We have reached a major milestone after years of works, negotiations, compromises and a few disappointments. We have adopted the Arms Trade Treaty and moved on to a new phase in the process that started a decade ago. Active involvement of the United Nations, governments, non-governmental organisations and industry has brought us to this point. We can be very proud of our achievement both as far as international treaties and arms control are concerned. We have taken a major step forward in controlling the use of conventional arms and small arms and light weapons, the present day weapons of mass destruction, that according to estimations kill hundreds of thousands of people every year.

This Treaty gives us an additional tool to lessen human suffering, to eradicate criminality and a threat to civilian population caused by easy access to small arms and light weapons in particular. The Treaty gives us means to curb irresponsible transfers of conventional arms which have affected security in different states and regions and lead to human rights violations, especially those of women and children.

This Treaty shall enter into force after 50 ratifications, which makes us both believe and hope that the Treaty could enter into force rather soon. We are here to start that process. Many countries are ready to sign the Treaty already now. A lot of decisions are also left to the State Parties and it is important to get the right combination of countries to make those decisions which will also affect the implementation of the Treaty. We need major producers and major importers, small and big countries to ratify this treaty as soon as possible. We also appeal to those countries which abstained or voted against the treaty to overcome their reservations and join the historic tide.

In Finland we have already started the ratification process and we should be ready to ratify in a few months time, in the autumn after the parliamentary approval of the necessary legislation. We would like to ratify the Treaty early since we have been involved with this process since its very beginning.

In Finland we have a functioning export control system and the legislation on export of weapons was updated last year. Nevertheless, even the best systems can be made more effective and efficient to make sure that the letter and spirit of the Arms Trade Treaty is fulfilled.

Mr. Chairman,

The Treaty will become reality only when it enters into force. We encourage as many states as possible to sign and ratify the Treaty and also effectively implement it on the ground. Only through implementation it will make a real difference and have an impact on the lives of millions who have suffered from armed conflicts or weapons in wrong hands, from corruption and lack of transparency in global arms trade. When implemented the Treaty should have a major effect also on development particularly in the least developed countries, where conflicts are a major obstacle to development.

Throughout this process we have had excellent cooperation with non-governmental organisations both back home and internationally. And honestly, without their pressure and work we would not have been able to get this Treaty. I would commend and congratulate on their tireless efforts and work. In the future we need non-governmental organisations to put pressure on governments to sign, ratify and

implement this treaty. We need their ideas how to make best possible use of the time before the Treaty enters into force. We cannot afford to forget the ATT process just because we now have the Treaty. Today we can celebrate but then the real work starts. The Treaty needs to enter into force as soon as possible.

We need to intensify this work and cooperation in order to implement this Treaty and make it as universal as possible. Broadest possible cooperation between all actors: governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, industry and even individuals is needed to bring about this result. We have indisputably a common goal.

Finland is also prepared to assist countries which have difficulties in ratifying and implementing the Treaty thus fulfilling one of the important Treaty obligations.

Finland, as one of the co-authors of the ATT process, will do its best to promote the ATT, its signatures and ratifications and hopes that very soon we can move to the real implementation of the Treaty on the ground. The seven co-authors will also continue their efforts to promote the ATT in different ways, also cooperating with others. Now that we have the Treaty the next challenge is its universalisation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman