



ICRC

5TH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ARMS TRADE TREATY 28 August 2019, Geneva

Statement of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Transparency and Reporting

Thank you, Co-Chairs.

The ICRC wishes to thank Belgium and Mexico for steering the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting during the course of this year. In our view, the discussions in this Working Group are critical, with transparency playing a key role in the Treaty and all its provisions.

Indeed, being able to take part in such an exchange is one of the privileges of becoming a party to the ATT and participating in this Conference. The sharing of information on implementation facilitates cooperation and assistance among States Parties, allowing them to identify needs and good practices. It is an essential means of developing a culture of responsibility and accountability in the international arms trade.

The ICRC echoes the concerns expressed by several States about the increased prevalence of confidential reporting. In the ICRC's view, public availability of reports should be the goal. Public reporting plays an important role in promoting wide awareness and accountability among officials, industry and the general public about the national systems for controlling the transfer of conventional arms, reinforcing efforts to universalize the Treaty and implement its provisions to the highest possible standards.

The ICRC notes with appreciation the practice of those States who have updated their initial reports to reflect changes in their measures aimed at Treaty implementation. The effectiveness of the ATT, as well as national measures aimed at its implementation, is amplified by the open exchange of information and practices in line with its object and purpose.

But there is still way to go in achieving transparent and – in particular – timely reporting that provides useful insights into implementation of the ATT. The ICRC shares the view expressed by a number of States Parties that an exploration of means to improve compliance with mandatory reporting obligations should be prioritized.

A better understanding of the obstacles stopping States Parties from reporting is needed in order to be able to find ways to overcome them. The ICRC acknowledges the emphasis placed by the co-Chairs on these goals, as reflected in the proposed mandate for the coming year.

In particular, the ICRC welcomes the proposal made by the co-Chairs to discuss reviewing the reporting templates endorsed by this Conference in 2016, and thanks the Co-Chairs for the compilation of views on the templates. Reporting that is detailed, accurate, consistent, corresponds to all aspects of the Treaty (whether obligatory or voluntary) and comparable

over time is critical to achieving the ATT's humanitarian purpose. Robust, straight-forward and user-friendly initial and annual reporting templates are a critical tool for supporting effective implementation of the ATT.

Thank you.