



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Statement of the Netherlands

Submitted in writing for the

Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty

Geneva, 31 August 2021

In addition to the statement submitted by the EU and the Netherlands would like to submit the following statement in our national capacity.

The Netherlands would like to express its gratitude to ambassador GBERIE, his team and the ATT-secretariat for your exceptional efforts to bring us together during this pandemic and allowing us to continue our work on the full and effective functioning of the Arms Trade Treaty. Equally, our gratitude goes out to the Chairs of the working groups and their teams for all the substantive progress that was achieved in these challenging circumstances. Please be assured of our full cooperation and support.

The ATT is the key tool for regulating the international trade in conventional arms, preventing the illicit trade and diversion of arms. It is grounded in a set of common norms and values. We would like this community of norms and values to continue to grow. It is disappointing that no country has deposited its instrument of ratification since the last Conference of State Parties. We remain hopeful that our community will continue to grow and call on all major arms trading nations that have not done so to join the ATT. The Netherlands has long supported countries in overcoming barriers to accession through the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund.

We are encouraged that the wider community of stakeholders, including civil society, industry, academia and international organizations remains committed and engaged to the ATT-progress. The ATT expert groups hosted by Saferworld in 2020-2021 were for example invaluable for us to advance our knowledge and thinking on the ATT in the COVID-19 world. The impressive roster of side-events hosted by various non-state stakeholders are further evidence that they are vital drivers of the ATT process.

Apart from extending our community of values, we would also like to deepen our common understanding of the ATT norms. The rules as laid down in the Treaty text seem clear. The rules as applied in practice are less so. There is ample scope to learn from one another and establish best practices. In our view, the best way of doing so, would be to discuss concrete cases of arms transfer authorizations. We look forward to the first substantial meeting of the Diversion Information Exchange Forum in order to discuss such cases involving diversion. We stand ready to contribute to this information exchange. We however believe that such an exchange is also needed and possible on cases in the absence of diversion, for example under the WGETI. In such a session we could for example look at the risk assessment carried out under article 7 of the ATT in concrete cases.

A meaningful and informed discussion about the way that the ATT is applied, requires transparency on what transfers we, as state parties, authorize and carry out. The Netherlands strives to be as transparent as possible by publishing all export authorizations that were denied and granted on a two-monthly basis. We stand ready to discuss these with all stakeholders to the ATT. We appreciate discussions with civil society and industry and we welcome questions from parliament on these transfers. We feel our policy can only benefit and get better if all relevant parties are well informed and engaged.

We are therefore saddened by the continuous decline in reporting rates and the decreased willingness by States Parties to report publicly. If this trend is continued, it will seriously hamper our work on the ATT. The Netherlands is a proud sponsor to the Control Arms ATT Monitor, which has established a clear and systematic track record of ATT implementation in this regard. We will take the recommendations to heart and encourage all other State Parties to improve their reporting practice.

Equally, we are grateful to the Working Group on Treaty Reporting for their work in updating and further clarifying the reporting templates. We are very pleased that the option to submit ATT reports to the UN Register of Conventional Arms has been included to lighten the reporting workload and thereby take away a further barrier to reporting.

As champion of action 21 of the Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament to build understanding on the impact of arms on conflict management, we welcome the thematic focus on eradicating the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and ensuring adequate stockpile management. We welcome the recommendations in the President's paper that should provide a clear impetus on bringing this work forward.

Finally, the Netherlands would like to reiterate its previous calls to provide the ATT with a solid financial foundation. It is disappointing that so many ATT State Parties still fail to comply with their financial obligations on time and in full. It is the only way to guarantee that we can continue our work implementing the Treaty. We urge those States with outstanding contributions and in particular those with significant arrears to fulfil their financial obligations as soon as possible.

In closing, the Netherlands would like to reiterate its commitment and conviction that together we can successfully further the ATT's objectives. We stand ready to do our part.

Thank you.