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## ATT SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME

### Background

Due to the impact of conventional weapons on development, and since 2007, in follow up to the report by the UN Secretary-General on Member States' views on the prospects for an arms trade treaty, UNDP has been engaged in the process of developing a robust international instrument to regulate the international trade in conventional arms. To this end, throughout the process of Preparatory Committees and the ATT Negotiating Conferences in July 2012 and in March 2013, as well as in light of universalization efforts, UNDP contributed with substantive inputs from its evidence based violence prevention programming in support of the activities of Member States. Additionally, to help raise awareness of these and to enable representative participation allowing for an inclusive debate UNDP also administered sponsorship programmes for low-income and developing states.

During the 2014-2015 Preparatory Process lead by Mexico as acting Chair up to the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of States Parties (CSP1), UNDP was again asked to administer sponsorship programmes for the five informal and formal consultations and preparatory meetings held in Mexico City, Mexico; Berlin, Germany; Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; Vienna, Austria and in Geneva, Switzerland respectively, as well as for the CSP1 itself, held 24-27 August 2015 in Cancun, Mexico.

At the CSP1, amongst other, States Parties decided “...to entrust the Management Committee, with the support of UNDP Geneva, to assist with the administrative tasks as necessary, in support of the work of the Conference.”<sup>1</sup> To this end, and in the interim of an establishment of a Secretariat as outlined by the Treaty, UNDP was assigned several administrative tasks by the Management Committee and requested to undertake necessary actions to implement CSP1 decisions, including the administration of a sponsorship programme for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of States Parties (CSP2). At the CSP2, held 22-26 August 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland, States Parties to the ATT decided, upon the recommendations of Germany in its capacity as lead on consultations on the ATT Trust Fund and related matters, to retain the current sponsorship arrangements for the ATT under UNDP administration for the following two years (2017-2018) with a view to review these arrangements at the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of States Parties (CSP4)<sup>2</sup>.

Since 2014, after the deposition of the 50<sup>th</sup> instrument of UN Member State ratification to the ATT, UNDP has administered, under the auspice of the ATT, in total 14 sponsorship programmes<sup>3</sup> facilitating the participation of low-income and developing states to meetings of the Conference, that otherwise would have faced difficulties attending and thereby jeopardizing inclusive, representative discourse. During the process, it also proved vital for the Treaty content itself in ensuring the participation of

<sup>1</sup> paragraph 32, [Final report](#) CSP1

<sup>2</sup> paragraph 24, [Final Report](#) CSP2

<sup>3</sup> 2014 - Mexico City, Mexico (8-9 Sept), Berlin, Germany (27-28 Nov), 2015 - Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago (23-24 Feb), Vienna, Austria (20-21 April), Geneva, Switzerland (6-8 July), CSP1 Cancun, Mexico (24-27 Aug), 2016 – CSP2 Geneva, Switzerland (22-26 Aug), 2017: 1<sup>st</sup> Informal meeting (5-10 Feb), 2<sup>nd</sup> Informal meeting (6-7 April), 3<sup>rd</sup> Informal meeting (29 May-1 June), CSP3 Geneva, Switzerland (11-15 Sept), and 2018 - 1<sup>st</sup> Preparatory meeting (6-9 March), 2<sup>nd</sup> Preparatory meeting (29 May-1 June), CSP4 Tokyo, Japan (20-24 Aug).

particularly affected states that have experienced first-hand the consequences of, and challenges presented by illegal and irresponsible arms trade.

### ATT Sponsorship Programme rules

In 2015, a list of eligible countries was developed in discussion with the then acting chair, Mexico, donors and other partners. States eligible to nominate participants to the programme were suggested to subscribe to the criteria of

- 1) being *listed as overseas development assistance recipient* by OECD-DAC<sup>4</sup> and,
- 2) as stated by preference of donor stakeholders, having *signed or ratified the ATT* and by so *acting in support of the purpose and intent of the Treaty*.

Following the example of other sponsorship arrangements, the programme was set to include the provision of:

- *An economy class, and most direct roundtrip air ticket*<sup>5</sup>
- *Applicable allowances*<sup>6</sup>, and
- *Suitable accommodation*<sup>7</sup>

In addition, based on the advice and experience of UNDP, a suitable group *travel insurance policy* is offered and issued to participants of the programme to ensure that the costs rendered by any eventuality do not negatively impact on the fund of the sponsorship programme.

Additionally, as background to the programme objective, the main aim is to support the participation of *state delegates*. However, at times and then based on specific donor requests, the sponsorship programme have also included *representatives from civil society organizations*. The latter have then also been subject to the ODA criteria, rendering eligibility to representatives from organizations with headquarters and registration in low income and developing states.

All representatives—both from state and NGOs, are requested to submit an *official Note Verbale/nomination letter* issued by relevant Ministry or supervisory function of institutions indicating the request for sponsorship of the nominated delegate. This procedure has also served to coordinate multiple requests from same country but different ministries as well as the legitimacy of CSO representation.

### Sponsorship Programme allocations

As a rule of thumb, and in the absence of a policy by the Conference, sponsorship allocations for state delegates have been done on a “first come, first served” basis as far as resources allows. Budgets were set at meeting the parameter of one (1) state delegate per eligible country, e.g. approximately 85 pax per meeting.<sup>8</sup> Only rarely however, have the budgets for a full scope of the sponsorship programme been met.

<sup>4</sup> The OECD DAC publishes a revised list every 3 years; <http://oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>

<sup>5</sup> In adherence to UNDP rules and regulations.

<sup>6</sup> Applicable per diem and terminal allowances for airport transfers, in adherence to UNDP rules and regulations.

<sup>7</sup> Based on available, standard 3-star hotel accommodation and in adherence to UNDP rules and regulations.

<sup>8</sup> The OECD DAC list for the period 2014-2017 contained 146 countries, the current list which is valid until 2020, contains 143 countries.

The limited allocations for NGO representatives has been done by UNDP together with an informal selection Committee consisting of NGO representatives. This informal Committee was established to ensure a transparent selection process and the best distribution of available funds for qualified NGOs and to ensure coordination with potential other sponsorship arrangements by NGOs themselves. The Committee members were selected among organisations who work *raising awareness of the object and purpose of this Treaty, and in supporting its implementation*, through active collaboration with states and the ATT Secretariat and is currently composed of five NGO representatives from *Control Arms, GRIP, Nonviolence International Southeast Asia, SIPRI and the Small Arms Survey*. On voluntary basis they have agreed to assist UNDP in reviewing and selecting NGO applications to the UNDP sponsorship programme against agreed criteria.

To ensure a broad-based engagement and transparency around the selections and to avoid conflicts of interest, NGO representatives have forfeited the eligibility of members of their organisations to benefit from the sponsorship programme under UNDP. At any time, however, should the NGO representatives choose to do so, they can discontinue their engagement in the Committee and become eligible if other eligibility criteria are met.

In the effort to ensure wide participation at meetings, information relevant to the UNDP sponsorship programme availability under the ATT, either for preparatory meetings or the CSPs, has been posted on the ATT website and shared through the ATT Secretariat mailing list ensuring that the information reach all potentials beneficiaries. In parallel, UNDP, as per standard practice, has also circulated the information through its wide network of Country Offices with the request for senior UN management to bring the sponsorship programme to the attention of government counterparts.

In total, since 2014, the sponsorship programme sustained **497** delegates<sup>9</sup>.

- **2014:** 2 informal consultations, which in total met the sponsorship of **81** delegates (59 states delegates, 22 NGO representatives).
- **2015:** 3 informal consultations and CSP1, which in total met the sponsorship of **249** delegates (177 state delegates and 72 NGO representatives).
- **2016:** the CSP2, which in total met the sponsorship of **40** delegates (38 state delegates and 2 NGO representatives).
- **2017:** 3 informal meetings and CSP3, which in total met the sponsorship of **61** sponsorships (56 state delegates and 5 NGO representatives).
- **2018:** 2 preparatory meetings and CSP4<sup>10</sup>, which in total will meet the sponsorship of, at least, **66** sponsorships (58 state delegates and 8 NGO representatives).

## Donors and funds

UNDP actively mobilise resources and fundraise for voluntary contributions from development partners. In addition to meeting states at CSPs (during the interim period of UNDP managed secretariat), UNDP has undertaken numerous bilateral consultations with partners to inform the development of the Sponsorship programme and its financial proposals. These proposals have been circulated to states and partners both by UNDP and the ATT Secretariat. When interest is mobilized and materialize, UNDP signs and manages, with each individual donor, separate contribution agreements. These are in line with UNDP procedures and standardized cost share agreements where available, and through individually negotiated terms when necessary.<sup>11</sup> Further to legal parameters,

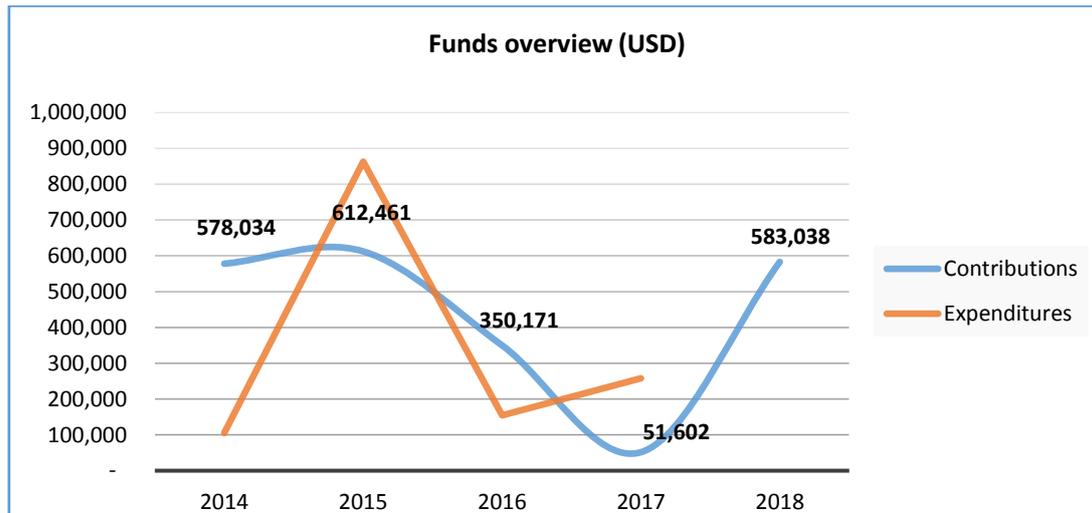
<sup>9</sup> As the CSP4 sponsorship programme is still open for applications, data is outstanding as of 20 July 2018, (the deadline for submission of this report established by the ATT Secretariat).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Most individual UN Member States have reached agreement with UNDP on standardised cost share agreements that are then used for any contributions to activities managed by UNDP, including ATT related activities.

these agreements also contain any applicable donor preferences for quotas and/or targets outlined by defined **meetings** (CSP, preparatory meetings, ad hoc meetings, etc.), **geographic regions** and/or **groups** (state, NGO, gender specification, etc.)

Over the years, the UNDP Sponsorship programme to the ATT has been financially supported by generous donor support and contributions from thirteen (13) countries (*Australia, Austria, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United Kingdom*). UNDP values each financial contribution regardless of size and emphasizes the broadest—as opposed to largest possible level of contributions, as of particular *value for the ownership of the programme* and also in *support of the universalization of the Treaty*.



The graph above shows incoming contributions to the programme over the five consecutive years with a total income of US 2,175,306.<sup>12</sup> Against actual expenditure a more balanced horizontal axis appears. Consequently, in real time, funds have had a more even spread throughout the time period since 2014. This has been possible by negotiating no-cost extensions with individual donors allowing the transfer of unspent funds into the following fiscal year, “replenishing” the sponsorship programme for coming meetings.

When looking at the total income of US 2,175,306, a simple divide onto the total number of delegates sustained through the programme is not a valid breakdown to understand costs accrued per sponsored person for comparative purposes. Programme specificities apply. First, with geographic representation delegates travel different distances, some intra-regionally, and some inter-continentially. Secondly, and notwithstanding geographic distance, the price of ATKs fluctuate over time. The cheapest economy class ATK procured was recorded at US 149, the most expensive economy class ATK thus far amounted to US 6,538. Adding to this, UNDP can only purchase once the delegate has agreed to an itinerary proposed and can confirm that necessary visas have been obtained (so that tickets are not procured in vain should visas not be obtained). Any delay in communication may impact on the ticket price. Experience show that the closer to a meeting the actual purchase is done has most often entailed a higher price than the original quote.

Third, several eligible delegates require visa, both for transfer and for the final destinations. This is facilitated through the network of relevant embassies around the world but very few states have

<sup>12</sup> 2018 financial figures are interim estimates as not all contributions have been received yet.

universal coverage. CSP4 is no exception and some sponsored delegates will need to travel off-route to a third destination at which the relevant consular services can be found, remain there for the number of days needed to acquire necessary visa(s) and then either return to country of origin before embarking for the final destination, or continue by alternative routes. These situations impact significantly on costs. Such cases are luckily not too many but with tightening immigration rules in many locations, they are definitely on the rise. In addition, UNDP applies cost recovery for percentage of administrative staff costs.

In keeping costs down, whenever possible UNDP applies centralized procurement of accommodation. This implies that, combined with the standard procedure of RFQs to obtain a minimum of three qualified quotations and cancellation policy negotiations, UNDP procures the number of rooms envisioned, by economy of scale to a reduced price. Accommodation needs are then monitored against incoming sponsorship requests with the aim of 100 per cent occupancy rates by utilizing the cancellation policy. This is, by far, the most economic option. Only when this is not possible has UNDP opted for monetized per diems inclusive of accommodation with the understanding that delegates both find, and pay for hotel rooms themselves. Occasionally delegates with other preferences and plans have requested cash transfers of per diems for accommodation. When centrally procured however, this is not possible as it leads to sunken costs for the programme.

As of 20 July 2018, the current, open Sponsorship programme for CSP4 in Tokyo has not yet been finalized<sup>13</sup> and travel arrangements are ongoing. UNDP can therefore not confirm the balance of financial contributions for this year. Invoices for air tickets and accommodation has not been finalized and any number provided would be rough estimates. UNDP will however report to each donor against the respective individual and signed agreements and any remaining balances will be disposed of in consultation and agreement with them<sup>14</sup>. In addition, UNDP will provide a final report to the ATT Secretariat that covers the entirety of 2018 upon closing the Sponsorship programme and its associated accounts.

## **Lessons learned**

UNDP would like to take this opportunity to provide some lessons learned and also highlight a few issues based on questions we have received from states. These could be summarized under three areas of a) sponsorship programme rules, b) representation in sponsorship programmes and, c) queries to circumvent the administration of programme entitlements.

### *a) Sponsorship programme rules*

The rules for the Sponsorship programme were developed in accordance with the wishes of states, donor representatives of these and the Management Committee with unity on eligibility criteria, per diem applicability and the standard of accommodation.

Over the course of the five years, UNDP has raised, and also received queries from states concerning the allocation of sponsorships on first come, first served basis. This approach has been used in many other sponsorship programmes under the frameworks of the cluster munitions process, the nuclear disarmament negotiations and other humanitarian disarmament efforts. Together with initial eligibility criteria, the approach has been used during early stages of individual processes, often in combination with a high frequency of meetings, and high interest among states to join negotiations. Some state delegates however, have felt that combined with slow in-country bureaucracy in nominating delegates, certain opportunities have been missed and slots have filled up with what

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<sup>13</sup> Application deadline: 23 July 2018

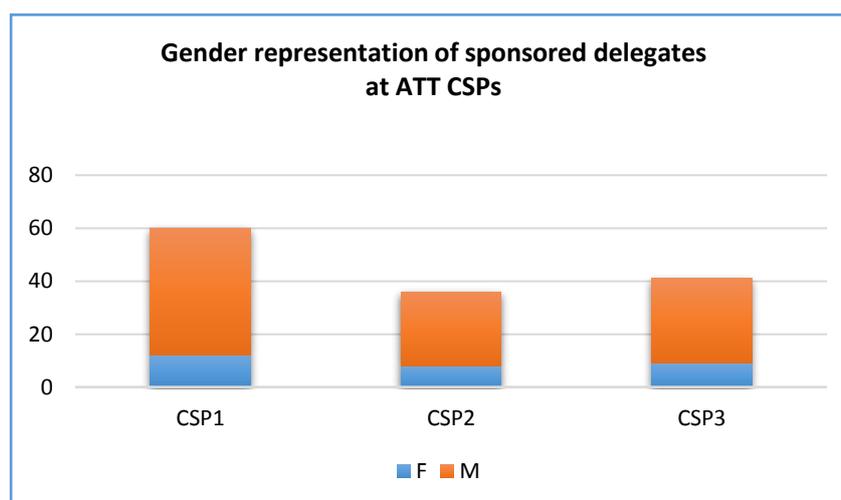
<sup>14</sup> Legal considerations prohibit UNDP to transfer any remaining balances from existing contribution agreements to a third party.

critics' call "regular appearances". Some of these considerations have been addressed and balanced by geographic earmarking applied by some donors. In the absence of a clear policy set by the Conference it has however been difficult for UNDP to apply such a rule to unearmarked funds as geographic earmarking can also work conversely, should an eligible and interested country not match with the earmarking of remaining funds.

However, as time progress, legal instruments mature and the funding for sponsorship generally flattens out, it is natural that eligibility criteria evolves. Our suggestion would be to review the programme eligibility criteria and establish a sponsorship programme based on the merit of specific implementation and universalization efforts with targets established by the Conference itself, and advocacy to elaborate broader Treaty engagement and ownership of the programme. This would imply that also states not party, nor signatory to the Treaty would be eligible to apply but also and importantly, with the opportunity to work more closely with such countries on universalization efforts and voluntary adherence to provisions of the ATT, set against for example, the broader SDG implementation efforts.<sup>15</sup>

#### *b) Representation in sponsorship programmes*

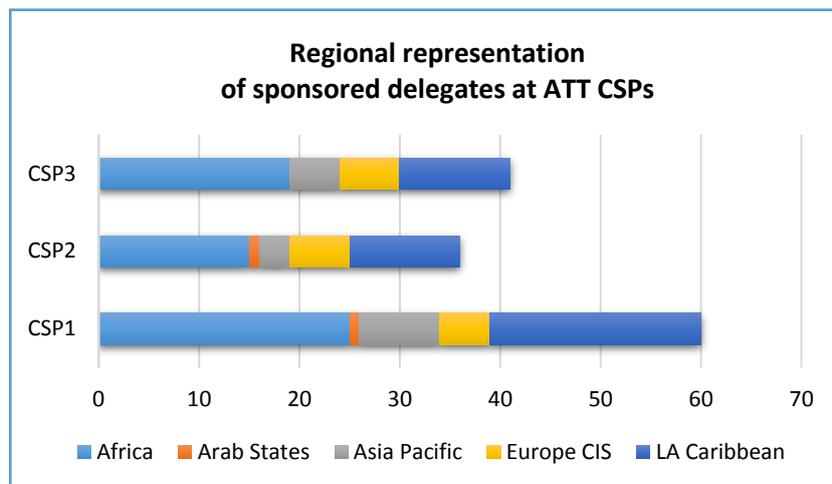
To ensure balanced and inclusive political processes, UNDP encourages the participation of female delegates in its communication to UNDP Country Offices, however, the official composition of delegation rests with the relevant governments themselves. We have noticed from experiences from other sponsorship programmes, that gender balance generally increases only when funds are earmarked with the objective of obtaining more female delegates. Indeed, when receiving a contribution to the sponsorship programme for the nuclear negotiations that required a minimum of 30 per cent allocated to female delegates, the balance rose from the average of a composite of sponsorship programmes of around 22, to 41 per cent female participation of the total number of sponsored delegates. Passing the message to recipient states that allocations are tied to gender considerations makes it easier to enforce. It has also proven easier to achieve gender balanced delegations under the sponsorship programme when two (2) delegates are sponsored from each eligible country. Additionally, such an approach could possibly also be better in terms of capacity development.



<sup>15</sup> **SDG 16.4.** By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime, with **Indicator 16.4.2:** Proportion of seized and small arms and light weapons that are recorded and traced, in accordance with international standards and legal instruments.

Similarly, the regional representation in conferences increases when contributions are earmarked with certain regional preference. The challenge is to balance this as donor contributions are individual and not necessarily coordinated to ensure the full picture.

Comparing regional representation across ATT eligibility in 2018 with the OECD DAC list percentage of geographical representation it is evident that, as the ATT programme follows eligibility tied to Treaty adherence, a few regions fall short, most notably in the Arab states and in Asia Pacific region. Following the rationale of extending the sponsorship programme for universalisation purposes also to states not party, nor signatory to the Treaty, a consideration of a more balanced geographical representation may be of interest and benefit other regions and countries also highly affected by illicit and irresponsible arms trade.



|  | ATT eligibility 2018 |            | 2018 OECD DAC list |            |
|--|----------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
|  | # of countries       | % of total | # of countries     | % of total |
| <b>Africa</b>                            | 36                   | 43         | 47                 | 33         |
| <b>Arab states</b>                       | 4                    | 5          | 14                 | 10         |
| <b>Asia Pacific</b>                      | 12                   | 14         | 36                 | 25         |
| <b>Europe CIS</b>                        | 10                   | 12         | 18                 | 13         |
| <b>Latin America &amp; the Caribbean</b> | 22                   | 26         | 28                 | 20         |
| <b>Total</b>                             | 84                   | 100        | 143                | 100        |

*c) Queries to circumvent the administration of programme entitlements*

Occasionally, UNDP has been approached by delegates from eligible states enquiring of the sponsorship entitlements and the possibility to bypass these. It has been a priority to maximize the number of sponsored delegates within the available budgets. Consequently, we have applied the most efficient, often more simplified and accessible approach to procure accommodation for all sponsored delegates. This approach implies that, within the entitlement, only a reduced per diem is provided with the objective of covering only those meals not provided for by the hotel or the organizer.

Arguments that support this approach include that last-minute sponsorship requests often entail very expensive reservations managed by the delegates themselves during busy periods, not least as experienced in Geneva. We have also noted that when booking individually, some delegates have faced challenges in complying with hotel requirements to secure bookings with internationally accepted credit cards. Cost benefit analysis of the many sponsorship programmes administered by

UNDP has unequivocally supported this approach which, with the scale of economy, often also has allowed us to allocate additional sponsorships towards the funds “saved”. The same principle of centrally procured accommodation also applies for larger groups of UN staff when travelling to staff gatherings and retreats.

In closing, UNDP would like to use this opportunity to thank the host of the CSP4, Nippon-koku, the State of Japan, for the collaboration over the last few months. We would also like to thank all states, including those who have supported the programme at any time since 2014 and, those who have benefited from the sponsorship programme administered by UNDP over the past 5 years. It has been a pleasure to work with you. We hope that this report may help inform future sponsorship programmes in support of the Arms Trade Treaty.

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