

**Working Group on Transparency and Reporting
February 6, 2020 - Geneva, Switzerland**

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State of play and challenges to reporting

Thank you Chairs.

As transparency in arms transfers is fundamental to achieving the ATT's goals and objectives, Control Arms would like to first commend the Working Group chairs and the ATT Secretariat on their exhaustive efforts to provide resources and guidance on reporting with a view to improving compliance with reporting obligations so that all States Parties can report fully, accurately, and on time. The 'FAQ-type guidance document on annual reporting obligations', the national measures document and the 'Outreach strategy on reporting', together, are effective tools that serve a number of valuable functions including demonstrating the importance of reporting, explaining reporting obligations, eliciting information from States Parties on challenges or best practices, and answering questions raised by national authorities involved in reporting.

As stated by the Working Group chairs in their introductory paper for this session, transparency in the international arms trade is a core component of the ATT which "can only be obtained by transparent reporting and the transparent, accessible provision of reported data to the public." Unfortunately, this year we saw more and more governments opt to keep their reports confidential. Though more annual reports were submitted, we know less about the global arms trade than we did before due to increasing numbers of reports being kept confidential.

A record 10 annual reports were kept confidential for 2018, more than double the amount in the previous year. And though some States Parties have worked to submit more information than in previous years, others have provided less.

Twelve initial reports, or 16 percent of all that have been submitted, are now confidential. Therefore, 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 support and/or cooperation to facilitate Treaty implementation.



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.

Thank you.

END FIRST STATEMENT

Reporting Templates

Thank you, Chairs

Our comments relate to the reporting templates in general, and obviously not in relation to the on-line system.

Use of reporting templates is 'recommended' and not 'mandatory'. However, Control Arms encourages states to utilize them, as they provide a framework through which States Parties can develop common understandings of the amount and types of information that should be included when reporting, and therefore provide a minimum baseline of comparability.

Adjustments to the templates have the potential to make them even more effective and clearer in this purpose. Such adjustments may help to address challenges to submitting timely and accurate initial and annual reports. To that end, Control Arms welcomes an open discussion on such adjustments that may also address concerns regarding the quality and transparency of reports.

For example, both the co-chairs' Introductory Paper and the ATT-Baseline Assessment project's recent report note that the current template for initial reports provides no indication of the existence of an update requirement for initial reports, nor a process or template for doing so. In updates submitted by Sweden and Japan, cover pages were provided that list the changes to their reports. This could be a helpful example for how States Parties indicate updates. New Zealand and Slovenia provided updated reports using the original reporting template, which does not provide an option to clearly indicate what has been changed.

As the ATT Secretariat moves towards the development of the proposed public searchable database that will likely be used with the online reporting tool, Control Arms welcomes continued discussion of the ways in which these tools can be used to broaden and clarify our understanding of the global arms trade.

Thank you.

END SECOND STATEMENT

Organizational means for information exchange

Thank you, Chairs.

As information is critical to effective arms transfer decision-making; it follows, therefore, that information exchange is an equally vital element of any effective arms transfer control regime. Indeed, it is particularly important for those States that are not part of existing international non-proliferation networks or regional arms control mechanisms. States that do not have timely access to the right kinds of information cannot be expected to implement the Treaty to the same extent as States Parties that are participants in the Wassenaar Arrangement and other international non-proliferation arrangements.

Establishing provision for information exchange on all relevant issues within the ATT framework will be vital if all States Parties are to implement the Treaty. Apart from substantive exchanges relating to diversion and potentially some arms transfer denials, this will require all States Parties to share and update details of their national point of contact, and to have procedures in place to enable their point of contact to operate as an effective conduit, ensuring that relevant information is passed to the appropriate individuals in a useful format and in a timely manner.

Thank you.

END THIRD STATEMENT