

Statement by the Centre for Armed Violence Reduction (CAVR) to ATT CSP4 Working Group on Transparency and Reporting

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Thank you Mr. President and Co-Chairs, for giving us the floor. We also take this opportunity to thank our hosts the Government of Japan.

The Centre for Armed Violence Reduction is pleased to share a short update with you and the Plenary on a technical assistance project we have been developing over the past year that links directly to this agenda item on information collection systems.

CAVR primarily works with the governments of Small Island and developing states to provide technical assistance and identify solutions to arms control and ATT implementation issues.

We have recently provided technical assistance to partners and government officials in the Pacific, South East and South Asia, and the Caribbean.

The background to our project stems from the arms transfers context in the Pacific. As you may know, most Pacific countries do not have a big conventional arms trade profile.

Moreover, most Pacific governments do not have the financial, institutional, or the regulatory capacity – nor the need – to manage an overly onerous or comprehensive system.

In addition, due to a range of technical, financial and capacity constraints, Pacific countries have experienced challenges in compiling and submitting reports on arms transfers – both the ATT, and to other mechanisms such as the UN Register.

In the process of exploring reasons why this is the case, a common thread we have encountered is that most Pacific countries do not have record-keeping systems for arms transfers or databases that are fit for purpose.

As we have explored solutions to this problem, we have found that bespoke systems can cost upwards of US\$1m. This presents a serious cost barrier, not to mention long term support costs and human and technical resources.

To address this gap, CAVR in partnership with Gary Fleetwood of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, has developed a low-cost, modular and technologically light database solution.

The initial work has been funded through two existing grants – a recently agreed VTF Grant for Samoa, and an UNSCAR grant to support treaty adherence in Melanesian countries of Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

The project has also benefited from the support of a number of technical partners who have helped to shape the database. You all have our sincerest appreciation.

Our new system – the National Arms Transfer Database (NATD) – helps small and medium-sized countries to establish record-keeping systems to track and manage imports and exports licences and the arms transfers themselves.

The package is fully customizable and requires embedding national legislation parameters into the framework.

For example, one step is to embed into the code the source of definitions of arms in order to generate categories for weapons listings – be that the UN Register of Conventional Arms or Pacific Model Control List, or indeed the Wassenaar Arrangement’s Military Lists.

In addition, the system generates the raw data necessary for States to fill out their ATT Annual Reports.

Even if the system is customised for several independent different in-state clients - for example military, law enforcement, and customs – each of the systems will produce reports in the same format, using identical descriptors.

Without sharing confidential databases, the various agencies can still deliver identical outputs which can easily be combined in a single national report to fulfil ATT obligations.

We hope that our project will result in tangible improvements to reporting rates in the region, and in turn, strengthen regional security and transparency initiatives.

We look forward to supporting the efforts of this working group, and contributing meaningfully to achieving the overall objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty to reduce human suffering.

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