

**Ninth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty**

**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ATT PROGRAMME OF WORK PROPOSAL**

**24 August 2023**

**Delivered by: Ms. Charlie Linney, on behalf of Control Arms**

Madam President,

After nine years of Arms Trade Treaty discussions - which have, so far, largely focused on procedural considerations and the development of guidelines - Control Arms welcomes the opportunity to take stock and review the ATT programme of work.

However, we believe that many substantive points in the latest draft of the Management Committee proposal are under-developed and raise further questions, which can best be addressed concretely over the course of the CSP10 cycle.

The draft paper clearly articulates and apparently acknowledges many of the concerns raised by States Parties during the 12 May session - including that any reform of the ATT process should primarily seek to support the Treaty implementation and priorities, and therefore consider the outcome of the WGETI configuration discussion *before* any decision is taken on the form of the Working Groups. In other words: form should follow function.

However, what follows, and what appears in the draft Final Report, largely ignores this logic. The two draft papers instead focus very much on form, with little to say on what that proposed form will ultimately deliver.

The Management Committee proposal and draft Final Report recommend reducing the ATT programme of work to one in-person session of up to four days of Working Group meetings per cycle, and one in-person session of up to two days of CSP preparatory meetings per cycle. Given that the new substantive configuration for the WGETI has yet to be decided and developed into a multi-year workplan, it bears noting: this appears to place form before function, *not* function before form.

There are also recommendations that the two formal sessions be “supplemented, if necessary, by informal intersessional consultations that could include small group meetings of interested delegates and regional meetings”. We do see that informal sessions could have significant benefit, and we appreciate the further clarification on this matter in the revisions to paragraphs 35 to 37 of the draft Final Report circulated during the lunch break. However, we still believe that this proposal is far too under-developed to even consider implementing on a trial basis, and leaves many questions unanswered. For example ...

- What are these informal meetings designed to achieve?
- What subjects would be considered legitimate for informal consultations, and who decides?
- How will informal meetings be structured to encourage greater participation and practical discussions, given the currently low levels of engagement by States Parties during the Working Group meetings?
- Will informal meetings benefit from interpretation services?

- How is success to be measured, who decides, and by what metrics?

These are just a few of the outstanding questions that need to be interrogated and resolved. Launching straight into a format that incorporates informal meetings into a trial period without addressing these questions risks further harming the ATT process.

The main suggestion of detail in the draft Final Report is that “informal intersessional consultations should take place, as appropriate, virtually or using the Information Exchange Platform located in the restricted area of the ATT website”. This is the same platform that was described by states during the discussions in May as barely used and not interactive, and that would exclude many stakeholders - including civil society and industry.

Without clear answers to these questions, among others, it is hard to see how such sessions will support the stated objective of “inclusive, collaborative, efficient, and broad participation”.

Madam President, we are clearly not in a position to answer all these questions or address all these shortcomings by the end of this week. Instead, elaborating on the objectives and modalities of any informal intersessional activity would be an appropriate, useful and logical task for the CSP10 cycle.

Control Arms understands that the next cycle will involve a degree of stock-taking and reflection as we approach the 10th anniversary of the Treaty; this provides a clear opportunity to further develop these conversations on the substance of the WGETI and the appropriate ATT programme of work that should follow, to design an effective framework. Only then can we consider implementing changes on a trial basis.

These are not decisions that should be taken lightly. Control Arms stands ready to engage constructively to continue these discussions over the course of the CSP10 cycle.

Thank you.

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