



28 August 2019

CONTROL ARMS FOUNDATION OF INDIA (CAFI) POSITION PAPER & STATEMENT FOR CSP 5 IN GENEVA

AGENDA ITEM: UNIVERSALISATION

1. The fact is that 57 UN Member countries have not yet joined and 33 members have yet to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We need to understand the reasons to their not joining and ratifying the ATT. Despite a much higher incidence of gun violence and illicit small arms proliferation, the support for ATT remains particularly weak in Asia, Oceania and Africa. For example in South Asia, other than Bangladesh all other countries have so far not joined the treaty. Similarly weak participation is found in Central Asia, West Asia and South East Asian countries.
2. Considering the fact that in the last three years, the ATT participation rate has come down and annual membership increase has been in single digit numbers, the ATT Secretariat must intensify efforts and try innovative methods to improve universalisation of the Treaty. If this low participation continues, there is a danger the Treaty loses its momentum for universalisation and the Treaty implementation processes may also run out of steam.
3. A way could be to facilitate a regional dialogue process in countries in Asian and African regions to understand their reluctance to join the ATT. Among the questions that need to be investigated include: would creating public knowledge of ATT's principles, objectives and its implementation processes develop broader public understanding of the benefits of the ATT in such countries? Would a region-based dialogues in different countries that includes public opinion makers, civil society, media and parliamentarians build a groundswell of public support and understanding of the benefits of ATT? How can this process be dovetailed into ATT's initiative for universalisation?
4. The ATT's Preamble identifies the need to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and ammunition; and to prevent their diversion to the illicit market or illegitimate end use. However, lately there has been a trend to describe the ATT as an arms control instrument, which is in fact, replicating the aims of UN Conventional Arms Register. The purpose of the UN Conventional Arms Register is to prevent excessive accumulation of destabilising weapon system and maintain regional arms transparency. Whereas the ATT was created to have independent purpose and objectives of developing arms trade and transfer accountability. These aims include:
 - i) maintain records of arms and ammunition sales for tracing;

- ii) recovery of illicit weapons by the state;
- iii) prevent diversion of arms and ammunition by the arms recipient states;
- iv) verification of legitimate end-use and certification of arms transferred to recipients over the weapons life cycle;
- v) prevent illicit manufacture of small arms and light weapons, etc.

The ATT must uphold its independent character and value of a global instrument to verify arms and ammunition transfer for legitimate end use.

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