



**The Fifth Conference of States Parties
to the Arms Trade Treaty (CSP5)**

**Keynote address by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**



Geneva
26 August 2019

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today the Arms Trade Treaty reached yet another historic milestone, as we are gathered here to commence the proceedings of its Fifth Conference of States Parties. I am honoured to be part of this event.

Allow me first to congratulate Ambassador Jānis KĀRKLIŅŠ on his election as President of CSP5. Mr. President, I am confident that this conference is in good hands under your leadership, and I thank you for inviting me to address this important forum on behalf of the United Nations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend all the States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty for their unequivocal support to the efforts to enhance transparency, accountability and responsibility in international arms transfers.

Civil society organizations, from all regions of the world, helped in bringing the ATT to life. They have continued to play an important role in its implementation. I salute their steadfastness and commitment including to the relentless efforts in ensuring gender mainstreaming in the ATT implementation.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The focus of CSP5 on gender is highly significant. Today, gender-related issues are finally beginning to get the attention they deserve in international deliberations and decision-making processes. I commend Latvia for championing this theme and for convening the panel on gender and gender-based violence, which I will be pleased and honoured to join.

Mainstreaming gender in arms control is not a mere cosmetic objective of achieving gender equality. It is making sure that the voice of women is heard, given the differentiated impacts of illicit arms trafficking and misuse on women and men, girls and boys. Every gun that kills or injures a man, woman, boy or girl, impacts the woman more profoundly as wife, sister or mother. The enormous brunt that women bear warrants their full participation in the search for solutions to gun violence. Integrating gender-responsive solutions in the

implementation of the ATT at all levels will strengthen the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. I will come back to this topic with more details in the panel discussion later today.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Over the past years, we have witnessed a heightening of tensions in the international security environment, often reminiscent of the cold-war era. Concurrently, there is a sense of growing uncertainty in international relations and decreased confidence in the prevailing international order. Meanwhile, the prevalence of conflict has not abated in some regions. These conditions have led to a considerable erosion of trust among nations, which in turn has spurred increases in military expenditures and weapons acquisitions.

According to available data, military expenditures reached a record high of approximately US\$ 1.82 trillion, continuing the worrisome upward trend observed over the past five years. At the same time, while the growth in international transfers of major weapons systems to most regions of the world seem to be relenting, it is estimated that the global volume of international transfers of those weapons was 7.8 per cent higher in the period between 2014-2018, compared with the previous 5-year period, as a massive and alarming 87-per cent growth in exports to the conflict-prone Middle-Eastern region more than offset the decline registered elsewhere.

It is therefore all the more important that the international community remain firm in its support to the ATT. After all, we must not lose sight of the fact that the arms trade is big business. With increased competition in the global arms market, countries face growing pressure to relax their export control policies and procedures, thus increasing the risk that weapons are exported to governments that are likely to use them against civilians or to commit widespread human rights abuses. It is thus critical that the States parties to the ATT and the signatories continue strengthening their commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Treaty. In this context, I am encouraged by the monitoring role that civil society organizations have taken upon themselves, as they keep vigilant eyes on the export activities of the States parties to the ATT.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In less than five years since its entry into force, the ATT has already proved to be one of the most successful multilateral treaties ever, in terms of the speed of adherence by States. More than half of the United Nations Member States are already party to the ATT. As at this date, a total of 104 States have joined the ATT, including Botswana and Canada, for which the Treaty will enter into force next month.

This remarkable achievement should not mask the fact that much work remains to be done. The imbalance in regional participation in the Treaty remains an issue that requires continued attention. Only 8 out of 55 States of the Asia-Pacific Regional Group, or less than 15 per cent of the Group's membership have joined the ATT! In contrast, 25 out of 30 States members of the Western European and Others Group and 18 out of 23 States members of the Eastern European Group are States Parties. The Latin American and Caribbean Group has 26 States parties out of 33 members of the Group, and the African Group has 25 out of 54 States.

The low level of participation of States from the Asia and Pacific Group is particularly glaring. Moreover, in the face of the high levels of growth it should be a matter of concern that only two States of the Middle East, namely Lebanon and the State of Palestine, have joined the ATT. I therefore urge all the States Parties, especially the ones from the Asia-Pacific Group, to work with their peers in the region with a view to persuading them to join the ATT.

We also need to continue our efforts to promote the ATT amongst the major exporters and importers of weapons. Although 6 of the 10 top exporters of arms in 2018 are States parties, the other 4 have control over 62 per cent of the global arms export market. On the import side, only 2 of the top ten importers are States parties to the ATT. I think we need to work hard to change this picture.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Finally, allow me to mention briefly some of the activities that my Office has undertaken to support the ATT, since CSP4. Through our Trust Facility, UNSCAR, we continue to fund projects aimed at enhancing the capacity of States to implement the ATT,

helping States that wish to join the Treaty, promoting ratifications and accessions and other activities aimed at raising awareness of the ATT and the need to join it. Also relevant are the Facility's support to projects aimed at preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their diversion. UNSCAR and the ATT Secretariat have continued to work together, exchanging notes, sharing experiences and collaborating on the selection of funding proposals to maximize synergies and avoid duplication between the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund and UNSCAR. This practice has proven effective in consolidating implementation complementarity between the ATT and the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Additionally, our regional centres in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean continued to collaborate with various partners, including Governments and subregional and civil society organizations to promote the universalization of the ATT in their respective regions and to provide capacity-building and technical support for its implementation.

You can count on the United Nations to continue providing its full and unwavering support to the ATT.

I thank you and wish you a fruitful conference.