



**Summary of Control Arms' Side Events**  
**UN First Committee 2013, October 22-24**

October 21-25 was a great week for Control Arms! Not only was the ATT mentioned by [# of countries] in statements by their representatives during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee, but it also received a new signature from Cambodia and was ratified by Grenada. In addition, three side events, organized by Control Arms in partnership with the Permanent Missions of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Norway, Iceland, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Costa Rica, Switzerland, Austria, as well as Oxfam, Saferworld, Parliamentarians for Global Action and Reaching Critical Will, were held to showcase the positive implications of the Treaty. The three events were meant to coincide with the conventional weapons debate in the UNGA First Committee and focused on concrete and tangible steps and policies that should now be taken in the areas of implementation and ratification. The events were a great success as the panelists brought up new and interesting points and suggestions to ensure the successful universalisation of the ATT and the audience was enthusiastic and engaged during Q&A.

The first event, “How can the Arms Trade Treaty help reduce armed violence?” was hosted by the Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations on Tuesday, October 22, and focused on the effect of the ATT on armed violence beyond traditional conflict settings. It also explored key international cooperation and assistance requirements to ensure that arms transfers do not have negative impacts on armed violence prevention initiatives. Amb. Terje Hauge, the Norwegian Ambassador for the ATT and SALW, noted in his speech that “armed violence is difficult to define, but easy to recognise.” However, he also pointed out that in reference to humanitarian suffering in Article 1, the reduction of armed violence becomes one of “the central values of the ATT, giving the treaty, a truly human dimension.” Another great point was raised by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations, Ms Shorna-Kay Richards, who centered her statement on the fact that “non-conflict armed violence claims far more lives worldwide than do ongoing wars.” She identified five key ways in which the ATT will make a difference in arms control, including the provision in Article 11 which establishes measures to prevent diversion of conventional arms, the Treaty provision in Article 10, which codifies brokering control, and the provision in Article 9 which codifies transit and transshipment control.

The second side event, “Operationalising the gender-based violence criterion in the ATT”, took place on Wednesday, October 23. The panel was comprised of Amb. Greta Gunnarsdottir, Permanent Representative of Iceland to the UN who also acted as chair. Amb. Matthew Rowland, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Amb. Gerhard Doujak, Head of the Department for Human Rights and International

Humanitarian Law at the Austrian Foreign Ministry, Ms. Ray Acheson, Director of Reaching Critical Will and Ms. Claire Mortimer, Legal Adviser at Oxfam. In his opening remarks, Amb. Rowland discussed that the successful universalization of “the normative values of the gender provisions in the treaty [...] will depend a lot on the extent to which it is championed by the states.” He also encouraged everyone to see the links between the ATT and other regional and international works and instruments related to GBV as they can improve the implementation process and ensure the availability of information necessary to aptly evaluate the impact of arms trade on GBV. Ms. Mortimer followed, enumerating several reasons why the GBV provisions in the ATT are groundbreaking, explaining that they “create an international legal obligation to mainstream gender into all arms transfer decisions” and that “they link to the supply of weapons which create GBV in all forms,” including post-conflict situations. During the Q&A session, an interesting point was raised by Amb. Doujak, who pointed out that with the inclusion of the GBV criteria, under general international law, states will be responsible for private acts of GBV. He warned that the link between weapons and human rights violations could be questioned by certain parties which will pose a challenge to the successful implementation of the ATT. However, Ms. Mortimer clarified that in such instances, the GBV provision may connect into other risk assessment processes. Therefore, even if a violent act will “not considered a serious violation of human rights law, it is likely to fall under at least one of the other grants, particularly the peace and security provision”.

“Ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty and achieving Entry into Force”, the last of the Arms Trade Treaty side events, was held on Thursday, October 24, and explored ratification requirements and initiatives to support smaller states in terms of their ratification processes and implementation capabilities. The event was chaired by H.E. Dell Higginson, New Zealand’s Ambassador for Disarmament, who talked about the necessity for a template that will give “guidance towards what other countries have felt helps incorporate a treaty in the national legislation”. She believes this guideline will make the ATT “more attractive for ministers, members of the parliament and parliamentary drafts people as they will not have to start with a clean slate”. Consequently, Amb Higginson mentioned that New Zealand will work with other states, particularly small states from the Pacific region to create a draft implementation model which should offer guidance to other countries, saving them time and resources. Equally engaging, Amb. Eduardo Ulibarri, Costa Rica’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, advised that in order to achieve the highest standards of interpretation for the ATT, certain areas must be worked on: each state must assume the responsibility of encouraging the universalisation of the Treaty; international cooperation is essential to the successful implementation of the Treaty, countries should work with and support one another as well as cooperate with the civil society since it can play a vital role as partners in enforcing all the provisions of the Treaty. He also acknowledged the pivotal roles played by the civil society during the ATT negotiation process, especially with regards to their work with smaller states such as Costa Rica.

Building on Amb. Ulibarri's speech, Amb. Urs Schmid, the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament, discussed his country's model interpretative declaration that will clarify how certain aspects of the ATT are understood and thus support implementation efforts by other states. Roy Isbister, the Head of the Arms Transfers Team at Saferworld, stated that while governments should focus on ratification, beyond the 50 states minimum requirement, the civil society should continue to play a key role in raising awareness, providing encouragement and support to countries, and facilitating cooperation and assistance, particularly to small states.