



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Statements to the Sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
17 August 2020

STATEMENT ON TRANSPARENCY AND REPORTING

The Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF) appreciates the work undertaken this year by the co-chairs of the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR) to progress the standing agenda-items and the recurring and specific tasks, and particularly efforts to improve the voluntary reporting templates, take comments on board, and address concerns. Postponing any decision-making on template amendments until it is possible to have a face-to-face discussion (virtual or in-person) rather than by written format makes sense.

Our statement focuses on four points: current reporting practice; draft decisions 12 and 13; the CSP6 president-designate's non-paper; and some broader reflections on information exchange.

Current reporting practice

WILPF registers its concern at the increased proportion of ATT annual reports that are being kept private. It is also concerned at the tendency of many states parties to aggregate information within their annual report, as noted by the WGTR co-chairs in their report to the CSP6 as an issue requiring greater attention. The Control Arms' *ATT Monitor* found in 2019 that 31 per cent of annual reports submitted in 2017 contained aggregation. Data aggregation prevents effective analysis of a state party's exports or imports. WILPF encourages further discussion on this topic and urges that states parties move away from this practice in their annual reports.

Draft decisions 12 and 13

WILPF notes that draft decision 12 proposes that states parties would "Endorse the standing agenda-items and the recurring and specific tasks for the WGTR in the period between CSP6 and CSP7, as included in Annex A of the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting Co-chairs' Draft Report to CSP6." However, the draft report of the WGTR co-chairs also contains a series of recommendations for CSP6 (see paragraph 25 of ATT/CSP6.WGTR/2020/CHAIR/607/Conf.Rep). Without prejudice to the content of the WGTR co-chair recommendations, it needs clarifying that those recommendations to CSP6 are *not* the decisions that states parties are considering endorsing through draft decision 12, and are included in Annex A of the report.

Draft decision 13 is highly problematic in our view. The proposals contained in paragraphs 5,6,7,8, and 9 would establish a Diversion Information Exchange Forum and see states

parties adopt a terms of reference (TOR) for this Forum. The draft TOR has been developed in a closed setting and there has been no opportunity for other stakeholders to even see, let alone reflect or provide feedback on these drafts. The activities and functioning of this Forum would therefore be exclusionary and secretive. WILPF calls on states parties to not adopt draft decision 13 until there is time to discuss this proposal further, and also to consider how to use the WGETI sub-working group on article 11 (diversion) to further dialogue in this area, in addition to ongoing bilateral exchanges and collaboration with civil society experts.

President's non-paper on transparency and information exchange to prevent diversion

WILPF welcomes the efforts of the CSP6 president-designate to advance the theme of information exchange over the last several months. Promoting and upholding transparency in the international arms trade—and in ATT-related fora—is necessary for the viability of this instrument and established as one of its key purposes.

In particular, the language found in paragraphs 7 and 8 regarding expanding cooperation with “civil society, industry, academia, and other relevant non-state actors” and exchanging information at the “bilateral subregional, and regional levels in other multilateral contexts related to the ATT” is welcome.

Information exchange and transparency

The coordination and information exchange across different instruments can present a more thorough overall understanding about arms flows and diversion in particular and enhances the potential practical use and application of the information reported on. Viewing ATT reporting practices in a vacuum not only reduces the potential practical use and application of the information reported on, by presenting only a partial picture, but also contributes to redundancies and reporting fatigue. Coordinating and working across mechanisms such as the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA), the UN Register on Conventional Arms (UNROCA), the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), and regional conventions would enrich information exchange on diversion.