

Eighth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty

STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

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Mr President

Control Arms has consistently urged ATT States Parties to meet all their Treaty obligations, including their financial obligations.

Support from the VTF is crucial to building state capacity for ATT implementation in all its aspects. Limiting access to assistance will only limit implementation and universalization of the ATT.

Accordingly, we strongly urge that a state's failure to meet its financial obligations under the Treaty should not be considered grounds for disqualification from receiving VTF funding for viable projects that further the aims of ATT implementation and/or universalisation.

We fear states may be discouraged from meaningful engagement with the Treaty through a punitive approach.

Indeed, it may be that in some instances, a successful ATT implementation project, where it increases national government 'buy-in' to the ATT, increases the likelihood that the state in question will address its arrears. We therefore urge States Parties to formally agree at CSP8 that contribution arrears will not be a bar to VTF funding.

Of additional concern is that a growing number of States Parties are disbursing the majority of their ATT project funding via the VTF, which in effect reduces the extent of bilateral support outside of the Treaty framework. The lack of funding available to States outside the VTF, places an even greater onus on the VTF remaining open to all states, irrespective of their financial circumstances.

To summarise, Control Arms does not support limiting VTF assistance to fully paid-up states, and suggests instead that other means are found to encourage states to meet their financial obligations under the Treaty.

Before closing, Mr. Chair, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Higginson for her efforts in leading the work of the VTF Committee and ensuring the continuity of the VTF with only limited disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic, and for all her work in support of a robust ATT, both during its negotiation and its implementation.

Thank you Mr. Chair.