed for the Treaty's entry into force. In the General Assembly 154 states voted for the Treaty and many countries are already well advanced in their internal ratification processes.

To meet the important requirement of universality, countries in all continents should become parties to the ATT. Countries both big and small, major arms producing states and developing countries alike should all ratify the Treaty.

A special word about the case of developing states. The ATT is to be implemented at the national level. If states are not able to engage fully nationally, the ATT's impact will be diminished and the Treaty's added value decreased. Some developing countries might need technical assistance to build up and run a licensing and administrative system that meets the requirements of the ATT. All states in a position to do so should consider assisting states in need upon their request and enhance international co-operation and well coordinated outreach in this respect.

Together we were able to co-operate and adopt the ATT after seven years of difficult and complex negotiations. It is with this same spirit of co-operation that we should be able to get the Arms Trade Treaty into force at the earliest opportunity.