

Arms Trade Treaty  
**Ninth Conference of States Parties**  
Geneva, 21 – 25 August 2023

**REVIEW OF THE ARMS TRADE TREATY PROGRAMME OF WORK  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: INITIAL DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (PROPOSAL)**

**BACKGROUND**

1. The Eighth Conference of States Parties (CSP8) to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) held from 22 - 26 August 2022, 'tasked the Management Committee to review the ATT programme of work, in consultation with States Parties and Signatory States, and to submit a proposal to the Ninth Conference of States Parties for a decision. In undertaking this task, the Management Committee is directed to take into account the following: foreseen ATT universalization and implementation objectives; optimisation of the ATT internal support processes; foreseen financial efficiencies; and the status of the disarmament calendar'

2. Following the CSP8 decision, the Management Committee elaborated a background paper to support its internal deliberations and to facilitate consultations with States Parties and Signatory States as well as with other ATT stakeholders on the task of reviewing the efficiency of the ATT programme of work. The Management Committee background paper made visible the Committee's approach to the task and highlighted some of the elements that the Committee would like to assess in its endeavour to prepare a draft proposal to CSP9 for consideration and decision.

3. On 31 January 2023, the Committee's background paper was circulated to ATT stakeholders together with all other documents for the February 2023 ATT meetings. On 17 February 2023, the background paper was considered and discussed during the First CSP9 Informal Preparatory Meeting. In introducing the paper, the Committee mentioned that the purpose of the background paper was not to provide solutions or answers to the task at hand but rather to seek stakeholders' views and comments on elements or questions that it would like to further evaluate. This would inform the initial draft recommendations (proposal) that the Committee plans to submit to the May meeting and ultimately to CSP9 as directed by the previous Conference.

**OVERVIEW OF MAIN THEMES EMERGING FROM THE 17 FEBRUARY MEETING**

4. During the 17 February 2023 meeting, delegations considered and commented on the Committee's background paper in response to the draft elements for consideration put forward by the paper. Hereunder is the Committee's general overview of main themes emerging from the 17 February 2023 meeting

**Current ATT institutional framework and process**

5. There was a general recognition that the current ATT institutional framework and process have functioned well thus far and have produced positive and useful outcomes. At the same time and in varying degrees, delegations expressed a need for some form of optimization of the current process, in terms of meeting times, working methods and topics for discussions, while remaining flexible to

explore other possible options.

6. During the discussion, some delegations established a link between the review of the ATT programme of work and the current low level of participation in the ATT Working Groups and CSP preparatory meetings. In their estimate, this demonstrated a clear need for the review of the ATT working methods including the configuration of the ATT working groups.

#### **Approach to the review exercise**

7. In terms of approach to the review exercise, several delegations emphasized that changes to the current programme of work need to be well considered and discussed in a transparent manner. In that respect, the impact of potential changes needs to be carefully assessed in relation to the persisting Treaty implementation challenges as well as other elements associated with this. It was further mentioned that any changes to be made should not be fixed but kept under review to ensure the ATT remains fit for purpose.

8. Other delegations noted that whilst the ATT financial situation requires urgent attention, the review exercise should not be pursued as a cost cutting exercise but should rather focus on practical Treaty implementation by States Parties. In this regard, urgent issues, priorities and objectives associated with practical Treaty implementation need to be identified and streamlined to form the basis of a revamped ATT discussions.

#### **Configuration and substance of the work in the working groups**

9. On the configuration and the substance of the work in the working groups, delegations called for a more direct focus on the practical implementation of the Treaty. In this context, reference was made to the Diversion Information Exchange Forum (DIEF), both in terms of its work on diversion, as well as in its approach, focusing on exchanges of concrete/practical information, which could be a model for other discussions. Generally, the content and type of discussions should shift to practical Treaty implementation measures and exchanges on national implementation cases/experiences. This includes discussions on national Treaty implementation efforts and the humanitarian “real life” impact of the Treaty. It was noted that discussions concerning national capacities to implement the Treaty should also consider opportunities provided by the ATT internal mechanisms of support e.g. the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF). In terms of engagement of States, it was mentioned that the presentation of national working papers showcasing national experiences should be encouraged (as this was considered a useful practice in the early CSP cycles).

10. With respect to the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation (WGETI), it was noted that this Working Group could benefit from a more holistic mandate. It should allow for a progressive discussion on implementation efforts by States Parties including successes and challenges. This approach to discussions on practical Treaty implementation will place into context issues of international cooperation and assistance amongst States Parties as contemplated in Articles 15 and 16 of the Treaty. To better focus its discussions and highlight the interconnectedness of Treaty articles, the WGETI must focus on limited topics as running/facilitating many topics in parallel is proving to be unsustainable. When developing new tools or guidance documents, where deemed necessary, the WGETI should first take stock of existing resources and avoid duplication.

11. Regarding the Working on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR), it was mentioned that this Working Group could retain the current discussion topics, but that those discussions do not require a full day meeting.

12. Concerning the Working Group on Treaty Universalization (WGTU), delegations supported the coordinated and practical approach to Treaty universalization proposed in the draft paper presented during the February 2023 meeting by the WGTU Co-chairs. It was noted that the draft paper highlights the VTF as a useful tool to promote Treaty universalization.

#### **Format of working group meetings and working methods**

13. Delegations emphasized that the format and working methods of working groups meetings need to allow for inclusive, collaborative, effective, efficient, and broad participation, and that virtual or hybrid meetings should play a role in this endeavour.

14. Concerning engagement during the intersessional periods, some delegations expressed interest in small group meetings of interested delegates or regional meetings. It was noted, nevertheless, that currently, the intersessional periods are too short for meaningful intersessional consultations. Furthermore, it was indicated that the Information Exchange Platform in the restricted area of the ATT website could also play a role in facilitating informal consultations, as an addition to efforts to maintain the momentum of the ATT process.

#### **Reduction of (*in-person*) meetings (meeting rounds and meeting times)**

15. Several delegations indicated that a one *in-person* session of up to five days of ATT Working Groups and CSP preparatory meetings, based on a revised configuration of ATT working groups, should be adequate to sustain effective and efficient ATT discussions.

16. A single session of up to five days of ATT Working Groups and CSP preparatory meetings could be organized between March and May of each year. This arrangement of ATT meetings can facilitate a timely circulation of meetings documentation and afford delegations adequate time to prepare for meetings. Additionally, this can also enable ATT office holders to facilitate intersessional informal consultations, as deemed necessary, with ATT stakeholders on issues to be canvassed in forthcoming ATT meetings. The timing of a single session of ATT meetings should take into account the disarmament calendar and other UN related main events in order to accommodate the constrained capacity of delegations.

17. Delegations supporting a single session of ATT meetings elaborated that the reduction of the current meetings could or should be supplemented by informal intersessional consultations. That could include small group meetings of interested delegates and regional meetings.

18. Some delegations mentioned that the benefits of the current two sessions ATT meetings concerning the effective preparation of Conference outcomes should not be lost during the review exercise but should be taken into account when considering reducing the number of meetings.

#### **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE'S GENERAL OBSERVATION**

19. At the conclusion of the agenda item on the review of the ATT programme of work, the CSP9 President mentioned that that the Committee was going to consider inputs and comments received on the background paper and thereafter elaborate initial draft recommendations (proposal) to be submitted to the May 2023 informal preparatory meeting.

20. Following the 17 February 2023 meeting, the Committee convened and carefully considered the main themes arising from this meeting as presented above.

21. In general, the Committee observes that the current ATT institutional framework and process have functioned well thus far and produced positive and useful outcomes suitable for circumstances foreseen in the 2016/2017 period. However, the current context including Treaty membership and implementation challenges necessitates optimization of the current process in terms of meeting times, working methods and topics for discussions.

### **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE'S DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (PROPOSAL)**

22. On the basis of input from the 17 February 2023 meeting and its own observation of the current tempo of the ATT process, the level of participation and focus of ATT discussions, the Committee would like to present the initial draft recommendations (proposal) below.

#### **Centrality of practical Treaty implementation**

23. To meaningfully assist States Parties in the effective implementation of their Treaty obligations, practical Treaty implementation issues at a national level must take a centre stage in the ATT programme of work. In this regard, the content and type of discussions should shift from current model to practical Treaty implementation measures and exchanges on national implementation cases and experiences.

#### **Configuration and substance of the work in the working groups**

24. To facilitate prioritisation of practical Treaty implementation, discussions within the Working Groups should focus on national implementation efforts by States Parties including successes and challenges, and the real impact that the Treaty makes as contemplated in Article 1 of the Treaty (object and purpose). To sustain this approach to ATT discussions and to place in context international cooperation and assistance amongst States Parties, the configuration and substance of the ATT working groups should be revisited and focused as follows:

- a. The Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation (WGETI) should adopt a more holistic agenda/mandate and allow for a progressive discussion on implementation efforts by States Parties and bring to bear national practices. To streamline its ongoing work on practical implementation and underscore the interconnectedness of Treaty articles in practice, the discussion topics of this working group should be arranged along the general phases/stages of Treaty implementation. At the same time, the working group should also provide a space for States Parties and other stakeholders to raise any current implementation issue for discussion, as appropriate.
- b. The Working on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR) could retain the current discussion topics but within a rationalised time allocation and established interface arrangements with WGETI. To that end, this working group is expected to feed into WGETI discussions in so far as transparency and reporting is concerned with a view to highlighting that transparency and reporting are important features of Treaty implementation effort. Post CSP9, this working group is expected to explore possibilities of aligning its work with the mainstream work of WGETI.
- c. In the context of its proposed coordinated and practical approach to Treaty universalization, the Working Group on Treaty Universalization (WGTU), is expected to feed into WGETI discussions in so far as issues of Treaty universalization and related aspects are concerned. Whilst recognising that Treaty universalization is not per se Treaty implementation, it is noted that Treaty implementation support arrangements can influence ratification of and accession to the Treaty. In view of this, as part of the current discussion on enhancing the work of the WGTU,

this working group is expected to explore possibilities of aligning its work with the mainstream work of WGETI.

- d. The Diversion Information Exchange Forum (DIEF) is of a different nature than the WGETI. The purpose of the DIEF is not to discuss measures that States (should) take to implement the Treaty, but to share *operational information* about concrete cases of suspected or detected diversion. In that respect, the work of the DIEF would remain complementary with that of a reconfigured WGETI. The Terms of Reference of the DIEF also address the relationship between the DIEF and the WGETI, allowing the DIEF Chair to orally brief the WGETI on any major trends and general lessons learnt that came out of a DIEF meeting, and on general issues that could benefit from policy discussions within the WGETI (Rule 22). The DIEF and its usefulness is scheduled to be reviewed at CSP10. This review could allow to further align the work of the DIEF with the mainstream work of the WGETI.

### **Number of ATT Working Groups and CSP preparatory meetings**

25. The current status of operation of the ATT in terms of membership, implementation challenges, congested disarmament calendar, constrained capacity of delegations, and envisioned rigour of foreseen ATT discussions motivate for the rationalization of ATT meetings per each CSP cycle. In this context, **the Committee recommends holding one *in-person* session of up to five days of ATT Working Groups and CSP preparatory meetings per cycle.** The one *in-person* session of ATT meetings must have in built flexibility to allow for:

- a. CSP Presidents to set dates for ATT meetings that account for the disarmament calendar and other UN related main events.
- b. CSP Presidents to, in consultation with relevant ATT office holders and the ATT Secretariat, set the number of meeting days and times that suit the agenda for discussions.
- c. Integration of workstreams of the various ATT subsidiary bodies for purposes of improved efficiency and outcomes.
- d. Elimination of duplication of efforts and avoidance of repetition of discussions.

26. To allow for inclusive, collaborative, efficient, and broad participation in ATT discussions, the proposed single session of ATT meetings should be supplemented by informal intersessional consultations that could include small group meetings of interested delegates and regional meetings. In this regard, informal intersessional consultations could take place virtually or in hybrid format or using the Information Exchange Platform located in the restricted area of the ATT website, as appropriate.

27. It is foreseen that the proposed single session of ATT Working Groups and CSP preparatory meetings will bring to bear the following advantages:

- a. In-built flexibility to accommodate changes in circumstances, ATT priorities, topics for discussion and level of participation.
- b. Timely circulation of meetings documentation
- c. Possibility for delegations to utilise time at their disposal to prepare adequately for meetings, and to encourage (more) capital experts involved in the practical implementation of the Treaty

to attend the meetings.

- d. Possibility for ATT office holders to conduct intersessional informal consultations virtually or in hybrid format and/or through the Information Exchange Platform, as appropriate.
- e. Realisation of efficiencies in resource allocation and utilisation.

## **CONCLUSION**

28. The Management Committee is of the view that the draft recommendations (proposal) on the review of the ATT programme of work does not constitute a final end product on this subject. Rather this remains a work in progress that should be further adjusted, refined and reviewed in the period ahead taking into account practical experience gained in implementing this model of ATT programme of work.

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