

Ninth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty

ATT Preparatory Conference Statement

Friday 12 May 2023

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MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PAPER RESPONSE

Thank you Madam President

We strongly support a review of the working group process, indeed it is probably well overdue – as many delegations have already expressed, Control Arms too would like to see a process that is fit-for-purpose and reflects the best way to engage in substantive and practical discussion of the Treaty. The current levels of engagement within the ATT process are disappointing. But if time is not being filled, maybe we should be thinking about how that time could be better organised, rather than assuming it is because there is nothing to say.

States should be provided with clear expectations of the best ways to engage in the working group process, what kinds of interventions would be most helpful, such as sharing good practices or how challenges have been overcome, and guidance on which government officials are best positioned to engage.

Instead of its current focus on time spent, the whole of this reform conversation should be viewed from an **outcomes perspective**, rather than a process perspective. Once we identify outcomes, only then can we design the structure and modalities that can best support those outcomes.

By deciding first how extensive the process will be, how much it will cost and what form it will take, *before* deciding what the conference wants to achieve, and how progress will be measured, you are very much beginning at the end: as Germany said and the Netherlands *MAY* have repeated: form must follow function.

But at this point, the function is still unclear. Our discussion this week on the WGETI and the session on T&R left us with much to be done to the point where we will still be clarifying the future roles and work of the Working Groups well into August. All of which suggests it would be presumptuous to be finalising the future of the ATT process at CSP9.

There is no need to rush the decision. We do not want to find ourselves in a few years time repenting at leisure; questioning the chosen approach. To support the development of a process that is truly fit for purpose, we must first set out what our purpose is. To do so, we suggest that States Parties consider using CSP10 as a kind of review conference, where the conversations on this topic are extended with a final decision to be decided in August 2024.

Thank you Madam President