



31 January 2023

Issued by: the Working Group on Treaty Universalization

Original: English

Arms Trade Treaty**Ninth Conference of States Parties**

Geneva, 21 – 25 August 2023

DRAFT PAPER**ENHANCING THE WORK OF THE ATT WORKING GROUP ON TREATY UNIVERSALIZATION (WGTU)**

1. Supporting the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has been a standing task for CSP Presidents since the Treaty came into force in December 2014. The Third Conference of States Parties to the ATT (CSP3) formally established the “Working Group on Treaty Universalization (WGTU)”, which is co-chaired by the current and previous CSP Presidents.
2. Since then, the WGTU Co-chairs have coordinated efforts undertaken to promote the ATT with a view to enlarge the number of ATT States Parties. Currently, the WGTU guides the focus of Treaty universalization efforts based on stakeholders’ inputs without the benefit of a medium to long-term view of how Treaty universalization could be advanced. Therefore, the WGTU work is based on a short-term perspective only as each CSP Presidency has two years within which to undertake its universalization efforts.
3. Current assessment demonstrates that national processes to ratify or accede to the Treaty can take several years. The extended nature of time required to ratify or accede to the Treaty stems from the unique national circumstances of each State. Those States who can benefit from assistance to support their domestic ATT ratification or accession processes often indicate a need for an individually tailored approach. Due to the current lack of improved coordination within the various bodies within the ATT such support cannot be rendered as required.
4. CSP8 requested Germany to further work on this issue and present recommendations to CSP9, based on the following elements:
 - a. Mid-term planning and coordination
 - b. Stepped approach
 - c. Regional champions
 - d. Demand driven vs. support oriented
 - e. Coordination of efforts inside the ATT
 - f. Coordination with other entities
5. This paper seeks to unpack these elements, prepare recommendations for CSP9, and provides a first proposal for the distribution of work in an amended process regarding Treaty universalization. It will be developed further during the intersessional discussions leading up to CSP9.
6. All elements of this paper are interlinked and build upon each other. Although not a strict sequence, the shift to a multi-year approach needs to be endorsed first as it serves as the foundation of the other elements of discussion.

Elements for further discussion (as per CSP8):

Mid-term planning and coordination	
Status	<p>Recent experience demonstrates that it usually takes a longer period for States to finalize national political processes necessary to accede to the Treaty. In order to establish and sustain continuity in providing support to States during the entire process, it would be beneficial to develop a mid- or long-term work-plan, which would enable the WGTU to provide ongoing support to national ATT ratification or accession processes over an extended period.</p> <p>To support States in this phase, more information on the status of national ratification/accession process including potential challenges in the national decision making processes would be necessary as no two states share the same challenges. With this information at hand, individual assistance, tailored to national circumstances, could be possible.</p>
Recommendation	CSP to endorse the WGTU proposed approach of undertaking Treaty universalization efforts in a multi-year format.
Rationale behind	While the yearly rotation of regional focus was a logical approach in the early years of the Treaty, the reality today shows that the process of accession needs a lot more time and specific attention. Therefore, a more focused and strategically directed approach would be beneficial in directing the universalization efforts towards geographical regions of less ATT participation. With this approach, the WGTU will be in a far better position to provide recommendations, inter alia on the regional focus of the universalization efforts, to the following CSP.

Stepped approach	
Status	<p>In order to better utilize available resources, the WGTU should consider developing a structured, stepped approach that may focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Signatory States that have demonstrated a strong likelihood to join the Treaty in the immediate future, 2. Signatory states that may join the Treaty in the coming years, and 3. other States inclined towards signing/joining the Treaty in the coming years; and 4. All other States thereafter. <p>The information pertaining to States will be managed in a sensitive manner and not open to a public discussion.</p>
Recommendation	<p>WGTU should focus its efforts primarily on Signatory States as they have already demonstrated political commitment to the Treaty, while remaining open and welcoming to other States interested in the Treaty.</p>
Rationale behind	<p>As universalization of the Treaty proves to be not as easy as during the first years, a focused approach on a small group of States would allow for better support and, ultimately, more likely positive results. This will also make best and focused use of available resources within the ATT.</p>

Regional champions	
Status	<p>States considering ratifying or acceding to the Treaty often require support in initiating the necessary steps required. To provide support from within their region, a regional roadmap or approach may be helpful in fostering exchanges and cooperation among states operating in the same regional context. Whilst this is outside the original scope of the Treaty, the ATT, through the CSP President and supported by the ATT Secretariat, might seek to establish new or intensify existing contacts with Regional and Sub-regional Organizations to improve coordination of activities and programs, where applicable.</p> <p>In addition to these existing work streams, the establishment of a program of “Regional Champions” should be considered. It is proposed that the ATT Vice-Presidents take up this role in their respective regions and that States Parties can serve as “Regional Champions” on a voluntary basis. This would serve two purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. support the universalization efforts of the CSP President, and 2. enable interested States Parties to share information regarding their own experience with the national ATT ratification / accession process with those States of the same region, that are still in earlier stages of their accession to the Treaty.
Recommendation	<p>The Secretariat should approach the National Points of Contact to explore possibilities to act as “Regional Champions” and hold regular briefings to CSP on contacts with Regional Organizations and their possible contribution to universalization efforts.</p>
Rationale behind	<p>Regional organizations have supported universalization efforts through their established networks in the past and continue to do so. Their access to Parliamentarians and Governments creates the necessary internal support towards and awareness of the Treaty. In addition, the opportunity to share information or experiences within the respective region may have a positive impact on those countries hesitant to accede. Beyond this established avenues, it may be very helpful to create a network of States Parties to act as “Regional Champions”. As States in a geographical region may face the same challenges, it seems logical that a direct exchange will result in a more focused support.</p>

Demand driven vs. support oriented	
	<p>To date, only the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) and the ATT Sponsorship Programme serve as an internal support mechanism, which, inter alia, assists States in their efforts to join the ATT. However, these programs can provide support only after a State has applied for funding. Applications for projects funding and sponsorship to participate in meetings need to be submitted by the States, at times based on limited information about available programs or their optimal sequencing.</p> <p>With a more solid knowledge about national processes, it may be possible to reverse this approach and offer tailored assistance that directly addresses the individual needs of states, taking into account national circumstances. Through this approach, the WGTU can support the coordination of work of the well-established assistance facilities, without duplicating them.</p>
Recommendation	<p>The ATT Secretariat provides advice to States seeking to utilise the ATT internal support mechanisms (VTF and Sponsorship Programme) to move forward their efforts to join the Treaty.</p> <p>This should be supplemented by a more proactive approach vis-à-vis interested States in order to provide them with advice on available programs and their sequencing.</p>
Rationale behind	<p>Experience gained through the past VTF cycles indicates a certain pattern of activities in support of accession and implementation and their sequencing. This will allow for a more proactive approach by the ATT Secretariat to provide guidance to Signatory States in applying for VTF project funding before their first application. The necessary administrative training on the completion of said applications is already available.</p>

Coordination of efforts inside the ATT	
Status	<p>WGTU needs to decide on the information required to support the intended individual approaches and then take stock of the information available within the ATT and its subsidiary bodies. Improved compilation, coordination, and dissemination of the available information will enhance the collaboration within the ATT framework and avoid duplication of work.</p>
Recommendation	<p>CSP shall take note of this approach.</p>
Rationale behind	<p>Compilation of already available data will enable the WGTU to approach States in a more targeted manner.</p>

Cooperation with other entities	
Status	<p>Various entities, operating at national and regional levels, support Treaty universalization and its implementation.</p> <p>Beyond the scope of the ATT there are entities working on other projects with a similar tasking, in the same regions, at times within the very same State. Based on the established cooperation with the International Organizations or Civil Society, it would be beneficial to exchange, to the extent possible, data or information to establish a common database to support the above-mentioned tailored approach and make best use of available resources.</p>
Recommendation	<p>CSP Presidents, with the help of the ATT Secretariat, should establish a regular exchange with stakeholders in a position to support universalization of the Treaty to explore possible ways to establish or intensify the cooperation, within given mandates and without creating financial obligations.</p>
Rationale behind	<p>Civil society provides valuable support to universalization efforts through established contacts and targeted activities at national and regional levels. This support allows for raising of general awareness vis-à-vis the Treaty, policy development, implementation of legislative processes, and other support during the process of accession and beyond. This experience can enhance universalization efforts and avoid the duplication of effort.</p>
