ICELAND

Special Event to mark the Opening for Signature of the Arms Trade Treaty

Statement by Gréta Gunnarsdóttir
Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations
3 June 2013

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Mr. President,

Today, we are witnessing a historic success, another excellent example of what the United Nations are capable of accomplishing, when we, the Member States, really put our mind to it.

Iceland has from the beginning been a strong supporter of an international and legally binding treaty to bring the arms trade under control. This support has not been restricted to the governmental level but has also been very widespread among the general public, with a démarche from thousands of Icelandic citizens to the Government last year calling for a treaty.

The process leading up to the treaty has also been a good example of how all stakeholders, Member States and civil society can work together towards a common goal.

Mr. President,

For Iceland it was crucial that the treaty would ensure respect for international human rights and humanitarian law. Iceland worked very hard towards having gender based violence and violence against children taken into account in all export assessments.

The relationship between arms trade and gender based violence is very real and we are satisfied with the outcome in the treaty. The treaty will obligate a State Party, as part of the export assessment process, to take into account the risk of conventional arms, ammunition, munitions, parts or components being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender based violence or serious violence against women and children.

Mr. President,

An Arms Trade Treaty is not intended to hinder legitimate trade in arms, it is intended to regulate it. We call upon all Member States to sign and ratify the treaty as soon as possible so as to ensure its universality.

Thank you, Mr. President