



**UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE  
FOR DISARMAMENT RESEARCH**



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**Supporting the Arms Trade Treaty Negotiations  
through Regional Discussions and Expertise Sharing**

**Lunchtime side event**

**MESSAGES FROM THE SEMINARS  
IN THE AMERICAS AND ASIA-PACIFIC**

**13 July 2011  
New York**

**SUMMARY REPORT**

## **Introduction**

The project “Supporting the Arms Trade Treaty Negotiations through Regional Discussions and Expertise Sharing”, which UNIDIR is implementing for the European Union,<sup>1</sup> consists of a series of regional seminars and other activities to promote the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) process and reinforce states’ capacity for effective arms transfer controls. As part of the project, UNIDIR organized a side event on 13 July 2011 in the margins of the third meeting of the ATT Preparatory Committee (PrepCom). The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on the project mainly by sharing the results of its two most recent regional seminars with all relevant stakeholders gathered in New York for the PrepCom. It was also an occasion to discuss substantive elements relating to the implementation aspects of the future Treaty, especially as they relate to possible transparency measures that could be introduced at the national, regional and international levels. Presentations made at the event highlighted key messages from the regional seminars held in Montevideo for the Americas and the Caribbean, and in Bali for countries in Eastern Asia and the Pacific. Participants also heard an intervention specifically related to the possible national reporting mechanisms that could be included in an ATT. The event, held with simultaneous interpretation in English and Spanish, was attended by almost 90 representatives of governments, international and regional organizations and civil society, and received positive feedback from the target audience.

The agenda of the side event is included in the annex, and presentations made during the event are available on UNIDIR’s website at <[www.unidir.org/bdd/fiche-activite.php?ref\\_activite=631](http://www.unidir.org/bdd/fiche-activite.php?ref_activite=631)>.

## **Chair’s welcoming remarks and introduction**

The seminar was chaired by Dr. Christiane Agboton-Johnson, Deputy Director of UNIDIR, who in her welcoming remarks noted UNIDIR’s long-standing active involvement in the ATT process and gave an overview of the current EU–UNIDIR project and other, related activities ongoing at the Institute on the ATT. In addition to supporting the ATT process, UNIDIR with its activities aims at enlarging and deepening the discussions on peace and security, linking international debates with realities on the ground and bringing new issues to the table. With its ATT project, UNIDIR hopes to contribute to the PrepCom process by nurturing interaction between national-, regional- and international-level actors across policy fields.

## **Regional views from the Americas and the Caribbean**

The messages from the regional seminar held on 27–29 April 2011 in Montevideo, Uruguay, for countries in the Americas and the Caribbean were delivered by Mr. Federico Perazza, Minister from the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations in New York. He noted that the Montevideo seminar was a timely and welcomed activity, which enabled the Americas as a region to come together before the PrepCom to discuss implementation of the future ATT. The seminar brought together close to 70 representatives from Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Defense, and the armed forces from 28 of the 35 states in the region, together with expert representatives of international and regional organizations, the United Nations and civil society. Mr. Perazza noted that as a region the Americas is actively involved in the ATT process and the existence of many regional instruments, such as those developed by the Organization of American States (OAS), demonstrate the importance of security and arms control initiatives to the region. While states in the Americas and the Caribbean share many views regarding the ATT, differences in opinions and priorities do exist. This was evident in the discussions during the Montevideo seminar, where most

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<sup>1</sup> The project was established by a decision of the Council of the European Union entitled “EU activities in support of the Arms Trade Treaty, in the framework of the European Security Strategy”, 2010/336/CFSP, adopted 14 June 2010.

participants called for a comprehensive scope, which would specifically include small arms and light weapons (SALW), and a variety of objective parameters to be included in an ATT. However, others voiced concern regarding expanding the application of the Treaty too much and rather recommended it to be kept short and simple. In the implementation discussion, the primary role of national-level action and the rights and responsibilities of states were underlined by many. During the first two days of the seminar, states exchanged views about the political aspects of the implementation of the future Treaty, while the last day of the seminar elaborated the necessary national structures to implement effective transfer controls.

As Mr. Perazza noted, almost all participants of the Montevideo seminar seemed to support having some kind of institutional follow-up system as part of the Treaty. In this, the possibility of having an Implementation Support Unit was raised, and participants exchanged views on its potential roles, structure and financing. Also, meetings of States Parties and Review Conferences to facilitate implementation were discussed. The importance of national reporting as a means to increase transparency in conventional arms transfers was stressed during the seminar, even though delegates expressed differing views regarding the voluntary or compulsory nature of this reporting, and what it could or should cover.

### **Key outcomes of the seminar in Eastern Asia and the Pacific**

Implementation aspects of the future ATT were the main topic at the seminar held in Bali on 6–8 June 2011 for countries in Eastern Asia and the Pacific. The outcomes of the seminar were shared by Mr. Fikry Cassidy, Minister Counsellor from the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations in New York. In his remarks, Mr. Cassidy welcomed the initiative by the European Union and UNIDIR to organize a regional event in Bali, co-hosted by Indonesia, to touch upon some of the central issues around the future ATT. He said that it is the firm view of Indonesia that the opinions of all states and regions should be listened to in the process towards an ATT, and that regional events are a welcomed addition to discussions ongoing at the United Nations. The Bali seminar was timely not only because it was part of the preparations for the third PrepCom meeting, but also because the arms trade is an important issue that directly connects to the issue of peace and security in the region. As Mr. Cassidy noted, there are still many divergent views regarding implementation of the future ATT. He pointed out that the seminar reinforced the fact that the ATT should not be addressed only from the political point-of-view but also practical implementation aspects should be considered, and practitioners who deal daily with transfer control cases should be heard in the process towards the Treaty.

Mr. Cassidy also pointed out that many participants at the Bali seminar called for a more equal treatment of arms importers and exporters in the future ATT. The Treaty should not be seen only as an exporters' agreement or an instrument that would allow exporting states to set the rules for the arms trade, but rather be a truly universal document that would help empower importing states on an equal footing with exporters and recognize the right of all states to self-defense, national manufacturing of arms and territorial integrity. In the lead-up to the ATT negotiations in 2012, more comprehensive discussion on these aspects of the Treaty are needed. Mr. Cassidy also referred to the discussions at the Bali seminar about the purpose and goals of the ATT in establishing high, common international norms for the trade in arms, especially to prevent the diversion of weapons from the legal to the illicit trade and avoiding the use of illegal weapons in crime, terrorism and conflicts. He expressed the hope that the outcomes of the Bali seminar would feed into the PrepCom process and that the future Treaty will take into account not only the commonalities but also the different regional settings and priorities of states in arms trade.

## **Remarks from the European Union**

Ms. Annalisa Giannella, Director for Non-proliferation and Disarmament at the European External Action Service, delivered remarks on behalf of the European Union. She concentrated on the current project and some central aspects concerning the ATT initiative from the point of view of the European Union, stressing the need for the Treaty to be negotiated and developed through a genuinely participatory process. She noted that while some significant convergence of views has emerged among the UN Member States within the past year, significant and complicated issues still remain to be tackled. In the lead-up to the 2012 negotiations, an open and solution-driven debate is needed that will aim at identifying constructive and viable compromises. In this, Ms. Giannella highlighted especially the importance of bringing into the international debate relevant national experts, to help ensure that the ATT will be implementable by those who are in charge of the daily work in the control of arms transfers. Such experts have been among the participants of the EU–UNIDIR regional seminars. Finally, Ms. Giannella ensured all participants of the European Union’s continued support for next year’s PrepCom and the intersessional period, and the European Union’s readiness to engage in a continued dialogue with all states.

## **Transparency measures in implementing an ATT: focus on national reporting**

As the final speaker, Ms. Elli Kytömäki, Project Manager of the EU–UNIDIR project, discussed the possible transparency measures that could be included in the future ATT. She noted that in the ATT discussions, the reasons for having transparency measures have included the need to monitor and improve Treaty implementation; build confidence between relevant parties and identify general trends in the conventional arms trade. As Ms. Kytömäki noted, several possible transparency measures for the Treaty have been suggested, such as regular national reporting, other forms of information exchange, consultations, networks of contacts, peer review mechanisms, dispute settlement and national record-keeping requirements. In her remarks Ms. Kytömäki concentrated on national reporting. She suggested that an ATT should include two types of reporting: information exchange on states’ national implementation mechanisms, such as the establishment and updating of regular laws and regulations; and information exchange about actual transfers of arms that will fall under the auspices of the Treaty. By discussing each of the two possible reporting types in detail, Ms. Kytömäki addressed issues such as what information could be included in these reports, how frequently they should be submitted, to whom and how, as well as how the reports could be utilized to ensure that the transparency measure fulfils its purpose. She noted that transparency measures should by no means be confused with implementation itself—not everything to be included in the ATT would have to be subject to a similar level of transparency.

Further, Ms. Kytömäki noted that the balance between transparency and national security concerns should always be respected. She also raised the issue of “reporting fatigue”, which has negatively affected the frequency and quality of reporting in several transparency systems, and encouraged states to think about using a reporting format that would utilize synergies with other similar mechanisms. She also pointed to further exploration of possibilities of electronic reporting, regional reporting and nil reporting.

Finally, Ms. Kytömäki turned to the issues related to the ATT’s possible transparency measures that most require further discussion. She noted that while most states seem to be in favor of some kind of transparency mechanism, the exact nature and level of detail of reporting remains to be decided. Once the Treaty is in place, states should think about possibilities to update and modify the transparency mechanism, when deemed necessary.

## **Discussion**

The presentations were followed by a series of questions and comments from the floor, both relating to specific aspects presented by the speakers and to the ATT process generally. Points were raised about the future transparency mechanism that could be included in the ATT, and participants pointed to the ATT's links with existing reporting instruments, different levels of transparency and the issue of import reporting as separate from information exchange on exports. Some pointed to the need to ensure balance between transparency and national security considerations and called for more elaboration on this aspect when developing the national reporting system. The topic of "reporting fatigue" was raised again and it was noted that many states have already committed themselves to information exchange and statistical reporting under regional and subregional instruments. The future ATT should therefore take into account these existing systems and avoid overlapping and duplicating states' current reporting requirements. Regional organizations, civil society and academic institutions were noted to be important partners in assisting states both in their reporting efforts and in ensuring the effective utilization of the exchanged information. Questions were also raised about the best way forward in the ATT process between the last PrepCom sessions, and it was noted that further national and regional meetings should be organized to keep the momentum in the process and to ensure that all relevant national actors get the change to become informed and involved in the discussions.

## **Results**

The side event attracted a high level of interest among the PrepCom participants and proved successful. Its timing during the third meeting of the PrepCom proved advantageous and helped keep momentum around both the event and the EU–UNIDIR project as a whole. Many participants, who have attended the regional seminars and our previous side events, were present, which shows continuity and commitment on the part of the different stakeholders. Despite several simultaneous events in the margins of the PrepCom, almost 90 representatives of states, international and regional organizations and civil society came to listen to the presentations and participate in the discussion. High-level participants and experts from the regions where project activities had been held contributed to the success of the event. Adding a thematic presentation on transparency to the regional statements proved advantageous as it linked the project with the ongoing PrepCom discussions and also further highlighted the outcomes of the regional seminars. It was also a good opportunity for the seminar host states to express their views and priorities. In this regard it was especially advantageous to have the event with simultaneous English and Spanish interpretation, as the event was attended by several Latin American delegations. The discussion and many questions that followed the presentations revealed participants' great interest in the project, and UNIDIR was approached after the event by several delegates. Summary reports of the previous regional seminars and other project materials were distributed to all participants on USB keys and in hard copy (the Montevideo and Bali reports in English, and the assistance and cooperation background paper in English and in French).

## **Next steps**

Following the side event, the ATT team at UNIDIR will concentrate primarily on the commissioning of the last background research papers and follow-up their completion. All the background materials, together with documents and audio recordings of the project activities will be made available on UNIDIR's website.<sup>2</sup> UNIDIR will also proceed, in accordance with Council Decision 2010/336/CFSP, with the organization of the three remaining regional seminars and other activities, which will take place between October 2011 and May 2012. The next side event will be organized in the margins of the UN General Assembly's First Committee Meeting in October.

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<sup>2</sup> See <[www.unidir.org/att](http://www.unidir.org/att)>.

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**MESSAGES FROM THE SEMINARS  
IN THE AMERICAS AND ASIA-PACIFIC**

**Wednesday, 13 July, 1.15–2.45 pm**  
**Conference Room 1 United Nations, New York**  
(Sandwich lunch served in the West Delegates Lounge at 12:45 pm)

**AGENDA**

**Chair's welcoming remarks and introduction**

Dr. Christiane Agboton-Johnson, Deputy Director, UNIDIR

**Regional views from the Americas and the Caribbean**

Mr. Federico Perazza, Minister, Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations, New York

**Regional views from Eastern Asia and the Pacific**

Mr. Fikry Cassidy, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations, New York

**Remarks from the European Union**

Ms. Annalisa Giannella, Director for Non-proliferation and Disarmament at the European External Action Service

**Transparency measures in the implementation of an ATT**

Ms. Elli Kytömäki, Project Manager, UNIDIR

**Discussion**

The seminar was held with simultaneous interpretation in English and Spanish.