



Sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
Geneva, 17-21 August 2020

SEHLAC STATEMENT AS PART OF CONTROL ARMS

Mr. President,

The SEHLAC Network on Human Security in Latin America and the Caribbean is a regional civil society coalition with presence in 12 countries, and a member of the Control Arms coalition. For more than a decade, we have been working to advance a humanitarian disarmament agenda at various multilateral fora and to strengthen international law through advocacy, research, and public education.

The Covid-19 pandemic has severely impacted several aspects of daily life—and multilateral diplomacy has been no exception. The fact that this very Conference is being held by written procedure is a clear testament to the disruption caused by the pandemic. But it may also be a cause for concern about the limitations that this format may place on transparency, substantive discussions, and civil society participation.

We welcome the Working Paper submitted by the Conference President, entitled *Transparency and Exchange of Information: its Role in the Prevention of Diversion*. The fact that Diversion is being addressed as a thematic focus for the second time during the short life of the treaty, as well as the concrete treaty provisions aimed at preventing and addressing diversion, reflect the paramount importance of this issue not just during treaty negotiations but, critically, since its entry into force.

However, we have profound concerns about Draft Decision 13, related to the establishment of a diversion information exchange forum. Although we recognize the potential contributions that such a forum can make to the ATT regime, we fear that its operations may move away from the tradition of transparency that has characterized ATT meetings, in particular as it relates to the inclusion of civil society. There is much that civil society can contribute to the effective operation of the Diversion Forum, and any move to exclude this source of expertise would both diminish its work of and set a troubling precedent going forward.

Mr. President,

Transparency is a key pillar of the ATT regime, as is the inclusion in good faith of civil society groups that have long supported the object a purpose of the treaty, many of which have implemented projects to better address diversion. We ask you, and all states parties participating in this conference, to ensure that civil society access and inclusion are not curtailed with Draft Decision 13.

Drafted by Pia Devoto and Cesar Jaramillo
On behalf of the SEHLAC Network, a member of Control Arms



