

**Sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
Geneva, Switzerland
14 August 2020**

**Control Arms Statement on
Transparency and Reporting**

ATT reporting is a cornerstone of effective Treaty implementation. To be impactful, four key things are needed.

ATT reports must be timely. They must be accurate. They must be comprehensive. And they must be public.

These ingredients will ensure that ATT reporting is transparent.

Transparency in reporting serves a number of key purposes. It enables States Parties to demonstrate that they are implementing the Treaty effectively, and it helps to identify any gaps to enable States Parties to access appropriate international cooperation and assistance. It can also help build confidence among states regionally and internationally and provide the public with a better understanding of the arms transfer policies and practices of their governments.

State of Play. Control Arms welcomes the efforts made by the WGTR Co-Chairs to support States Parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations and commitments to transparency. We support initiatives such as the voluntary peer-to-peer bilateral and regional assistance project and subsequent monitoring of its implementation, as well as the 'Outreach strategy on reporting' being implemented by both the WGTR and the ATT Secretariat. These initiatives provide much needed support to non-reporting States Parties and are good examples of the comprehensive efforts made by the Working Group to address reporting and issues.

Control Arms welcomes updated initial reports submitted by four States Parties – Japan, New Zealand, Sweden and Slovenia. These updates are an important means of demonstrating progress in implementing the Treaty. Control Arms urges states to submit these mandatory updates. Article 13 is clear in this regard: each State Party must report to the Secretariat on any new measures undertaken in order to implement this Treaty, when appropriate.

The 2020 reporting cycle will prove challenging given the widespread impact of COVID-19 and the new obstacles to reporting it presents. Already, this is evident in the fact that less than 40 percent of States Parties met the 31 May 2020 reporting deadline for 2019 annual reports. Since then, according to the ATT Secretariat website, to date only 50 percent of States Parties -- 49 of the 97 expected -- have submitted their annual reports this year. As the world adjusts to these new circumstances, we urge the WGTR and ATT Secretariat to consider new types of support for States Parties to ensure reporting obligations can be met.

Reporting Challenges. Control Arms welcomes efforts made to address challenges concerning reporting. In particular, initiatives taken to implement the 'Outreach strategy on reporting' document demonstrate strong efforts to support States Parties in submitting timely reports. Another positive development are the consultations between the CSP6 Presidency and non-reporting States that took

place in the CSP6 intersessional period, as well as the enlistment of support in carrying out such consultations in all regions. Control Arms also welcomes the issuance of individualized letters to States Parties, reminding them of their ATT reporting obligations, as Control Arms has supported previous CSP Presidencies in similar outreach activities. We believe it is important that all ATT stakeholders provide support to States Parties in fulfilling obligations, as all have a role to play supporting implementation.

Substantive Reporting and Transparency Issues. As stated by the co-Chairs of the Working Group in their introductory paper for the Second Working Group session in April 2020, transparency in the international arms trade is a core component of the ATT which “can only be obtained by transparent reporting and the accessible provision of reported data to the public.” Unfortunately, each year more and more governments have opted to keep their reports confidential. The number of confidential reports increased from 2% in 2015 to 20% in 2019. When a significant number of reports are made confidential, it is not possible to review the implementation practices of these States Parties, compare their national control systems with those of other States Parties, or identify opportunities for cooperation and assistance to facilitate Treaty implementation.

While some States Parties have worked to submit more information in their reports than in previous years, others have provided less. Submitting a report alone does not demonstrate a commitment to transparency. The ATT Monitor, an independent project of Control Arms, establishes that ATT Annual Reports must provide data to a level of disaggregation and accuracy that provides for meaningful transparency, which means States Parties should report on actual exports and imports; specify weapon type; provide a number or value (or both) for each item; and, clearly name the final exporting and/or importing country.

To provide this information, Control Arms strongly recommends that States Parties utilize the reporting templates. While the use of reporting templates is ‘recommended’ and not ‘mandatory’, they provide a framework through which States Parties can provide a minimum baseline of consistent and comparable data, which is crucial to identifying trends in the global arms trade and opportunities for supporting States Parties in implementing Treaty obligations.

Control Arms supports making amendments to the reporting templates in order to address substantive reporting and transparency issues and to make them more effective transparency tools. We welcome the Working Group co-chairs’ proposed amendment on the reporting templates to change the default setting of the annual report to ‘public’ rather than ‘available only to States Parties’ to help clarify any confusion. While we are concerned about delays in launching improved reporting templates, we understand that the discussion and debate needed to develop these improved templates is not possible within the confines of the written procedure adopted by CSP6 due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. We look forward to engaging in these discussions and debates during the CSP7 session.

Organizational means for information exchange. Establishing provisions for information exchange on all relevant issues within the ATT framework is a key component of effective Treaty implementation. The three-tiered approach to diversion established by the WGTR (information exchange platform, informal discussion meetings, WGETI discussions), includes two tiers that are open only to ATT States Parties, and in some cases, to signatories. Control Arms, as an international civil society coalition, urges the WGTR and States Parties to recognize the valuable contributions of civil society to the ATT process in all forums. Formalizing processes relating to diversion or other key aspects of the Treaty that are entirely closed to independent civil society contributions goes against the broad participation privileges afforded in

the ATT Rules of Procedure, and undermines transparency - one of the Treaty's stated purposes. Information exchange between States Parties will improve the detection and prevention of diversion. However, to maintain transparency and accountability in the process by which these information exchanges take place, such as the proposed Diversion Information Exchange Forum, all ATT CSP participants, including civil society, need to play a role. We urge the WGTR and States Parties to maintain open processes in intersessional meetings and to not allow closed informal meetings to become the norm.