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Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation

Parts and Components

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Thank you, Mr. Chair, my Statement concerns ATT Article 4.

The production and transfer of parts and components are fundamental to the international arms trade, yet their regulation remains one of the most overlooked weaknesses in Treaty implementation.

Under the ATT, parts and components are those elements that comprise the complete conventional arms systems that are defined under Article 2(1). Such parts and components can be used in the manufacture of new weapons; equally, they can be used to sustain the operability of weapons-systems long after their transfer. Accordingly, parts and components play as important a role in the international arms trade as does the trade in complete weapon systems.

Parts and components are controlled under Article 4 of the Treaty which requires States Parties to regulate their transfer under national control systems, including through application of Article 6 and 7. Yet in practice, it appears that a significant number of States Parties may not control international transfers of parts and components. As of 2025, only 53 ATT States Parties - in their Initial Reports to the Secretariat - had reported controlling parts and components through their national control systems. The majority of these States Parties were either members of the European Union, participants in the Wassenaar Arrangement, or both.

Even when parts and components are controlled by national systems, the level of control that is applied often appears to differ from that of complete systems, particularly in cases of transfers between allies and in the context of joint military production. For example, under the multinational F-35 Joint Strike Fighter programme, participating states often authorise component transfers under bulk licences that allow for very large quantities of parts and components to be exported over many years. In some States Parties such transfers occur outside of conventional licensing procedures and even without any licenses at all.

This has real-world ramifications. For example, throughout Israel's bombardment of Gaza, several ATT States Parties participating in the F-35 programme suspended or halted the direct transfer of weapon systems to Israel due to the overriding risk that they could be used in serious violations of international law. However, some of these States Parties have continued the indirect transfer of parts and components through the F-35 programme. This is despite these

aircraft playing a central role in the airstrikes that humanitarian monitors have identified as a major driver of civilian casualties, as well as the destruction of critical infrastructure.

In recent weeks, the use of F-35s in an expanding range of regional strikes, including attacks on Iranian civilians and renewed bombardment of Lebanon, reinforce the urgent need for component-producing and exporting states to apply the provisions of the ATT more rigorously and systematically to the international transfer of parts and components.

Mr. Chair, these challenges face the risk of becoming even more pronounced as global military spending rises and states pursue deeper defence-industrial integration. For example, European states have launched initiatives such as Readiness 2030 and the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) agreement. Both of these initiatives seek to integrate European arms production supply chains, with reports indicating that they may reduce or even eliminate licensing requirements for intra-European transfers or expand the use of general export licenses, which allow for much less scrutiny.

The international transfer of all systems controlled under the ATT, including their parts and components, must be assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the obligations set out in Articles 6 and 7. While the Treaty does not seek to impede the legitimate trade in defence equipment between States Parties, nor does it provide a basis for departing from these obligations on the grounds of political, military, or economic considerations.