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**DRAFT WORKING PAPER PRESENTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ELEVENTH CONFERENCE
OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ARMS TRADE TREATY (ATT)**

Universalization as a Priority

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The theme for Argentina's presidency of the Eleventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT CSP11) is "University as a priority". As we mark the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)'s 10th anniversary, universalization of the Treaty remains a cornerstone of its success. Universal adherence ensures the ATT's full implementation, as well as the goals of regulating the international arms trade, preventing diversion, and reducing human suffering caused by armed violence. In the current global context of tensions and conflicts, universalization is not merely an aspirational goal but a necessity for global peace, stability, and accountability.

2. This document aims to provide a new impetus to reinvigorate efforts for universalization. It builds on previous discussions, documents, and recommendations of the Working Group on Universalization (WGTU), emphasizing the importance of cooperation, outreach, and engagement with all relevant stakeholders.

II. BACKGROUND

3. Efforts to promote the universalization of the ATT have been central to the Treaty's implementation since its entry into force. Past Conferences of States Parties (CSPs) have recognized the challenges and opportunities in this endeavour, with particular attention given to the following areas:

- The WGTU was established by the Third Conference of States Parties to the ATT (CSP3) with the objective of leading the process of harmonizing thoughts and ideas on the issue of Treaty universalization with a view to determining the best approaches for taking the issue forward. The work of the WGTU is guided by its Terms of Reference as well as the Working Group's initial Work Plan endorsed by CSP3¹.
- CSP4 acknowledged the benefits of regional targeting, the privilege position of Co-Chairs to reach their respective regions, the importance of contacts with parliamentarians, and the regional events as platform to broaden the range of stakeholders².
- CSP5 adopted the Universalization Toolkit and 'Welcome Pack for New States Parties to the

¹[ATT/CSP3.WGTU/2017/CHAIR/160/Conf.Rep](#)

²[ATT/CSP4/2018/SEC/369/Conf.FinRep.Rev1](#)

ATT', and encouraged stakeholders to translate these documents to target languages, in addition to UN official languages)³

- CSP7 highlighted cooperation and assistance as essential for implementing the Treaty, encouraging States Parties to promote and support the Voluntary Trust Fund. It also pointed out the importance of the Human Right's Council Universal Periodic Review mechanism to improve the visibility of the Treaty⁴
- CSP9 endorsed the proposal of a multiyear plan, focused on Signatory States; established the figure of "Regional Champions"; and highlighted the role of industry, civil society, academia and other stakeholders⁵.
- CSP10 welcomed the workplan for ATT universalization efforts, which emphasizes tailored outreach efforts to engage non-member states, particularly those in regions with low participation rates; recognizes that some regions have lower participation rates and encourages regional organizations and partners to play an active role in universalization efforts; highlights the importance of supporting states in building the necessary legal, administrative, and technical frameworks to implement the ATT, especially for countries with limited resources or expertise in arms trade regulation; and promotes coordination and collaboration among stakeholders and monitoring progress⁶.

III. UNIVERSALIZATION ACTIVITIES BY THE PRESIDENT

4. The work of the President begun immediately after the last Conference. During negotiations on the UN General Assembly resolution regarding the Treaty, the President took advantage of his presence in New York to hold meetings and discussions with delegations from various non-party or Signatory States. It was during this period that the President maintained contacts and was able to announce the good news of the ratification of Colombia and seized the opportunity to engage with countries in the region and neighbouring states. In line with the priorities defined by the Working Group on the Treaty Universalization (WGTU)⁷, exchanges were also held with countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The contributions and cooperation of the Secretariat and civil society, particularly Control Arms and Small Arms Survey, were fundamental, providing valuable information on the interest and status of discussions in specific countries.

5. Advocacy activities for the Treaty also included participation in various events on the margins of the First Committee: The President participated in the events "ATT @10" organised by the United Kingdom, Australia, and the Stimson Center; and "ATT: the Voluntary Trust Fund", organised by the Secretariat. The commitment and proactiveness in enhancing the Treaty's visibility and keeping the debates alive of these different actors was crucial for the President's activities.

6. The 5th Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, from November 24 to 29, was also used to promote the Treaty. The President held bilateral meetings and distributed promotional materials among participants.

7. Parliaments play a crucial role in universalization efforts: they are key actors not only in the Treaty's ratification by Signatory States but also in influencing the decisions of executive branches regarding signature and implementation for States Parties. They can also exert influence through engagements with neighbouring or partner countries. The President has maintained highly fruitful

³ [ATT/CSP5/2019/SEC/536/Conf.FinRep.Rev1](#)

⁴ [ATT/CSP7/2021/SEC/681/Conf.FinRep.Rev1](#)

⁵ [ATT/CSP9/2023/SEC/773/Conf.FinRep.Rev2](#)

⁶ [ATT/CSP10/2024/SEC/807/Conf.FinRep](#)

⁷ [ATT/CSP10.WGTU/2024/CHAIR/801/Conf.Rep](#)

contacts with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and parliamentarians and participated in the following events: a dialogue session with Argentine parliamentarians in September 2024; a presentation before parliamentarians on the margins of the IPU Annual Assembly in October 2024; and an intervention at the 10th Anniversary of the Treaty event organized by the Union in December 2024.

8. The regional approach is key to facilitate exchanges with a focus on shared challenges and opportunities of cooperation and coordinated actions. The “Sub-Regional Meeting on Enhancing Cooperation for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) Universalization and Humanitarian Disarmament,” held in Manila under a Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) project implemented by the Philippines is one prominent example. The President had the honor of sponsoring this event and participating virtually. Such events not only promote and raise awareness of the Treaty through substantive debates and exchanges, but also serve as a clear example of how existing Treaty tools, like the VTF, can be used to coordinate implementation among countries within the same region.

9. The President participated in the webinar, “10 Years of the Arms Trade Treaty: Advancing Universalization in Asia-Pacific,” organized by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and the Small Arms Survey.

10. The President promoted the visual installation in the margins of the High-Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament.

11. The President participated in the event “Amplifying Pacific Voices in Conventional Weapons Disarmament” organized by the Permanent Missions of Japan and Australia.

12. The President has prioritized the revitalization of the Treaty’s official social media channels as a key tool to amplify its message and reach new audiences. This includes producing and disseminating digital outreach materials, such as publications and a new promotional video highlighting the Treaty’s core objectives and key provisions. Designed for sharing by States Parties, partner organizations, and civil society, these materials enhance the Treaty’s visibility on strategic platforms.

13. Regarding future plans, in the coming months, the President expects to: engage with Regional Champions to explore possible joint activities or strategies; strengthen the partnership with the IPU; and continue bilateral contacts with various delegations.⁸

IV. POSSIBLE AREAS TO REINFORCE UNIVERSALIZATION

14. Recognizing the work carried out by the WGTU, the valuable background of the recommendations of the CSPs and documents developed by both States Parties and civil society and academia, as well as the exchanges during activities held by the President in the current cycle, it is proposed that future chairs and the Secretariat take into account the following points:

- **Focused Cooperation: beyond the VTF**

The role of the VTF, a key body in the ATT structure, has been highlighted on multiple occasions, including in the universalization plan approved by CSP10. In addition to this framework, further cooperation actions, mainly exchange of experiences and good practices between States

⁸ The list of activities is not exhaustive, as the President’s initiatives and universalization efforts remain ongoing until CSP11. Future updates will be presented in the President’s reports to the Preparatory Meeting and the Conference of States Parties.

Parties and states that are in the process of accession or have recently ratified, are considered to be extremely fruitful as they allow for closer contact between countries that may have closer realities.

As part of the structure of the Treaty, applying for a project in the VTF requires a certain degree of knowledge about its rules and practical functioning. These exchanges could, in this vein, be useful as a preliminary and introductory step, and an opportunity to disseminate information on the funding options.

The factor of proximity, geographical and political, is critical. Tailored missions by ATT States Parties, specially by the Chair and Co-Chairs, to neighbouring countries, focusing on sharing best practices and lessons learned, can be a turning point in the accession process. There are important opportunities to explore in this aspect in the framework of regional and sub-regional groups, which can be used as a platform for promoting the Treaty.

The exchanges between Colombia, which recently ratified the Treaty, and other States Parties in the region with a longer history of membership in the Treaty like Argentina and Brazil, supported by BAFA and Expertise France are an example of the type of actions referred to in this point.

- **Engagement with Multiple Stakeholders: strategic partnership with IPU**

Active involvement of civil society, academia, industry and parliamentarians has been part of the WGTU discussions. At this point, it is important to take advantage of the growing interest of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in trade and arms control issues, and specifically, in the ATT, which has been part of the Union's agenda and events in recent years. Parliaments can play a pivotal role in building political will, ensuring legislative alignment, and fostering accountability; while the IPU can be a strategic partner to reach the parliamentarians from different countries amplifying the ATT message, providing access to information on national decision-making challenges, and facilitating efforts to support States in their processes of ratification and effective accession to the Treaty. Recent IPU events and collaboration with the Chair offers examples of successful exchanges.

- **Awareness and Communication Campaigns**

Public awareness campaigns could be implemented to bring the ATT closer to society, emphasizing the humanitarian objectives of the Treaty and its impact on reducing armed violence and improving civilian security.

The Secretariat and the Chairs should leverage digital tools and social media platforms to amplify messages about the ATT's goals and achievements. A coordinated and more permanent presence on these platforms can engage diverse audiences and build public support. The 10th anniversary activities under the motto "ATT@10" are a good example of experiences with positive impact that could be replicated.

- **Cooperation with Other Stakeholders**

Various stakeholders operating at national and regional levels can play valuable roles in promoting the universalization of the Treaty, contributing to the achievement of its objectives more effectively. Collaboration with academia, industry, and the media holds great potential to drive forward the Treaty's universalization and should be further strengthened as it enters its second decade in force. On its end, civil society plays a crucial role by organizing outreach events at different scales, raising awareness about effective control over conventional arms transfers, supporting

legislative processes, and providing various forms of assistance to States. These efforts should be leveraged by exploring synergies and complementarities to achieve a more efficient and widespread universalization of the Treaty.

- **Visibility of the ATT in International and Regional Forums**

State Parties and especially the ones chairing the different bodies of the Treaty, could ensure that the ATT is consistently highlighted in discussions at related international and regional forums, such as those addressing disarmament, human rights, and international humanitarian law. Constant presence of references to the Treaty in such meetings enhances its visibility, facilitates access to officials and governments, and helps generate the necessary awareness regarding the importance of the Treaty's overarching objectives, contributing to its universalization.

V. POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS

15. Following the exchanges on universalization during the ATT CSP11 meeting cycle, the Argentine presidency of ATT CSP11 proposes the following items for consideration to be included as ATT CSP11 recommendations to universalization efforts:

- a. States Parties and other interested parties are encouraged, where appropriate and on a strictly voluntary basis, to include the ATT in the agendas of bilateral, regional, and sub-regional meetings, as well as to promote peer-to-peer exchanges, information-sharing missions, and best practices on Treaty implementation and universalization. Such exchanges could be facilitated through regional organizations, joint workshops, or targeted outreach initiatives, particularly to non-States Parties in the process of accession or ratification.
- b. The Secretariat, States Parties, and future Presidents are encouraged to maintain and strengthen the strategic partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), including through joint advocacy activities to engage parliamentarians on the ATT's universalization objectives. Such collaboration could focus on raising awareness, supporting legislative alignment, and fostering political will for Treaty ratification and effective implementation. Experiences from recent IPU engagements could serve as a basis for future cooperation.
- c. The Secretariat and future Presidents are encouraged, within the limits of available resources, to develop targeted awareness-raising campaigns using digital tools, social media platforms, and traditional media to highlight the ATT's humanitarian impact and achievements. Initiatives such as the "ATT@10" anniversary activities could serve as a model for sustained outreach efforts to diverse audiences, including civil society, academia, and the general public.
- d. States Parties are encouraged to continue promoting inclusive engagement with key stakeholders, such as industry, academia, media, and civil society, in support of ATT implementation and universalization. Such efforts could involve multi-stakeholder dialogues, capacity-building workshops, and collaborative initiatives to address challenges related to arms transfer controls.
