Mr. President,

We welcome your paper on “Gender and Gender-based Violence” and the three broad aspects on which it is structured, which provide a holistic examination of how gender can be mainstreamed in the ATT. This is an underrepresented issue in many international debates and this paper sets a high bar for further progress towards the adoption of good practice in this area.

Regarding Representation and Participation:
We see value in your recommendation that States Parties attending the ATT Working Groups and CSPs strive for gender balance in their delegations as well as for the sponsorship programme to actively consider gender balance as a selection criterion. As a matter of good practice, Control Arms will always strive for gender balance, in addition to geographical and linguistic diversity in its delegations at all meetings.

We believe it is also important that women delegates are encouraged and supported to contribute to the discussions. In this regard, we recommend that any analysis of gender balance also considers the level and nature of participation by gender, highlighting how many women were Head of Delegation, how many women delivered a statement at CSP, or how many women Chaired or Facilitated discussions in the Working Groups. It would also be useful to know how many women lead policy-making conventional arms units in ministries.

We also see value in establishing synergies with the interesting work on gender currently undertaken in other disarmament sectors such as landmines and explosive weapons. Lessons learned in other disarmament fora can contribute to these discussions and can strengthen gender initiatives at the national, regional and international level just as the experiences in this forum can support gender initiatives in other frameworks.

The Gendered Impact of Armed Violence in the Context of the ATT:
We welcome the recommendations made under this section, particularly on the collection of gender disaggregated data within national crime and health statistics. We wish to stress that in order for States Parties to have a full picture of the gendered impact of armed violence and conflict, data on the proportionality of harm to civilians should focus on both direct and indirect impacts. Available data indicates that while men are directly impacted, women are disproportionately affected by reverberating effects of armed conflict and violence.

Measurements of harm when considering proportionality need to include longer term impacts that severely affect women and children, and deepen humanitarian consequences of combat, particularly in urban areas.
While significant gaps exist, much disaggregated data on the impact of conventional weapons on civilians is already available from UN agencies, research institutes and civil society organizations. The Control Arms practical guide on how the ATT can address GBV, for instance, provides a comprehensive list of sources and documents from which export control officials can gather information and data concerning incidences of, and responses to, arms-related GBV in the recipient state.

Lastly, considering Gender-based violence risk assessment:
While we welcome the focus on the interpretation of key, yet undefined terms such as ‘overriding risk’, ‘serious’ and ‘facilitate’, we believe that this discussion should not be confined to Art 7.4. These terms are at the core of the wider application of the export risk assessment required under Article 7; any discussion of these terms should reflect all relevant obligations in Article 7.

The role of mitigation measures is also an important consideration under Article 7. Under this provision, exporting states are obliged to consider them as part of the export assessment and decision-making process. These measures can include a wide range of activities and should be undertaken with clear and measurable assessment to ensure that those risks have been mitigated. However, whenever a state party has identified a clear or substantial risk of a serious violation of International Human Rights or Humanitarian Law or violations involving GBV, it is difficult to imagine measures that could effectively mitigate that risk.

This year’s ATT Monitor Annual Report, to be launched at CSP5 in August, contains a chapter on gender and GBV within the ATT. We hope this analysis will facilitate learning between States Parties about the different steps states take when assessing the risk of GBV and we thank those states that have taken part in this research so far.