



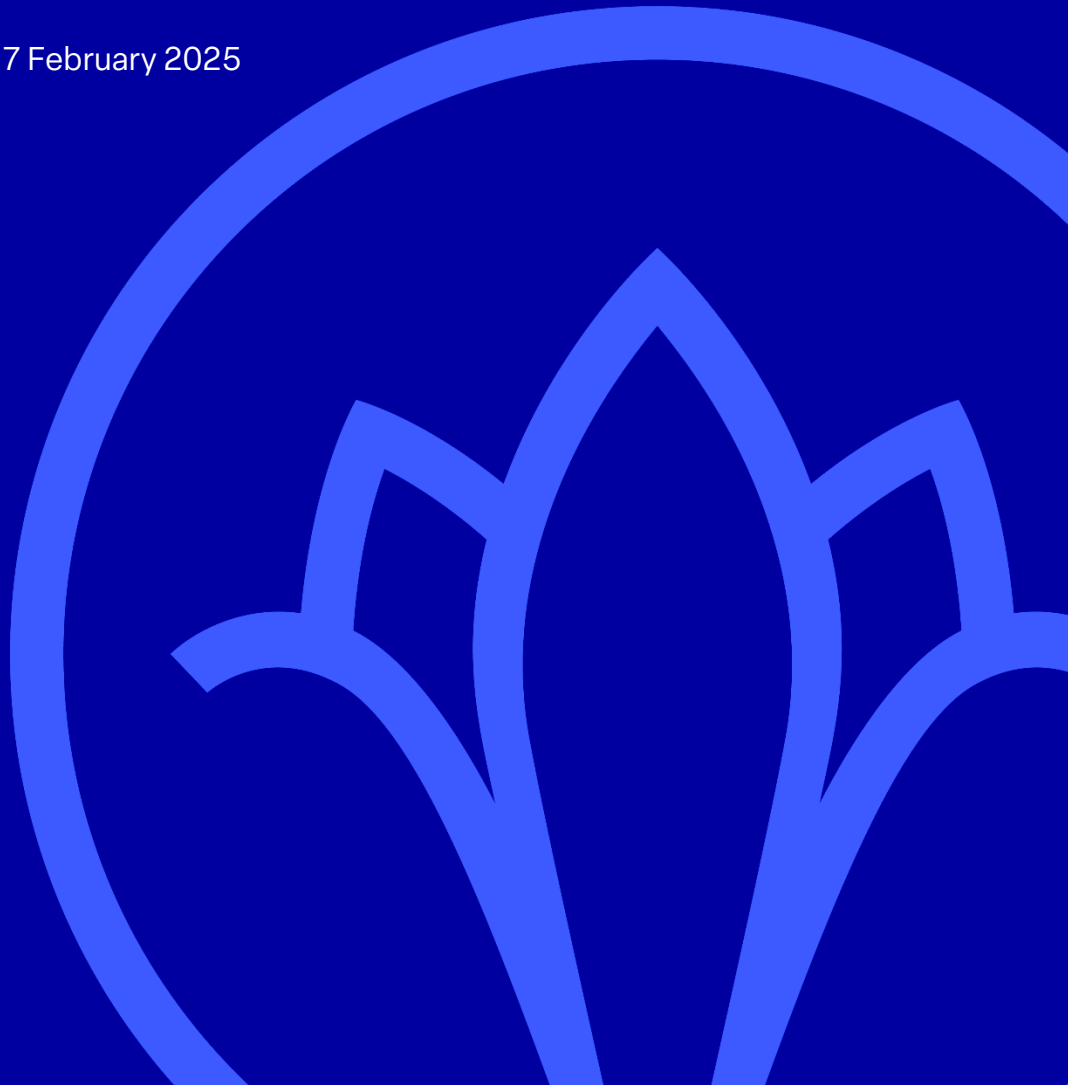
**Wilton
Park**

**Report:
Advancing the ATT: The role of
interagency cooperation and the
next decade of the ATT**

Wednesday 5 – Friday 7 February 2025

In association with

UK Foreign, Commonwealth
and Development Office,
and Romanian Ministry of
Foreign Affairs



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This Wilton Park Conference aimed to create a safe space to advance discussions on the 10th Conference of States Parties to the ATT (CSP10) Presidency's theme of interagency cooperation, the recommendations adopted at the Conference, and the recommendations of Stimson Center's 'The ATT at 10' Report. The two day in-person conference gave States, civil society and industry an opportunity to reflect and consider practical next steps both to support and deliver the implementation of the interagency theme, and the future direction of the ATT itself.

During the conference, the participants discussed the major successes and challenges of the ATT over its first decade and the progress made in achieving its wider objectives. They also looked at what the next decade of the Treaty would look like, and what steps the ATT community would need to take to fulfil its object and purpose. In order to do this, they first reflected on the key insights and recommendations shared at CSP10 with a focus on enhancing universalisation and implementation of the Treaty. The participants then took a deep dive on the CSP10 theme of interagency cooperation, considering what the challenges are for effective interagency cooperation in the ATT context, how they affect practical Treaty implementation and universalisation, and what next steps are required to overcome these challenges and implement the CSP10s outcomes. The discussions culminated by looking towards

CSP11 and the coming years as participants considered what key actions would be required to consolidate ATT objectives moving forward, what unresolved issues would need to be addressed, and how the legacy of CSP10 and its focus on the role of interagency cooperation could be maintained.

Executive summary

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) entered into force in 2014. In its first ten years, discussions have primarily focused on developing the Treaty structures and institutions. While the Treaty can point to some successes such as greater transparency and accountability in the trade of conventional arms and the strengthening of national-level regulations and capacities for arms transfer control, its impact in terms of reducing human suffering and saving lives is harder to measure. What is clear, however, is that there are still challenges in implementation as well as to the further universalisation of the Treaty.

Implementation challenges include the lack of a mechanisms or forum to review how effectively states have implemented the Treaty, noting that there is some divergence in how States Parties understand and apply some of the provisions. In addition, many discussions in the first decade focused on diversion. Recommendations for fostering greater engagement in the ATT include:

- Further discussions on implementing measures such as national control lists, improved legislation, import regulations and export assessments relating to conventional arms;
- Exploring how to apply the ATT across complex supply chains and in respect of emerging technologies; and
- Encouraging sustained engagement from States Parties through a 5-10 year ATT strategy.

Universalisation challenges include the comprehensive nature of the ATT's provisions adding to an already wide-ranging international disarmament and arms control agenda. In addition, conversations may be perceived as superficial, given that diplomats tend to outnumber technical experts in discussions. Some States Parties may be hesitant to share politically sensitive challenges concerning arms transfer regulation openly with an international audience. Recommendations for the future include:

- Holding five-yearly meetings with technical experts;
- Organising more meetings outside of Geneva to bring the ATT closer to other regions;

- Organising ad hoc meetings for States Parties wishing to discuss shared challenges.

The decision of the Romanian Presidency of CSP10 to establish interagency cooperation as its theme could have far-reaching consequences in shaping the future landscape of international arms transfer control and ATT implementation. The [CSP10 Presidency working paper on Interagency Cooperation](#) focuses on relevant state systems and on establishing ‘the highest possible common international standards for regulating or improving the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms’.

Experience has shown that, in terms of interagency cooperation ‘no one size fits all’ and there is no single structure to adopt an interagency strategy as each country has its own governance structures, legal frameworks, and institutional capacities. While there can be challenges to interagency cooperation, such as a lack of trust and history of cooperation among key government institutions working on arms transfer control, there are undoubtedly significant benefits including holistic arms transfer decision-making and risk mitigation, as well as improved transparency and reporting. The CSP10 discussions on interagency cooperation yielded several key recommendations for future action:

- States should engage in voluntary information sharing in relation to national experiences and best practices for interagency cooperation;
- ATT Working Groups should consider integrating the topic of interagency cooperation into their discussions and guidance documents;
- Existing voluntary guidance on ATT implementation could be expanded to include recommendations on interagency cooperation; and
- States are encouraged to use the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund to support projects aimed at improving interagency coordination.

The Head of the ATT Secretariat has several key priorities for CSP11 including:

- Strengthening transparency and accountability with a focus on compliance and fostering information exchange;
- Seeking to understand of why reporting levels are still low and launch a reporting champions initiative; and
- Fostering more inclusive and diverse engagement and a better integration of gender perspectives.

Looking to the next decade, the ATT Secretariat will consider:

- Reflecting on how the Treaty operates and reimagining aspects such as the structure of Working Groups, the management committee, the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) and the Diversion Information Exchange Forum (DIEF);
- Revisiting past CSP themes and considering how to ensure that each theme builds on the previous ones;
- Undertaking regional outreach to build relationships with key counterparts, especially in the Global South;
- How to bring discussions on effective Treaty implementation in specific cases from side events to the Working Groups; and
- How to advance universalisation, including through a better understanding of what has worked in respect of the ratification processes in different contexts.

The ATT's objectives of regulating the conventional arms trade and preventing diversion are highly relevant in the current geopolitical environment. While there are some quick fixes such as streamlining the ATT website, long-term sustained collaborations between ATT States Parties, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the Secretariat will be needed for the ATT to maintain momentum in furthering effective implementation and universalisation, as well as to preserve its culture of constructive collaboration. In this light, this meeting has demonstrated how holding frank, constructive exchanges on the ATT outside of Geneva can create space for creativity and blue-sky thinking.

Part 1. Recapping CSP10 and the first decade of the ATT

On 24 December 2014, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) entered into force marking the culmination of years of work by civil society, governments, and other international stakeholders, who found common ground and purpose to negotiate and adopt the first multilateral instrument governing the global trade in conventional arms. The ATT now provides the only global legally-binding agreement concerning regulation of the international transfer of conventional arms. It offers a unique platform for information exchange and cooperation and a mechanism for assessing the impact of arms transfers on international human rights and humanitarian law and gender-based violence. Many of the ATT's architects hoped that the ATT would significantly curtail the illicit and irresponsible transfer of conventional arms and reduce human suffering, while providing much-needed transparency and accountability in the arms trade. However, progress towards these goals has been insufficient and there is significant

frustration at the lack of effective implementation as well as universalisation of the Treaty in its first decade. The vision, hope, and expectations attached to the ATT are still to be realised.

Nevertheless, ten years is a relatively short period of time within which to change global norms and state behaviour. Moreover, the Treaty itself does not contain quantitative metrics whereby success can be judged, and it is practically impossible to measure how many lives may have been saved by arms transfers that never occurred. The ATT itself, and its formalisation of the link between the arms trade, international law, and human suffering is a huge normative achievement. Furthermore, the Treaty has spurred the adoption or enhancement of national-level regulations and capacities for arms transfer control, while the concept of transparency and accountability in the arms trade is now well-established.

Thus far, the principal focus of the formal ATT process has been on the Treaty structures and institutions including the development of guidance for Treaty implementation. Few discussions have been held on how States Parties are applying the Treaty's provisions in their arms transfers. Although difficult at times, when such conversations have occurred most States Parties have reaffirmed their commitment to keeping the dialogue practical and constructive. Implementation challenges exist for many states, particularly those with limited capacity for and experience with international arms transfer control. Many such states are not often involved in exporting arms; accordingly, implementation support is required to focus on the whole transfer chain including states that are primarily a locus for transit or transshipment of conventional arms. Challenges to universalisation also exist; in particular in some regions and subregions where there is an apparent lack of understanding of the Treaty. Tailored approaches will be required, responding to states' particular concerns and perspectives.

Part 2. Enhancing universalisation and implementation of the ATT over the next decade

As the ATT matures into its second decade of existence, it will need to demonstrate its contribution to peace, security and stability, reducing human suffering, and promoting cooperation, transparency and responsible actions by States Parties in the international conventional arms trade in an increasingly complex global environment. This will involve enhancing Treaty implementation by the 116 current States Parties, as

well as further universalisation of the Treaty to bring on-board additional States Parties, particularly in under-represented regions.

Nevertheless, pursuing universalisation, implementation and transparency simultaneously involves trade-offs. For example, maximising universalisation efforts can bring in states that may have limited resources or political will to fully implement the Treaty. Conversely, ambitious approaches towards ensuring the full and transparent implementation of the Treaty's provisions, including by scrutinising potential cases of non-compliance, could discourage some non-States Parties from ratifying or acceding to the ATT.

Implementation challenges

Ensuring the continued effectiveness and credibility of the Treaty will involve overcoming deficits in the political will to implement actions required by the Treaty, such as reporting and the systematic application of ATT criteria in the context of arms export risk assessments. It will also involve addressing how national control systems operate in practice, as the ATT currently has no review mechanism or forum to examine States Parties' arms transfer decisions in the context of conflict and crises, as well as serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed or facilitated by internationally transferred conventional arms. This may become more difficult if national interpretations of the legal provisions within Articles 6 and 7 begin to diverge due to changes in the geopolitical climate. While the constructive and relatively apolitical nature of ATT discussions is an asset, there may be some scope for peer-to-peer reviews of State Party implementation on a voluntary basis, which could help to build trust. Moving forward, States Parties – both existing and aspiring – should make better use of what has been achieved so far, namely the creation of a wealth of guidance for enhancing and improving national arms transfer control systems as well as a plethora of mechanisms for constructive exchanges.

One of the key strengths of the ATT is its comprehensive approach to preventing internationally transferred conventional arms being used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL) through a range of measures such as national control lists, improved legislation, import regulations and export assessments relating to conventional arms. Recent CSPs, however, have focused largely on themes related to diversion as well as technocratic aspects such as the role of industry and interagency cooperation. As a consequence, many stakeholders from the fields of disarmament, human rights and conflict prevention who were instrumental to the establishment of the Treaty, and who

have a crucial role to play in promoting its universalisation and implementation, have chosen to allocate less of their increasingly limited time and resources to the ATT. Revitalising interagency and cross-sectoral cooperation on topics such as national Treaty implementation and IHL/IHRL might help to motivate relevant stakeholders to return to the Treaty process and contribute to more effective Treaty implementation that harnesses synergies with other instruments. Such a strategy may require a more flexible approach to assistance on Treaty implementation, and more localised engagement.

Effective Treaty implementation also involves addressing the whole supply chain, including brokering, transit and trans-shipments in addition to imports and exports. Moreover, as arms technologies evolve, so too does the nature of the arms trade. New technologies used in the arms industry, such as 3D printing and artificial intelligence, can be traded internationally without any goods crossing physical borders. There is little appetite to revise the Treaty text, particularly Article 4 on parts and components, in light of these changes. This could risk the weakening of its provisions. Therefore, States Parties will need to explore how to apply the Treaty's existing provisions as the nature of these arms-related supply chains evolve.

Universalisation challenges

While the wide-ranging parameters of the ATT create the potential for the Treaty to be impactful, the expansiveness of the ATT's provisions can be daunting for states that are considering ratifying the Treaty, particularly given the large number of government ministries and stakeholders that need to be involved in its implementation. The scope and activities of the ATT, coupled with the plethora of pre-existing commitments arising from already-established disarmament and arms control agreements, may discourage some states from joining the Treaty for fear of increasing the burden on already stretched resources.

ATT meetings are most useful when they bring together technical experts from capitals in order to discuss innovative solutions to shared challenges in their work. In practice, however, most delegates at ATT meetings are diplomats and thus discussions can be somewhat superficial. Moreover, for those delegates who have come from capitals, it can be intimidating to share challenges openly in international, Geneva-based, venues in front of other states who may not have a good understanding of their specific regional or national context. Some may prefer to engage with regional instruments rather than international mechanisms such as the ATT.

Fostering higher quality ATT engagement is crucial to fostering greater universalisation. One option would be to convene technical expert meetings to review Treaty implementation on a 5-yearly basis. Holding these meetings outside of Geneva could be a way of bringing the ATT closer to other regions. Similarly, it may be more effective to complement the CSP cycle with smaller ad hoc meetings of states. These could convene likeminded states with a similar profile (e.g. those that are major exporters or mainly importers) or states from the same region or sub-region. States may be more willing to share challenges with a smaller group in a more familiar context, creating the conditions for more open and in-depth technical discussions. The VTF could be used to fund some of these discussions.

Addressing larger challenges related to implementation and universalisation requires coordinated, long-term efforts. One option could be to frame the ATT's annual themes within a longer 5-10 year ATT strategy. Interested States Parties could also volunteer to provide sustained engagement to the Secretariat and successive chairs as 'friends of the ATT'.

Part 3. Interagency cooperation

Overview

The Romanian Presidency of 10th Conference of States Parties (CSP10) chose interagency cooperation as its central theme, aiming to move from theory to practical action. This focus could aid in shaping future arms trade policies and strengthen efforts to prevent illicit arms flows. During the February 2024 ATT Working Groups, the Presidency highlighted that effective implementation cuts across many Treaty articles, from establishing and maintaining a national control system; controlling international transfers of conventional arms; and countering diversion and enforcing national laws and regulations. No single government agency, ministry or institution can implement the Treaty alone; structured and institutionalised cooperation is essential.

To support this, the ATT has developed several tools over past conferences, including the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF, CSP2, 2016), Working Groups (CSP3, 2017) and the Diversion Information Exchange Forum (DIEF, CSP6, 2020). The ATT's role as a unique platform for collaboration and exchange has been further strengthened by the adoption by the multiyear workplans for the Working Groups on effective Treaty implementation (WGTEI), transparency and reporting (WGTR) and Treaty universalisation (WGTU).

National approaches to interagency cooperation

Experience has shown that there is no ‘one size fits all’ model for interagency cooperation. Each country’s approach reflects its governance structures, legal frameworks and institutional capacities. Some have centralised arms control agencies, while others use inter-ministerial committees or multi-agency review bodies, which may be permanent or ad hoc. Despite these differences, the core principle remains: successful ATT implementation depends on structured, institutionalised cooperation between all relevant agencies.

CSP10 discussions highlighted the diversity of national systems and suggested that analysing States Parties’ Initial Reports could help demonstrate these varied approaches. By sharing experiences and lessons learned, states can improve their own processes and address common challenges.

Challenges to interagency cooperation include:

- Lack of awareness of ATT roles and responsibilities amongst institutions;
- Institutional fragmentation, with responsibilities divided across multiple bodies;
- Frequent staff turnover, disrupting continuity; and
- Resource disparities between agencies

Benefits of interagency cooperation include:

- Holistic decision-making and risk mitigation, as multiple authorities contribute to transfer authorisations;
- Efficiency and resource optimisation, reducing duplication;
- Improved transparency and reporting, as accurate data from multiple agencies is required to meet ATT reporting obligations; and
- Strengthening compliance, as effective cooperation ensures national laws are followed and potential violations are identified and responded to.

The CSP10 discussions yielded several key recommendations:

- States should voluntarily share information on national experiences and best practices for interagency cooperation;
- ATT Working Groups should consider integrating the topic of interagency cooperation into their discussions and guidance documents;
- Existing voluntary guidance on ATT implementation could be expanded to include recommendations on interagency cooperation;

- States are encouraged to use the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund to support projects aimed at improving interagency coordination; and
- A voluntary reference document outlining key elements of interagency cooperation could be useful to states looking to develop or refine their national processes.

Interagency cooperation and ATT reporting

Interagency cooperation is vital for fulfilling ATT reporting obligations under Article 13. Compiling Initial Reports (on national measures) and Annual Reports (on arms imports and exports) requires collaboration across agencies. While 81% of States Parties have submitted Initial Reports, Annual Report compliance has declined from 87% in 2015 to 62% in 2024. The fact that it is a legal obligation to report under the ATT suggests that there is some way to go, both in terms of reporting compliance and demonstrating that the ATT is an effective instrument. There are a variety of reasons for the unsatisfactory levels of reporting from capacity challenges to sub-optimal functionality within the ATT and UNROCA online reporting systems. These include:

- A lack of interagency cooperation and trust between ministries (e.g. foreign affairs and data holding ministries)¹
- Inadequate or inconsistent record-keeping practices;
- Limited understanding of Treaty reporting obligations; and
- Insufficient resources and training, compounded by staff turnover. coupled with staff turnover.

Many of these deficiencies could be addressed through effective interagency cooperation, such as a reporting calendar shared between focal points in different ministries, regular inter-ministerial meetings, and the development of standard operating procedures. International assistance, including training and VTF-funded projects, can help build national capacities. It is also important that both working-level and senior officials engage in ATT Working Group meetings to ensure comprehensive engagement.

¹ This was a key factor highlighted during a UNIDIR workshop held in Monrovia in March 2024 attended by 19 African states.

Interagency cooperation and national systems

The CSP10 Presidency working paper on interagency cooperation and wider ATT discussions focus mainly on a state's arms export control systems and establishing 'the highest possible common international standards for regulating or improving the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms' with a view to preventing and combating the illicit trade in conventional arms. At the national level, interagency cooperation supports these efforts by fostering information sharing and the development of synergies between the relevant government ministries as well as law enforcement, intelligence and customs. At the international level, the ATT Diversion Information Exchange Forum (DIEF) performs a unique function that facilitates discussions between states on cases of diversion and illicit trafficking; civil society and industry might also be able to provide their own particular insights. International assistance is provided to states which can help to prevent and combat diversion, however more information, for example in relation to relevant VTF-supported projects, could be made available.

The ATT encourages States Parties to 'apply the provisions of this Treaty to the broadest range of conventional arms', alongside controlling transfers of the seven UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) categories, small arms and light weapons, their parts and components. States are increasingly using other regulatory tools, over and above arms export controls, to regulate the international arms trade. This is creating challenges for interagency cooperation within states and cooperation between states. Factors driving this include:

- Companies and research institutes within the 'civilian sector' are now at the forefront of developing and producing technologies with relevance for military and security systems, including in artificial intelligence (AI), space exploration, and quantum technologies. Such new technologies are not captured within the scope of the ATT. As such, interagency cooperation mechanisms established to facilitate ATT implementation may not be able to address the increasing role of new technologies in the international arms trade.
- Drones, semi-conductors, electronics and other parts and components are playing an increasing role in active conflicts. Such items are often manufactured within the civilian economy for civilian end-use, so are more likely to fall outside the scope of the ATT, any associated interagency cooperation mechanisms, and established arms transfer control mechanisms.

States seeking to respond to these challenges are finding that traditional arms export controls often have little impact. Appropriate regulation of the transfer of parts and components for such technologies and systems also poses significant challenges for conventional arms control interagency cooperation mechanisms. As a consequence, states are increasingly turning to:

- Implementing dual-use export controls covering technologies such as quantum computers, additive manufacturing tools and semi-conductors;
- Applying sanctions measures to prevent transfers of sensitive technologies that are being integrated into weapon systems used by Russia in Ukraine.
- Expanding Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) screening covering a wider range of investments and identifying transfers of knowledge and technology that could benefit a recipient state's defence and security capabilities.

In addition, post-shipment controls, which have been extensively discussed within the ATT CSP process, could be applied by exporting states as a condition on which export licences for new and old technologies are granted. Decisions on such matters could be taken on the basis of interagency discussions, involving mechanisms established for ATT implementation.

Some states centralise all controls under one agency, while others create separate bodies, each approach presenting its own challenges and opportunities. The ATT provides a forum to discuss the domestic and international challenges caused by the growing use of overlapping policy tools; it also can address their impact on actors such as companies and research institutes who are increasingly subject to export controls, sanctions' applications and FDI screening. Moreover, states should pay attention to how such policy tools are integrated, coordinated and aligned at the national level. Discussion should also focus on how to ensure that Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDT) are not used in ways that violate ATT provisions.

Interagency cooperation, data sharing and transparency

Data sharing among agencies is often hindered by commercial confidentiality, political sensitivities, national security concerns and inconsistent recordkeeping. Incomplete or misleading data, fluctuating attitudes to transparency, and bureaucratic rivalries further complicate matters. Trust-building is essential for improving cooperation between government agencies. To this end, data should be presented in a way that avoids creating problems for particular institutions.

Systemic issues include:

- Discrepancies between government and industry records, leading to inconsistencies in official reporting;
- Lack of communication and harmonisation between agencies classification and interpretation of information;
- Misconceptions about reporting, such as overestimating reporting obligations, leading to unnecessary administrative burden; and
- Insufficient senior-level awareness, affecting the prioritisation and content of reporting.

The ATT presents an opportunity for greater interaction among agencies that typically do not collaborate, such as licensing, law enforcement, and customs. Expanding such engagement could help address systemic inefficiencies and improve implementation. The designation of focal points for licensing officers could facilitate more structured exchanges and encouraging peer-to-peer exchanges can help to disseminate best practices and reduce the burden of compliance.

Obstacles to interagency cooperation

There are several identifiable obstacles to interagency cooperation, including:

- Potential rivalry and unclear mandates across government agencies;
- Gaps in legislation and absence of cooperation requirements;
- Competing political agendas and resource constraints;
- Staff turnover and loss of institutional memory;
- Lack of technical expertise and engagement across all relevant officials;
- Multiplicity of disarmament and arms control processes, reducing the scope for effective cooperation across all commitments.

Finally, while building institutional capacities on ATT-related issues is important for Treaty implementation, public and parliamentary support is also critical. There is a need to enhance public perceptions of and support for the ATT and to engage political parties and parliament.

Interagency coordination and policy

There is a lot of international attention in the area of arms transfers. National legislation and regulations need to be aligned with the ATT, without this, it is very difficult to implement the Treaty. For example, in many countries where there is lack of border control, this lack of regulation allows transnational organised crime to flourish.

There are barriers to effective implementation of the ATT at national, international and local levels. The ATT is an international obligation, but different agencies within national and international systems have different mandates and responsibilities which create impediments to the development of a culture of information-sharing and a tendency to work in silos.

At the national level, it is important to identify all relevant institutions involved in ATT implementation. In addition, an interagency mechanism needs to be established to ensure that government bodies concerned with ATT implementation understand their role. National-level leadership is also required to ensure that relevant policies are applied consistently, and human and financial resources are conserved.

Finally, changes of national government leadership and in the national political environment can undermine consistency of implementation. It is imperative that there is good handover between administrations, as well as good record keeping reinforcing the national framework and galvanise implementation irrespective of changes in government.

Part 4. The way ahead: conclusions and next steps for CPS11 and beyond

The new ATT Secretariat's priorities

The ATT Secretariat's priorities for CSP11 will be transparency and accountability with a focus on compliance and fostering information exchanges. For example, the Secretariat will try to better understand why reporting levels are still low and launch a reporting champions initiative. It will also continue to collaborate with the important regional initiatives supported by the European Union (EU) in Latin America and West Africa. In addition, it will also seek to engage more with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and regional bodies such as the African Union (AU), Organization of American States (OAS) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to promote ATT implementation and universalisation.

As part of this endeavour, the Secretariat will develop measurable implementation metrics to better understand whether the support they currently offer is having its intended impact in terms of improving compliance and universalisation. These metrics could also be used to demonstrate the security and economic benefits of joining the Treaty.

Another priority of the ATT Secretariat is to foster more inclusive and diverse engagement, including a better integration of gender perspectives. With a view to encouraging more women to present, take the floor and head delegations, as well as to promoting greater participation from a larger number of States Parties overall, the Secretariat is re-examining how it measures meaningful participation. One step it has already taken is to request delegates to register for all meetings in the CSP cycle, not just the conference itself, for the purposes of collecting gender-disaggregated data on who is participating in the ATT process

Finally, the financial stability of the ATT is an important priority for the Secretariat. Planned measures include earlier engagement with states in arrears. The Secretariat will also explore whether there are technical issues such as high bank fees that make it difficult for state to pay their annual contributions. In addition, the Secretariat will look into the feasibility of replicating the model of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Provisional Technical Secretariat, which accepts voluntary in-kind and financial contributions from states and private sector entities in addition to annual contributions from States Parties.

Regarding the Working Group meetings themselves, the aim is to have better structured, more dynamic and engaging discussions throughout the CSP11 cycle. To facilitate this, there will be more time allocated for discussions on a smaller number of topics:

- The Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation (WGETI) will discuss imports, gender-based violence, and Mexico's gender focal point proposal.
- The Working Group on Treaty Universalization (WGTU) will have national presentations on the ratification process.
- The Working Group on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR) will focus on transfer reports to the ATT Secretariat from the perspective of national implementation practices regarding reporting.

Unfortunately, the shortage of nominations for Working Group chairs and sub-Working Group Chairs remains an ongoing challenge. Without states volunteering to take up Treaty leadership roles, the Secretariat must step in to lead the committee, which does not reflect well on state prioritisation of the Treaty. Currently States Parties in arrears cannot chair Working Groups, but a more flexible approach could have net benefits for the Treaty, and allow for greater leadership and opportunities, which could help national leaders understand the Treaty's value and importance.

Defining the ATT's path in the next decade

The first decade of the Treaty, shepherded by a single Head of Secretariat, focused on establishing the bureaucratic structures of the Treaty. With the foundations now established, having a new Secretariat Head provides an opportunity to reflect on how the Treaty operates and to reimagine aspects such as the structure of Working Groups, the management committee, the VTF and the DIEF. Another consideration could be around promoting greater inclusion by expanding the reach of the Treaty to more governmental and civil society actors outside of Geneva. There is also an opportunity to revisit some of the past CSP themes and to consider how to ensure that each theme builds on the previous one.

The ATT has to be considered within the context of other disarmament and arms control mechanisms. This year, the Working Group meetings clash with the high-level segments of the Human Rights Council and the Conference on Disarmament for the second year running. The Secretariat will coordinate with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs moving forward to try and prevent overlapping meeting dates. Delegates will also be given a more detailed work plan with clear guiding questions, but less reading material overall, so they can come prepared and involve technical experts as necessary.

An important aspect of promoting the ATT is regional outreach to build personal relationships with key counterparts, especially in the Global South. The sponsorship programme is one effective way of bringing delegates to Geneva, but there could be more clarity on what the Secretariat expects from those who participate in the programme. In the past, regional outreach by CSP Presidents was effective, but it depends on the financial means and priorities of their respective states.

The CSP11 Cycle also presents a window of opportunity to consider several specific functions of the Treaty in more detail.

Implementing articles 5, 6 and 7

On the one hand, it would be timely to reflect on how to bring discussions on effective Treaty implementation in specific cases from side events to the Working Groups, the focus needs to be on building trust and confidence by adopting a 'no surprises' approach.

On the other hand, it could be worth considering whether the rigidity of Working Groups is itself a hindrance. Rather than waiting up to a year for the next Working

Group meetings, it might be possible to arrange informal meetings to discuss crisis situations as they arise. Carefully crafted terms of references could allow for specific forums similar to the DIFE, to be convened when a crisis develops. Such forums could facilitate information exchange whereby states, and potentially international organisations and CSOs working on the ground in the relevant contexts, could share and triangulate their data. Having accurate and up-to-date data would support Member States in better applying the Treaty's provisions on prohibitions and risk assessments, and to identify the most appropriate and feasible mitigation measures to prevent diversion and associated serious violations of IHL and IHRL.

Another approach, given the sensitivity of these issues in some cases, would be to discuss theoretical exercises as a means to share insights and good practices. Under this model, states could champion thematic issues such as transit, and focus their interventions in specific domains.

Transparency and reporting

Reporting compliance faces several longstanding issues, such as the lack of institutional memory when staff turnover, especially where there is no handover or national standard operating procedures, meaning that sometimes people tasked with reporting do not understand what the requirements are or what they mean. There can also be challenges in accessing necessary data from security ministries.

There are, however, several potential ways to remedy reporting challenges, and thoughtful consultations with States Parties may identify more. For example, currently only one person per member state can have an account on the reporting platform, so it requires this individual to prioritise what is usually a time-consuming task. Moreover, this individual may feel embarrassed about submitting a late report, or updating a report.

The Secretariat could therefore look into options to allow multiple users to input data, sending automated yet personalised reminders, and congratulating people for sending or updating reports, even if they are late. It could remedy the reporting process, by allowing states to save a draft report and complete it at a later time, meaning it has to be completed in one go.

Identifying reporting 'champions' could be an effective way of improving reporting compliance. There could be a role for civil society in this, although one issue is that there is no open access database of reporting points of contact. This also undermines

transparency, because NGOs, civil society and industry do not know whom to contact if they have follow-up questions. This is compounded by the fact that the existing website is difficult to search, there is no indication regarding whether an annual report has been updated, and no database to provide aggregated information.

Universalisation, cooperation and assistance

To advance universalisation, it would be important to gain a better understanding of what has worked when it comes to undertaking the ratification processes in different contexts. It is already clear that universalisation is a long, multi-stakeholder process and may not be achieved in a given country within the one-year mandate of a CSP chair. Longer-term engagement by regional champions could be key, and there may also be benefits in reaching out to parliamentarians who can keep the topic on the political agenda as governments change.

Moreover, while top-down approaches targeting senior officials may be more in line with established protocols, bottom-up approaches whereby VTF funding is used to support legislative reform or strengthen export controls, thus bringing a country more in line with ATT obligations, is also important in bringing about the conditions needed to ratify the ATT. This can be done most efficiently when it is coordinated with efforts related to other mechanisms like the UN Programme of Action, and can be especially effective if industry can be brought in from the beginning to understand their role in ATT implementation.

Diversion and transfer or information sharing: the future of the DIEF

The need for a DIEF in some form is more relevant than ever, given the central importance of diversion in the Treaty and its role in undermining international peace and security. Its usefulness lies in unpacking typologies of diversion through real-world examples, and identifying tangible practices to prevent diversion.

The DIEF has, however, become excessively politicised at times, and the rules of procedure have not always been strictly enforced. The current format is characterised by a large degree of apprehension on the part of States Parties. It is somewhat telling that it took a lot longer to find a new chair than for other parts of the ATT. There is often a lack of interaction, which can be because the diplomats in the room do not have the necessary technical expertise to make meaningful interventions. In addition, member states do not usually have enough advance notice regarding which cases will be discussed in order to prepare an intervention.

It could therefore be worth considering whether some alternative or complementary formats may be better suited to achieving the states objectives of the DIEF. One would be to organise regional or sub-regional ‘mini-DIEF’ sessions outside of Geneva in contexts where states would be more willing to share, and then to report back on these discussions at the CSP. Other options could be to hold a version of the DIEF at the UN Office for Drugs and Crime in Vienna, or at INTERPOL in Lyon, in order to link it with discussions and technical experts working on trafficking and transnational organised crime. Other forums such as the Wassenaar Arrangement or regional expert groups (such as the Conventional Arms Export Control (COARM) group in the EU) could provide inspiration for alternative formats. Secure hybrid formats might also be worth considering to allow a wider number of technical and regional experts to attend remotely.

An ongoing discussion at the DIEF is whether to involve civil society experts. Approaching this as a ‘yes-no’ question, however, may detract from some alternative solutions. For example, it could be possible to modify the DIEF’s terms of reference to allow the chair to invite specific CSOs or industry to attend or present. It would also be possible to have ‘break-out’ sessions in which CSOs can participate. This, as is the case for all alternative models, would benefit from states having more time to prepare their interventions, for example, during the intersessional period.

As with the discussion on applying articles 5, 6 and 7, there could also be an option to discuss theoretical or anonymised examples through table-top exercises as a means of facilitating exchanges in national practices without the risk of naming and shaming. Another shared challenge is that the DIEF could be more effective if it were more agile. The DIEF could therefore discuss mechanisms that would allow law enforcement in one country to reach out to industry in another on an ad hoc basis in order to prevent and address diversion, including by filling gaps in supply chain integrity where the existing document is not sufficient. This could serve as an early-warning mechanism to prevent the transfer of arms which could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of IHL, IHRL and gender-based violence (GBV), rather than as a forum to discuss serious crimes after the fact.

Part 5. Conclusion

There is no doubt that the ATT will face challenging times going into the next decade given the increasingly unpredictable geopolitical environment and the range of potential security challenges that may arise. In this context, the primary objectives of

the ATT, namely to establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms, and to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevent their diversion, remain as relevant as ever. For this reason, it will be important to maintain the momentum towards more effective Treaty implementation, and to seize the opportunities that having a new Head of the ATT Secretariat can bring.

In the short term, there are some easy fixes to support ATT implementation and universalisation, such as streamlining the ATT website and better showcasing past successes, including VTF projects. In the longer term, ATT States Parties will need to find a constructive way to address some of the more politically sensitive aspects of ATT implementation in order to convince prospective new States Parties of the Treaty's wider relevance.

It is clear that ensuring more effective Treaty implementation is a joint effort requiring political will and involving close collaborations between the various agencies of each of the ATT States Parties and Signatories, ATT Secretariat and CSOs. The ATT's greatest potential lies in its stakeholders supporting, rather than criticising, each other. With this in mind, thematic discussions on the technical aspects of Treaty implementation, such as accounting for transfers of parts and components used to produce arms, or enhancing transparency in relation to open-ended contracts, could be useful new areas for the ATT Working Groups to consider.

Successful ATT implementation can have far-reaching impacts, that can extend beyond the scope of the Treaty itself. For example, implementing concrete measures to prevent the misuse of conventional arms to commit or facilitate serious violations of IHRL can support the work of the Human Rights Council, while more effectively regulating the arms trade can strengthen the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. This meeting has demonstrated how holding frank, constructive exchanges on the ATT outside of Geneva can create space for creativity and blue-sky thinking. There is clearly value in expanding this practice to all regions of the world, as well as to other policy communities, in order to learn more about shared successes and challenges that could be relevant to the ATT in a variety of different contexts.

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