Statement on the Arms Trade Treaty
UNGA First Committee New York, October 28th 2014
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Mr Chair,

I speak on behalf of the Control Arms Coalition, the civil society movement that has been campaigning for tough controls on the international arms trade, with members and partner organisations in all regions of the world.

We welcome the progress that has been made so far on the Arms Trade Treaty. When we launched the Race to 50 last year, we called for speedy ratifications. Governments have responded to that, and the momentum behind the ATT remains strong. We also welcome the activities toward implementation that governments have described during this meeting.

But since the ATT opened for signature the world has also been wracked by armed-fueled conflicts and atrocities. From Syria to Ukraine to South Sudan to Central Africa Republic to Israel and Gaza civilians are paying the cost with their lives. The Arms Trade Treaty has been adopted, but the arms trade remains out of control. With a rise, not a decrease in the number of casualties from armed violence, we need effective implementation of the treaty right now. Each day delayed is further suffering. Another parent lost, another child killed, another livelihood destroyed.

There has never been an excuse for the flood of weapons and ammunition around the world that cause untold suffering and misery. But before there has not been an instrument to control that. The success of this Treaty will be judged by the lives saved.

We welcome the statements from many States noting the humanitarian aims of the Treaty and its potential to prevent arms from getting into the hands of human rights abusers, of terrorists, those who repress, and those who commit sexual and gender-based violence. We welcome too the resolution on Women, Disarmament, non-proliferation and Arms Control and it is positive to see so many co-sponsors on this important issue.

The race to 193 now continues. All states should sign and ratify the ATT as soon as possible. But equally important is the establishment of very strong global norms, which make it extremely clear that arms transfers which fuel poverty, conflict, and human rights abuses are unacceptable. This is a normative treaty whose effect will be far reaching beyond its signatories. In particular, articles 6 and 7, the humanitarian heart of the Treaty, must be
applied rigorously to stop those arms transfers which fuel poverty, conflict and human rights abuses.

We must also have an effective first Conference of States Parties. We look forward to working with Mexico and other signatory and ratifying governments to make this successful. The first CSP needs to decide on efficient rules of procedure, effective financing mechanisms, ensuring a capable secretariat and agreeing how to support those States who do not have the capacity yet to ratify and implement.

The many members of the Control Arms Coalition, from all regions of the world will continue, to contribute research and analysis, and to work to support implementation, and to hold governments to account.

We have shown collectively that change can happen. That a vision and an idea can become a reality through campaigning, tenacity and partnership. But this is just the first step. Now we must make it work.

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