

**Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)
30 August 2021
Geneva, Switzerland**

High-Level opening forum: The Seventh Conference of States Parties to the ATT (CSP7) was opened by [H. E. Professor David John Francis](#), Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, who noted his country's recent history of civil war makes Sierra Leone acutely aware of the need to prevent the illicit trafficking and diversion of arms and the importance of effective global arms regulation. Emphasizing that women, children, young people, and civilians are disproportionately affected by arms violence, he stated that even developed nations experience the consequences of illicit arms transfers. Professor Francis concluded by calling for all states not yet party to the Treaty to join this accomplishment in international arms control.

H.E. Sheik Omar, the Minister of Defence of the Republic of the Gambia [announced](#) that his Government has taken the decision to accede to the ATT. As the only country in West Africa not yet party to the ATT, the Gambia has made progress towards implementation by establishing a national commission on SLAW.

H.E. Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen, the State Secretary for Economic Affairs of the Swiss Government [addressed](#) the growing importance of the ATT in the current international climate. Given that the illicit arms trade contributes to civilian violence, Ms. Ineichen emphasized the importance of consolidating illicit arms transfers efforts, especially in the context of SALW. Stressing the importance of transparency, she noted her concerns regarding the decrease in ATT reporting. Ms. Ineichen reminded states that support can be sought from the VTF to address ATT implementation challenges. She also mentioned her concerns about State Parties not respecting their financial obligations and emphasized the importance of this issue.

The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu called for more engagement in the ATT universalization, noting this is a crucial step for the Treaty's success. In this regard, she welcomed the accession of China to the ATT. Ms. Nakamitsu emphasized the importance of effective stockpile security and noted that the Treaty's purpose can only be achieved through collective efforts.

In his statement, Mr Gilles Carbonnier, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reminded states why the ATT is important. He recalled the hundreds of arms conflicts throughout the world, including the recent situation in Afghanistan. Keeping arms flows in check and establishing necessary safeguards are opportunities to reduce human suffering, arms violence and the displacement of millions of people. For this reason, the ICRC called for ATT States Parties to follow the humanitarian purpose stated in the Treaty and encourage its universalization on the basis of humanitarian aspiration.

The last speaker, Eugene Ngalim, Executive Director of Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace, [spoke](#) on behalf of the Control Arms Coalition. He emphasized the importance of the ATT in the African region, especially in the context of ongoing humanitarian crises in the Sahel, Ethiopia and the Central African Republic. Highlighting the important role of civil society in support of the universalization and the implementation of the ATT Ngalim encouraged states to take advantage of the expertise that civil society can provide and urged donors to support civil society-led projects.

- **Thematic discussion on SLAW and stockpile management:**

This session was opened by Ambassador Gberie of Sierra Leone, as the President for CSP7 who introduced his [Working Paper](#) which sets forth a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening cooperation under the ATT in support of preventing illicit trafficking and diversion of SALW, including through stockpile management.

Sierra Leone's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, H. E. Professor David John Francis, took the floor to note that the Working Paper is grounded in his country's experience during the brutal civil war from 1991-2002. Recalling the importance of preventing the diversion and illicit trade of SALW and the need to strengthen stockpile security, he urged states to take a comprehensive approach in addressing these challenges, including by bringing best practices developed under other international and regional instruments into the ATT process.

H.E. Sr. Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon, the Secretary of Exterior Relations of Mexico, stressed the importance of transparency in weapons trafficking to prevent diversion. Mr. Casaubon spoke on the increasing trafficking of conventional weapons and outlined the Mexican Government's strategy to address the illicit trade in arms, which includes taking US arms manufacturers to court.

RECSA mentioned the work they have done in order to reduce the number of SALW in distribution and to support the harmonization of national legislation. RECSA stressed the importance of strengthening national institutions and capacities on SALW to enable States to accomplish their role in the prevention of their diversion.

GICHD called for strengthening efforts to eradicate the SALW illicit trade and its diversion, stressing the importance of considering the full lifecycle of the weapon: prior, during and post-delivery.

China welcomed the President's working paper and shared efforts taken at the national level including, implementation of laws, regulations on firearms, adoption of exports control lists, implementation of the UN resolution on arms embargoes, reporting and recordkeeping of stockpiles and accounting of weapon systems as well as robust security measures for warehouses. China stated their support for the African Union's Silencing the Gun initiative.

[Peru](#) thanked the revised text of the President's Working Paper and stated their support for the five recommendations, and particularly for the recommendation on the use of international and regional instruments. Peru mentioned the importance of synergies between the ATT and other instruments, such as the UN PoA in order to align with the SDG 2030 Agenda, especially target 16.4.

[Japan](#) urged State Parties to continue discussions on SALW to create a positive impact on preventing their diversion and illicit proliferation. Japan stressed their support for the African Union's Silencing the Gun initiative.

The EU and Spain highlighted civil society's role in advancing ATT universalization and their advocacy/information sharing efforts. The EU noted that ATT States Parties and stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure safe management of arms and ammunition which requires transparency. The EU also stated their support for exploring synergies with other instruments such as the UNPoA, International Tracing Instrument (ITI), the Firearms Protocol. The EU noted the ATT Outreach Programme and other efforts conducted to eradicate illicit SALW transfers, including for mechanisms and platforms such as iArms and iTrace. **Romania** expressed support for the President's Paper but noted it would have liked more time for in-depth discussions.

Ireland, recognizing that poorly managed stockpiles are vulnerable to illicit activities and diversion, welcomed the President's recommendations for the post-delivery phase. It also stressed the importance of synergies between instruments and welcomed the inclusion of a recommendation on the gendered impact of weapons diversion in the President's Paper.

Namibia stated their commitment to the UN PoA, the African Union's Silencing the Guns Initiative and the ATT and shared efforts undertaken at the national level to meet these commitments, including by organizing a regional ATT Academy training focused on the implementation of Articles 5, 6, 9, 11 and 13, in partnership with Control Arms.

Switzerland stressed that more progress is needed in the implementation of stockpile management policies and noted the efforts of OSCE states to develop and improve good practice on SALW and stockpile security

The UK welcomed the President's Paper including its recommendations related to export licencing systems and comprehensive risk assessment but cautioned against creating unnecessary burdens and unrealistic requirements for States. The UK also welcomed the inclusion of gender in the paper and called for the full and effective participation of women in the implementation of the ATT.

Hungary stated their full support for stockpile management in the post-delivery phase and to the objective of the Treaty. It stressed the need for synergies between the ATT and other instruments and noted their support for building capacity among Western Balkan states to prevent the illicit proliferation of SALW.

The Republic of Korea welcomed the focus on prevention of SALW illicit trade and diversion and highlights several initiatives undertaken in this regard, including the establishment of a structured system for marking and recordkeeping and tracing of weapons, and its efforts to support the Treaty's universalization in Asia-Pacific.

France mentioned their support in synergies and welcomed cooperation between importing and exporting states on stockpile security but expressed their warning on the difficulties in applying cooperation in practical terms. Gave their support to related stockpile security measures and overall stood with the president's working paper.

All states welcomed the President's Working Paper. Out of the countries that spoke, eight governments (China, Peru, Japan, EU, Namibia, Rep. of Korea, France, Ireland) mentioned their support for synergies between the ATT, the UN PoA and other international instruments, and five states (Peru, Namibia, UK, Rep. of Korea, Ireland) welcomed the inclusion of gender and GBV in the ATT.

Side events

Launch of the ATT Monitor 2021 Annual Report

Hosted by the [ATT Monitor](#), and co-sponsored by the Netherlands, Germany and the Stimson Center, this side event presented the [2021 Annual Report](#). The event began with a presentation by ATT Monitor Coordinator, Carina Solmirano, who introduced the ATT Monitor project and this year's publication.

Ambassador Lansana Gberie, President of the Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty emphasized the importance of independent, civil society-led projects such as the ATT Monitor in advancing the universalization and implementation of the ATT. He noted that the ATT Monitor Annual Report, which includes a comprehensive analysis of ATT annual reports, identifies good practices and provides recommendations, enable States Parties to support the submission of timely, accurate and comprehensive information on their arms exports and imports. Noting the importance of transparency, Ambassador Robert Gabrielse of the Netherlands reaffirmed his country's commitment to the ATT Monitor. Mr. Rainer Schmiedchen, Head of Division of the German Foreign Office responsible for Export Control, Conventional Arms, and Dual-Use Goods acknowledged the progress made towards the Treaty's implementation over the past seven years, but recognized that additional work needed to be done.

Carina Solmirano took the floor again to present a special section of the report which explored stockpile management as a key mechanism for addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) and highlights synergies between ATT provisions and other global arms control frameworks. Looking at the nature and dynamics of stockpile management practices in Sub-Saharan Africa, the chapter showed how even states such as Ghana which have enjoyed peaceful and stable democracies, still face challenges due to problematic historical legacies, outdated stockpile management systems and a lack of inter-agency cooperation and coordination.

Katherine Young, the Senior Researcher at the ATT Monitor, discussed key findings from this year's report including a continued decline in compliance with ATT reporting obligations and an upward trend towards private reporting. Chapter 2.1 of the report, which evaluates five years of ATT annual reporting data, looking at the degree to which annual reporting by States Parties is meaningfully transparent, found that only twelve (12) states parties have been consistently compliant with their Article 13.3 reporting obligations. Katherine Young also noted that between 2015-2019, the percentage of States Parties submitting annual reports has declined from 82 per cent of 2015 reports to 64 percent of 2019 reports.

Rachel Stohl, Vice President of Research Programs at the Stimson Center, presented findings related to ATT initial reports and a preview of 2020 annual reports analysis. Looking first at initial reports, Stohl noted that while the number of initial reports submitted has gradually increased, the overall compliance rate has remained constant. Of the 106 States Parties required to submit an initial report 76% have done so. Equally worrisome is that 21 percent of all ATT initial reports are kept private, pointing to a growing trend towards confidential reporting. Similarly, when looking at the most recent round of ATT annual reports, of the 105 states required to submit a report in 2020, only 57 states did so. Stohl cautioned that without universal compliance with ATT reporting requirements, the Treaty cannot live up to its original intent.

A recording of the event can be found [here](#)

The Role of Women in Stockpile Management: Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC)

This side event, organized by the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC) began with a discussion of different discriminatory practices that prevent women from entering professions related to weapons management. The speakers noted for example, the lack of female mentors in arms control and the importance of supporting women's organizations. In discussing the impact of children, the panelists noted that, in many countries women who have kids can no longer serve in the military, while men are not facing such discrimination only on the basis of fatherhood.

Women and girls from around the world have little say in the national or international decisions which may directly or indirectly impact them. Similarly, technical issues often do not include gender considerations, even though there is solid evidence - for instance, from research conducted by UNIDIR and [UNODA](#) - that gender is relevant in these matters.

The panel also discussed key opportunities to encourage gendered representation including 1) direct assistance to support women pursuing careers as technical experts or funding conditional to women's participation in the security sector; 2) for WAM actors to collect data on women in the field, 3) for security sector to offer gender training and coaching and engage men in efforts to address discrimination.

Folade Mutota aptly noted the international community must work to protect women, and called for the increased participation of civil society in gendered issues.