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WORKING GROUP ON TREATY UNIVERSALIZATION CO-CHAIRS' REPORT TO CSP11

INTRODUCTION

1. This report to the Eleventh Conference of States Parties (CSP11) to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is presented by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Treaty Universalization (WGTU), Ambassador Carlos FORADORI of Argentina and Ambassador Razvan RUSU of Romania. It is intended to reflect the work undertaken by the WGTU and ATT stakeholders in promoting Treaty universalization since CSP10, as reported during the 27 February 2025 WGTU meeting. The report also includes an overview of the discussions and outcomes of the 27 February 2025 WGTU meeting [*and the briefing by the WGTU Co-Chairs during the during the 20-21 May 2025 CSP11 Informal Preparatory Meeting*]. The reports concludes with the recommendations which the WGTU puts forward for consideration by CSP11 on this topic.

BACKGROUND

2. The WGTU was established by the 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 CSP3 ([ATT/CSP3.WGTU/2017/CHAIR/160/Conf.Rep](#)).

3. Following discussions on enhancing the work of the WGTU, as well as a review of the ATT programme of work and a shift in focus of the Working Groups from theoretical discussions to practical Treaty implementation issues, the CSP10 took a number of decisions that affected the work of the WGTU. The CSP10 firstly welcomed the "WGTU workplan for ATT universalization efforts" which intends to guide the Treaty universalization discussions and outreach efforts of ATT stakeholders during the CSP11 to CSP13 cycles ([ATT/CSP10.WGTU/2024/CHAIR/801/Conf.Rep](#); Annex A). The workplan itself mandates the WGTU to administer the workplan and to monitor and steer its implementation under a recurring WGTU agenda item "implementation of the WGTU workplan for ATT universalization efforts". Aligning the work of the WGTU with the mainstream work of the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation, the CSP10 also mandated the WGTU to conduct structured discussions on national ratification/accession and domestication practices and welcomed a list of practical questions for that purpose ([ATT/CSP10.WGTU/2024/CHAIR/801/Conf.Rep](#); Annex B). This will be addressed under a recurring WGTU agenda item "ratification/accession and national domestication practices" for at least the CSP11the CSP11, CSP12 and CSP13 cycles.

27 FEBRUARY 2025 WGTU MEETING

4. The WGTU held its only meeting of the CSP11 preparatory process on 27 February 2025. A letter of the WGTU Co-Chairs and a draft annotated agenda for the meeting were circulated on 29 January 2025 ([ATT/CSP11.WGTU/2025/CHAIR/810/DrAnnAgenda](https://www.thearmstradetreaty.org/att/csp11.wgtu/2025/Chair/810/DrAnnAgenda)). To facilitate preparation for the meeting, the letter of the Co-Chairs provided several concrete questions for delegations to consider and the draft annotated agenda contained an annex with the practical ratification/accession and domestication questions mentioned above.

ATT Secretariat update on the status of ratifications and accessions

5. The ATT Secretariat kicked off the meeting with a presentation on the [status of participation](#).¹ Since the CSP10, three additional States have become ATT States Parties -Gambia, Malawi and Colombia, bringing the total to 116 States Parties. Twenty six signatory States are not yet States Parties. In terms of the regional participation rate, Asia and Oceania still have the lowest participation rate, as in Asia only 23% of all States are ATT States Parties (with an additional 21% having signed the Treaty) and in Oceania, only 40% of all States are ATT States Parties (with 20% signatory States). This the reason why the regional focus of the WGTU workplan for ATT universalization efforts is on the Asia-Pacific States that have not yet joined the Treaty.

Update on activities to promote the universalization of the ATT

6. The CSP11 President gave an overview of the universalization activities he has undertaken since assuming office. The first activities included facilitating the negotiation of the [2024 ATT Resolution](#) during the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (voted in favour by 159 states, with no votes against) as well as holding discussions with non-State Parties and Signatory States and participating in various events in the margins of the First Committee meeting. Other instances where the CSP11 President addressed ATT universalization included the European Union (EU) Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Conference, the 5th Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty, the Annual Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, a Philippines-led, VTF-funded Sub-Regional Meeting on ATT universalization, a webinar of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) and Small Arms Survey about "Advancing Universalization in Asia-Pacific" and the High-Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament.

7. The CSP11 President also used the opportunity to explain the thematic focus of his Presidency on universalization, in reference to his food for thought document "Universalization as a Priority" that was circulated to all ATT stakeholders on 19 February 2025. Intended to complement the WGTU workplan, this document identifies concrete areas for action, emphasizing the need for tailored outreach strategies, enhanced cooperation mechanisms, and engagement with a broad spectrum of stakeholders. The aim is to have a discussion on the ideas in the document during the CSP11 Informal Preparatory Meeting on 20-21 May 2025, with a view to agreeing on additional recommendations to complement the WGTU workplan.

8. Following this, several States Parties and regional organizations informed delegations about their

¹ An up-to-date overview of the status of participation is available on the *Treaty Status* page of the ATT website: <https://www.thearmstradetreaty.org/treaty-status.html?templateId=209883>.

universalization efforts since the CSP10. These included activities in the context of the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF), the EU ATT Outreach Programme and ASEAN, *inter alia* in Eastern Africa and South-eastern Asia. Mention was also made of the State support to the ATT at 10-project and its recommendations on universalization. Substantively, delegations referred to challenges concerning inter-agency cooperation, political considerations, and uncertainty about the rules and benefits of the Treaty. Delegations indicated that it is important to engage with States about such challenges and to take away misperceptions and focus on relevant topics, which for many States are not export controls, but rather transit and brokering. Delegations also mentioned the relevance of addressing the ATT in high-level meetings whenever feasible and indicated their readiness to assist.

9. In response, the CSP11 President encouraged delegations engaging in universalization outreach to share the challenges and attitudes of targeted States regarding the ATT with the ATT Secretariat. This could facilitate the assessment of States' inclination to join the Treaty and allow for a more tailored approach towards each potential State Party.

10. Next, civil society organisations referred to activities under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross for South-eastern Asian States and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and more general efforts to learn about the reasons why States are not joining the ATT. One organisation referred to the little interest in the ATT in Arab countries and the need for more efforts, including by regional organisations.

11. Some delegations also addressed the food for thought document, welcoming the practical, action-oriented focus of the document, as well as its pertinent recommendations, including on the visibility of the ATT, the use of social media and the involvement of academics and parliamentarians. Delegations also welcomed the mention of regional universalization champions and synergies with other arms control frameworks, and agreed with the need for regional engagement as neighbours find common ground on difficult issues.

Implementation of the WGTU workplan for ATT universalization efforts

12. The CSP11 President introduced this new recurring agenda item by highlighting two important aspects of the broad framework which the workplan offers for ATT universalization efforts, i.e. the regional focus on Asia-Pacific States that have not yet joined the Treaty and its acknowledgment of the need for collaboration and coordination between all ATT stakeholders in their efforts to bring new States into the Treaty. Subsequently, the CSP11 President reported on the outcome of the ATT Secretariat's inquiry with ATT National Points Contact about States Parties' interest to act as regional universalization champions, informing delegations that so far, no State Party had expressed interest in assuming such role. Concerning other tasks in the workplan, the Co-Chairs had included the question in their letter how the guidance in the workplan could be concretely incorporated in States Parties and other stakeholders' universalization efforts. During the meeting, the CSP11 President posed the following concrete questions: i) whether and how the focus on Asia-Pacific States and signatory States has impacted the planning of universalization activities; ii) how the likelihood of a State joining the ATT should be assessed; iii) whether the guidance from the ATT Universalization Toolkit is used when conducting universalization activities; and iv) whether delegations have promoted the VTF, the ATT sponsorship programme and participating in ATT meetings as part of their universalization outreach.

13. In response, a few delegations addressed the workplan more generally and emphasized the need

for coordination of efforts, the value of providing ATT profiles of targeted States and of instrumentalizing the ATT sponsorship programme and the VTF. Delegations also emphasized the importance of regional approaches and expressed support for the regional universalization champions initiative.

Ratification/accession and national domestication practices

14. The CSP11 President introduced this second new recurring agenda item with a short outline of the topic and the working arrangements for these structured discussions that are the same in the three ATT Working Groups. To start, Mr. Deepayan BASU RAY, Director of the UNRCPD, was invited to deliver an introductory presentation and share his perspective on ATT ratification, accession and domestication in the focus region of Asia-Pacific, including on practical challenges and constraints, and to describe UNRCPD's work on universalization. In his presentation, Mr. BASU RAY highlighted the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific region and explained how UNRCPD facilitates dialogue, provides technical support, and fosters partnerships to advance arms control and ATT universalization. He provided examples of ongoing initiatives in Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, and Papua New Guinea, where UNRCPD is supporting legal reforms, inter-agency cooperation and regional cooperation. Mr. BASU RAY also addressed the challenges of geography and political priorities in the region, stressing the need for continued efforts and integration of ATT-related work with broader global aims like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Finally, he reaffirmed UNRCPD's commitment to supporting ATT universalization and implementation efforts.

15. After this introduction, representatives of Colombia and Norway shared their national experiences and challenges with ATT ratification and domestication. This included describing the legislative and judicial proceedings and the actors involved. Colombia in particular addressed the International cooperation (with States in its region and beyond) and international assistance it has and is receiving to establish and develop their national control system. Norway mentioned the input of civil society and industry in the process and indicated that while no legislative changes were deemed necessary, it did update internal guidelines to reflect key ATT provisions.

16. In the exchange that followed, other States Parties shared their national ratification, accession and domestication experiences. Some delegations explained how necessary legal reforms and challenges related to parliamentary work, such as mandatory consultations with relevant stakeholders, can impact ratification or accession timelines. This applies pre-eminently for States without pre-established national control systems, which is why universalization efforts should go hand in hand with attention to technical assistance needs. In light of the experiences that were shared, delegations also reiterated the need for regional cooperation and engagement, indicating that common concerns and challenges can make conversations more meaningful.

CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD AFTER 27 FEBRUARY 2025 WGTU MEETING

17. In terms of next steps in the process towards CSP11, the Co-Chairs identified two deliverables to work on. The first deliverable concerned a working paper of the CSP11 President with a number of recommendations to the CSP11. The second deliverable is progress in the implementation of the WGTU workplan.

18. To obtain these deliverables, the CSP11 President first reiterated the call to States Parties to consider assuming the role of regional universalization champion pursuant to the WGTU workplan and

asked for further comments and suggestions regarding his food for thought document. In addition, the President and the ATT Secretariat planned activities to advance work on both deliverables as well as on their shared purpose of developing or refining strategies to enhance and streamline universalization efforts. These included informal discussions to identify key barriers to universalization and possible solutions, strengthen engagement with non-State Parties and seek input about targeted States ratification status and ATT profile, as well as an anticipated informal meeting with regional universalization champions to explore assessments of States' inclination to join the ATT, strengthen collaboration and refine regional engagement and targeted outreach strategies.

WGTU BRIEFING DURING 20-21 MAY 2025 CSP11 INFORMAL PREPARATORY MEETING

19. During the CSP10 Informal Preparatory Meeting, on 20 May 2025, the Co-Chairs presented the draft of this report and its recommendations.

20. In response, delegations expressed support for the draft recommendations and the identified deliverables. As delegations did not propose any changes regarding the draft report and its recommendations, no changes were made.

21. More generally, delegations reaffirmed their commitment to universalization and mentioned the importance of promotion, outreach and assistance as well as the coordination efforts. Delegations particularly welcomed the recommendation regarding regional cooperation and engagement and called for tailored strategies to promote ratification/accession in the Asia-Pacific, African and MENA regions as well as towards signatory States. Delegations also shared recent universalization activities, in particular towards the Asia-Pacific region. Delegations further highlighted the role of transparency and capacity-building in increasing Treaty acceptance and agreed that addressing misconceptions, political sensitivities, and implementation challenges is key to advancing the Treaty's universalization.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CSP11

22. Based on the above and considering the work undertaken by the WGTU to fulfil its mandate for the period between CSP10 and CSP11, the Working Group recommend that CSP11:

- 1) *Expresses its appreciation to the States Parties that have accepted to assume the role of regional universalization champion pursuant to the WGTU workplan for AT universalization efforts and encourages other States Parties to follow their example;*
- 2) *Reaffirms that regional cooperation and engagement are key instruments to impel States to join the Treaty and calls on all States Parties and other ATT stakeholders involved in ATT universalization efforts to include relevant regional universalization champions, regional organizations and other regional actors in their universalization activities;*
- 3) *Calls on all States Parties and other ATT stakeholders involved in ATT universalization efforts to inform the ATT Secretariat well in advance of their anticipated bilateral, multilateral and regional activities, as requested in the workplan, as well as to share their findings and the results of their efforts with the Secretariat, where feasible and appropriate; and*
- 4) *Continues to encourage States Parties to volunteer to give presentations about their national*

ratification/accession and domestication practices, taking into account the practical ratification/accession and domestication questions that were welcomed by the CSP10 for that purpose.
