

Wassenaar Arrangement - General Working Group
Mexican Remarks
23 - 24 October 2019

Good morning Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Current international threats and challenges linked to arms control need to be addressed, more than ever, from the multilateral regimes and from the principle of common and shared responsibility. Mexico believes that we can actively reach better contributions to address those challenges from the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA).

According to the evidence coming from all regions of the World, the diversion, traffic and indiscriminate access to firearms, small and light weapons, is one of the global challenges that should call for our foremost attention, due to the damage it causes in terms of human lives, national security, human rights, disrupting social cohesion and limiting the sustainable development.

As you may know, Mexico with other Member States have tried to bring to the attention of the WA these concerns. Unfortunately, between the last WA Work Group Meeting and the appointment that today summons us, hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives due to the use of conventional arms, while also hundreds of thousands of weapons have arrived to wrong hands, at the hands of organizations or individuals who employ them to commit criminal, violent extremism or terrorist acts.

Mexico and Latin America face a reality that forces us to formulate an emphatic call to improve the arms trade control, to counteract its diversion and illicit traffic, as well as to promote measures that prevent indiscriminate access to them.

The homicide rates that have been recently registered in Mexico and in the Americas are largely explained by the access that criminal groups have had to arms, including those of high lethality.

More than 200 thousand weapons enter illegally into Mexican territory. Although Mexico has restrictive laws regarding access to and carrying weapons, the proximity to large international arms markets, corruption and the cross-border dynamics of illicit markets have made this one of our major problems and most definitively a national security priority.

Let me share with you that on Saturday, August 3rd, in the city of El Paso, in Texas, a border state with Mexico, an individual encouraged by the concerning growing of hate speech, opened fire indiscriminately with a high-powered arm against Mexican citizens and of some other nationalities. Such an attack against innocent people could be called a terrorist act.

This arm maybe legally bought was previously imported from a European country and it was finally used in a mass attack. In this regard, from the WA we encourage all States to ask themselves whether at the time of conducting risk analysis to export a weapon, ammunition or components, we are asking ourselves the right questions. It is time to recognize that today the chances of serious violations of human rights, criminal acts, violent extremism or terrorism are not concentrated only in places or regions in armed conflict.

More recently, just a few days ago, as a result of simultaneous violent acts committed by a criminal organization in the northern city of Culiacan, in the State of Sinaloa, the urgency to counter arms trafficking was clearly reaffirmed. Such criminals were carrying and firing, for instance, large caliber assault rifles, and Barrett and Browning caliber .50 machine guns. The high-scale fire capability that this and other criminal organizations are able to easily acquire is, again, a matter of deep concern for our country.

The WA can make a difference, so that people in Mexico, Latin America and the Caribbean do not die from the violence perpetuated by criminal organizations, so that there are no more civilians who lose their lives in armed conflicts in Africa or Asia, or in attacks like the ones we witnessed in El Paso, and in many others cities in the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Europe.

Today we require international cooperation, better arms controls, sharing of information and mutual legal assistance to meet this challenge.

A world based on rules and the peaceful settlement of disputes demands the commitment of the main arms producers and markets, with the multilateral legally-binding instruments that prevent the diversion and trafficking of weapons, even if they are not yet part of them.