



Control Arms Submission to the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR)

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Below are Control Arms' inputs to the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR) draft reports to inform intersessional work ahead of CSP6.

1. State of play of compliance with reporting obligations

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 commend 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.

However, despite a slight increase in the reporting rate for 2018 Annual Reports, only 65 percent of States Parties due to submit reports did so. Because Article 13.3 makes clear the legal obligation of States Parties to submit reports, it is concerning that 34 percent did not fulfil these obligations. Of even greater concern is the increasing trend towards confidential reporting, which is discussed in greater detail below.

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 also 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 even more challenging given the widespread impact of COVID-19 and the new obstacles to reporting they present. As the world adjusts to these new circumstances, the WGTR and ATT Secretariat may consider new types of support they may provide to States Parties to ensure reporting obligations can be met.

2. Challenges concerning reporting

Control Arms commends 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. We welcome ongoing consultations between the President of CSP6, Ambassador Foradori, with non-reporting States in the 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.

3. Substantive reporting and transparency issues

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, each year more and more governments have opted to keep their reports confidential. A record 10 Annual Reports were kept confidential for 2018, more than double the amount in the previous year. Though more reports were submitted, we know less about the global arms trade than we did before due to increasing numbers of reports being kept confidential. 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 cooperation 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, at a minimum: report on authorized or actual (or both) 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 many of the proposed changes to both the Annual and Initial Report templates and support the inclusion of further changes that serve two key functions: first, changes that support States Parties’ efforts to provide more publicly available information (for example, in Annual Reports, providing spaces for states to explain why and what kind of information was kept confidential as an option beside each reporting category); and second, changes that support States in providing information that goes beyond the minimum requirements (for example, in both Annual and Initial Reports, eliminating the designation of information as ‘voluntary’).

Additionally, Control Arms strongly supports two recommended changes to the Initial Report template, proposed by the WGTR co-chairs:

1. Addition of ‘Mr.’ and ‘Mrs.’ tick boxes in Question 1.K to facilitate gender analysis of national points of contact.
2. Amendment of questions 2.E and 3.R to solicit States Parties’ interpretations of key terminology in Articles 6 and 7.

4. Organizational means for information exchange



Establishing provisions for information exchange on all relevant issues within the ATT framework will be vital if all States Parties are to implement the Treaty. 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. To maintain transparency and accountability in the ATT CSP intersessional process, closed informal meetings should not become a norm. It is crucial to encourage information exchange between all ATT stakeholders, not just States Parties.

Since the Treaty entered into force in December 2014, civil society has played a crucial role in supporting the Treaty's implementation and its reporting mechanisms. To this end, civil society organizations have provided valuable research and substantive input, including through the ATT Monitor and the ATT Baseline Assessment Project (ATT-BAP), while others have worked with ATT States Parties directly to support their efforts to establish national data collection processes or to meet their reporting obligations. Through its extensive and varied expertise, civil society plays a key role in encouraging and facilitating information exchanges.