

Statement delivered by Ara Marcen Naval on behalf of Transparency International Defence & Security, as part of Agenda Item 8 (Transparency & Reporting), Wednesday 27th August

Thank you, Mr President.

Transparency International is disappointed to note the trends in reporting highlighted by the ATT Secretary and the Transparency & Reporting Working Group this morning. The downward trend in compliance with Article 13 reporting obligations, as well as the increased trend at which reports are kept confidential, are concerning.

Transparency International echoes the calls of the Secretariat and of many states parties in urging ALL states parties to fulfil their treaty obligations to submit their reports, and to make these reports public and accessible.

Mr President, Transparency is a key pillar for good governance and accountability and is a crucial tool in curbing corruption and in building institutional integrity. It enables external oversight of government – and the military – by legislators, civil society and the media, increasing accountability of political decision-making and institutional practice. It enables informed participation of societies in public debates. And it deters corruption and in some instances brings corruption to light.

The defence sector and arms trade are notoriously opaque. While some information may need to remain classified for legitimate national security reasons, this should be a well-founded exception – not a rule. Maintaining high levels of secrecy and a lack of transparency and access to information, impairs civilian control of the security sector, hampers oversight bodies and increases corruption risks at all levels. It allows corruption to occur unexposed, unaddressed, and in the shadows, and of course can lead to diversion and illicit trading in arms.

Transparency International calls on states parties to comply with their reporting obligations under the ATT, not only to be compliant with the text of the treaty, but to demonstrate their commitment to the spirit of the treaty too, in enabling civil society engagement and oversight, deterring corruption and ultimately contributing to a safer and more responsible arms trade.

Thank you, Mr President.