



Statement: First Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty

The World Council of Churches, a global fellowship of 345 member churches who together represent more than half a billion Christians around the world, has long been actively engaged in promoting the establishment of an effective international legal regime for regulating the arms trade. Every day, local churches in many parts of the world witness the devastating human impact of the poorly controlled flow of weapons and ammunition. We are motivated by the faith calling and moral desire to save lives from this threat.

The swift entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 24 December 2014 made political and legal history. Now, with the forthcoming 1st Conference of States Parties (CSP) in Cancun on 24-27 August 2015, the international community has an opportunity – and duty – to ensure effective and comprehensive implementation of the treaty; to make this document work to save lives in practice. The decisions that will be made in Cancun – on the fine technical details of rules of procedure, financial mechanisms, reporting, and secretariat support – will have tremendous practical import for the lives of millions of people threatened by armed violence. Mexico has the privilege and burden of leadership in this process.

The Rules of Procedure for ATT conferences must ensure that conference decision-making is democratic, representative, transparent and equitable. The challenge of agreeing on robust and productive Rules of Procedure for the ATT brings to mind the challenge which various states including Mexico have championed at the Conference on Disarmament (CD). There is an opportunity at next week's meeting to provide the ATT with the kind of Rules of Procedure which the CD so clearly needs and has repeatedly failed to adopt. The opportunity for the ATT to be different must be seized now.

To that end Mexico – along with the other States Parties – has a key role in ensuring the following outcomes:

I. Rules of Procedure

- All procedural and substantive issues are decided by an effective, majority-based decision making process; there are no mechanisms for deferral;
- NGOs participate fully as Observers;
- Plenary and subsidiary meetings are open, not closed.

II. Reporting

- Regular, comprehensive and transparent reporting is required of States Parties.

III. ATT Secretariat

- An independent, adequately resourced ATT Secretariat provides support for ATT implementation;
- Secretariat staff appointments are based on merit.

IV. Financial rules

- An established fundraising mechanism supports effective and sustainable implementation;
- Funding supports implementation that is robust and is equitable for all States Parties.

V. Strong standard

- ATT provisions are applied in a manner that prevents and reduces the human suffering caused by irresponsible arms transfers;
- Strong and effective implementation helps to establish new norms for the arms trade.

Together with our civil society partners in the Control Arms Coalition, our benchmark for the ATT has always been, and remains, the human impact of the treaty. The CSP must establish itself as a constructive forum, fit for that purpose, from the outset. Otherwise it will have failed in its responsibility to the victims and potential victims of armed violence around the world.

*He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. **Isaiah 2:4***