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Arms Trade Treaty High Level event
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Mr Deputy Secretary General, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I am proud to speak today on behalf of Oxfam International, and the Control Arms Coalition. Every day we deal with the devastating results of an arms trade that is out of control in our work with communities around the world. Armed violence destroys lives and it destroys hope.

It has taken more than a decade of determined campaigning to get us to where we are today, an Arms Trade Treaty in existence, and a world that has come together and said enough is enough, it is time for change.

Let us all remember that the purpose of this treaty is to save and protect lives. It is a humanitarian objective that has driven the ATT, and this aim must remain as our collective goal as we move from agreeing the treaty, into the next important stage of ensuring its effective implementation. The ATT can reduce human suffering, promote development and help tackle the inescapable link between poverty and armed violence. It can help reduce the suffering that women and children in particular experience during armed conflict.

The most powerful argument for the ATT continues to be the call of the millions who have suffered from armed violence around the world. I know this myself as a survivor of two wars and the regime of Idi Amin.

No-where is the need for an effective treaty so apparent as in the devastating humanitarian crisis in Syria. More than two years of war has killed more than 100,000 people and over seven million are in dire need of humanitarian aid. The number of deaths and refugees has climbed as the fighting has intensified and spread. The conflict has been fuelled by transfers of arms, munitions and ammunition from outside parties. The world is focused on the vital work of reinforcing the norm against the use of chemical weapons. It is just as vital to reinforce the principles of international humanitarian law and human rights law that are at the heart of the ATT, and ensure that there are no further transfers of arms to any warring party in Syria, or indeed to any conflict zone where there is a high risk of misuse.

It is extremely positive that more than half of UN member states have now signed the treaty, and that seven have already ratified. It is also extremely positive that the United States, the world's biggest arms producer and exporter is among the new signatories today.

But it is not enough to sign the treaty. Governments must take their role of implementing the ATT very seriously. This is a treaty about saving lives and transforming the way the arms trade operates. It will require changes in legislation, and even

more importantly, it must achieve changes in behavior.

States must rigorously assess all arms and ammunition transfers, whether they are leaving, entering, or passing through their territory. They must apply the treaty's criteria robustly, and deny arms transfers where there is a substantial risk that they will be used for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including gender based violence. The risks of diversion to illicit users must also be thoroughly assessed, as must the risks of corrupt practices.

Some states will need assistance to be able to implement the treaty, and to set up the necessary export control regimes within their governments. Better resourced governments must support those with less means, both financially and with technical assistance.

The Control Arms Coalition with our more than 100 member organisations worldwide, remains committed to working with governments and UN agencies to support the treaty implementation. Together we worked to make this treaty become a reality. It was not an easy task, and it required great tenacity and perseverance. The next phase will be equally challenging, but we must rise to it together. It is too important not to.

Thank you.