INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON OEA/Ser.K/XLIV.2

TRANSPARENCY IN CONVENTIONAL CITAAC/CEP-II/INF.1/22

WEAPONS ACQUISITIONS (CITAAC) 25 March 2022

Second Conference of the States Parties Original: English

April 19th, 2022

Virtual Format

INFORMATIVE NOTE

(Presented by Canada)

**OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this document is to establish the issues that will be addressed at the Second Conference of the States Parties to the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions (CITAAC), which will be held under the chairmanship of Canada, in virtual format, on April 19th, 2022.

The Conference of the States Parties to the CITAAC is the highest political body of the Convention and brings together the authorities of the States Parties to examine its operation and application, and to consider further transparency measures, consistent with its objectives (article VIII of CITAAC). Additionally, in this Second Conference, the States Parties to the CITAAC will analyze a strategy to institutionalize the Convention to foster compliance with the annual reports and further adhesion to the CITAAC.

**JUSTIFICATION**

Transparency regarding the acquisitions of conventional weapons is an important measure to contribute to peace and stability worldwide. Bearing that in mind, CITAAC was adopted in 1999. The Convention came into force in 2002: it has been ratified by 17 Member States of the OAS and signed by 4 OAS Member States.

Through CITAAC, governments have committed to providing annual reports on their arms imports, exports, and national production. The exchange of this information can build trust and confidence in the region. It also may assist in the early identification and prevention of risks by excessive or destabilizing accumulations. Conventional weapons are those usually employed in armed conflicts, such as battle tanks, missiles, and armored combat vehicles. Most countries have legislation that prohibits civilians from carrying those weapons, as they are restricted to the use of Armed Forces. By being transparent and predictable, States can build confidence while meeting their legitimate security needs.

Currently, the efficacy of CITAAC has been lowered by a low level of reports presented by State Parties and the absence of constructive spaces to promote dialogue between them.

In total, there have been five political meetings of CITAAC:

* 2006 - First Meeting of States Parties to CITAAC (in preparation for the Conference of the States Parties to be held in 2009)
* 2008 - Second Meeting of States Parties to CITAAC (in preparation for the Conference of the States Parties to be held in 2009)
* 2009 - Third Meeting of States Parties to CITAAC (in preparation for the Conference of the States Parties to be held in 2009)
* 2009 - First Conference of the States Parties to CITAAC
* 2013 - Meeting of National Contact Points of CITAAC

In these opportunities, State Parties have discussed the challenges of complying with annual reporting, and strategies to increase the level of reporting. They have reiterated the need to establish follow-up mechanisms to increase the operationalization of CITAAC, and to assist states parties with implementing its provisions, including the establishment of a Technical Secretariat. A dedicated technical Secretariat would be able to provide support to countries with their reports, systematize and circulate the information of the reports, and promote a dialogue among States Parties through the consistent organization of Conferences and meetings.

With the holding of the Second Conference, the expectation is for the State Parties to consider the establishment of the governance of CITAAC, with the institutionalization of the Consultative Committee and Technical Secretariat, so as to strengthen the Convention. Additionally, it is expected to carry out a comprehensive discussion regarding a way forward for CITAAC.

**OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Second Conference of CITAAC are:

* Consider and approve the Draft Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the States Parties to CITAAC, and the Draft Rules of Procedure of the CITAAC Consultative Committee;
* Analyze the progress in the implementation of the Convention and consider potential additional transparency measures, including alterations to the list of Conventional Weapons;
* Discuss priorities and objectives to advance in the fulfillment of the provisions of the Convention;
* Consider and approve the Recommendations of the Second Conference of States Parties.

**FORMAT OF THE MEETING**

* The II Conference will be a one-day meeting, with a two-hour morning session (10 am to 12 pm – Washington-DC time), and a two-hour afternoon session (2:30 pm to 4:30 pm – Washington-DC time). It will be held through the virtual platform used by the OAS for virtual sessions (Kudo Platform), and will be divided into six segments:
1. Connection to the platform;
2. Opening Ceremony;
3. Introductory Session, during which the Chair, Vice-chair, and Rapporteur of the Conference will be elected. Immediately after the elections, the meeting agenda and schedule will be approved. The General Secretariat of the OAS will present a report on the status of the convention;
4. Session to discuss the institutionalization of the CITAAC, with a presentation of the General Secretariat of the OAS about the efforts to strengthen the Convention. States Parties will then consider the approval of the two documents to institutionalize the Convention: Rules of Procedure on the Conference of the State Parties and the Rules of Procedure on the Consultative Committee;
5. Member States will be invited to participate in two thematic panels and one technical panel, as described below;
6. Approval of the Recommendations of the Second Conference of States Parties to the CITAAC; and
7. Closing Ceremony.

**INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CITAAC**

Taking into account the previous recommendations of the meetings of the State Parties of CITAAC, OAS Member States have requested the General Secretariat of the OAS to take appropriate steps to establish and define a technical secretariat for CITAAC, to assist member states with implementation of the Convention (paragraph 94 of resolution AG/RES. 2945 (XLIX-O/19).

Based on that mandate, the Department of Public Security of the Secretariat of Multidimensional Security of the OAS (DPS/OAS), with the support of the Inter-American Defense Board, has drafted two documents that would enable the institutionalization of CITAAC:

* Draft Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the States Parties to CITAAC
* Draft Rules of Procedure of the CITAAC Consultative Committee

The elaboration of these documents was guided by a desk review of other conventions and the CITAAC background, and is included in a report of the DPS/OAS to the Committee on Hemispheric Security (CSH) of the Permanent Council of the OAS (document CP/CSH-1978/20). The OAS Member States have analyzed both documents and endorsed them to be submitted to the consideration of the Second Conference of CITAAC (paragraph 80 of the AG/RES. 2970 – LI-O/21).

As such, during the Second Conference, it is expected State Parties consider the approval of the documents to institutionalize the CITAAC Technical Secretariat, as an effective mechanism to increase the operability of the Convention and assist the State Parties in the implementation of its provisions.

**PANELS**

There will be two thematic panels and one technical panel at the Conference. States Parties interested in being speakers on one or more topics are invited to communicate with the Department of Public Security of the OAS.

**THEME 1. The relevance of the regional approach and synergies with other conventions**

The first panel of the Conference seeks to promote an open dialogue about the relevance of the CITAAC as a regional tool, and its complementarity to related existing conventions and mechanisms. It will consider lessons learned, and collaboration processes that could be established to increase compliance with these instruments.

At the United Nations level, two key instruments in particular promote transparency on transfers of conventional weapons:

* United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA): UNROCA was created in 1991 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. It is an annual reporting mechanism through which Governments share information on arms transfers they were involved in the previous year. It has two levels of reporting: one for transfers in seven pre-defined categories of heavy weapons, as well as small arms (“7+1”), and a second for additional background information, including current holdings of weaponry and procurement through national arms production;
* Arms Trade Treaty (ATT): the ATT is an international treaty which came into force in 2014, to regulate international trade in conventional arms. The ATT seeks to prevent and eradicate illicit trade and diversion of conventional arms by establishing international standards to govern arms transfers, including the submission of annual reports. Out of the 17 State Parties of CITAAC, 14 have ratified the ATT.

Representatives from these bodies will be invited to the panel to present on the status of the instruments and on the reports presented to them, and to find common strategies to collaborate and support countries. The panel would also look to other partnerships between regional conventions in other parts of the globe and the universal system as models for CITAAC to consider..

Each panelist will have twelve (12) minutes for their intervention, followed by twenty (20) minutes of dialogue with the representatives of the States Parties, and other participants present at the meeting.

**THEME 2. Additional transparency measures and relevance of CITAAC in the Inter-American System**

The second thematic panel will consider the interrelation between the CITAAC and confidence and security-building measures. In the Inter-American System, the consolidated list of Confidence and Security-Building Measures, approved by the General Assembly, includes two measures highly related to the convention:

* Measure 7: Participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, including the provision and exchange of information on the national production of conventional arms.
* Measure 22: Sign, ratify, and implement the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons (CITAAC).

Considering this, panelists will discuss the links of CITAAC and transparency to provide insights for the dialogue of State Parties about additional transparency measures, considering Article VIII of the Convention.

This panel will also explore the complementarity of CITAAC and other conventions of the Inter-American System, particularly the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA).

Each panelist will have ten (10) minutes for their intervention, followed by fifteen (15) minutes of dialogue with the representatives of the States Parties present at the meeting.

**THEME 3. Challenges and opportunities with reporting**

The third panel is technical and operational in its nature and seeks to promote an open dialogue about the challenges and opportunities with the annual reports of CITAAC. As mentioned before, the level of reporting to CITAAC has decreased within time. This ongoing issue has been previously addressed in the other meetings of the State Parties, with suggestions to improve reporting:

* Identification of National Points of Contact, responsible for the submission of the reports;
* Development of an electronic database to facilitate the submission of the reports, and access to consolidated data on the transfers;
* Offer of socialization workshops to countries;
* Integration of reports with those of the U.N. system (e.g. submission of a copy of the reports of UNROCA to the OAS);
* Submission of nil reports.

To provide insights for the dialogue of State Parties, the panel will have an initial presentation of the General Secretariat of the OAS on the history of the reports, including a comparative analysis with the other existing reports on the matter. It will also have state experts presenting on good practices of how they have been able to comply with the reports.

Each panelist will have ten (10) minutes for their intervention, followed by twenty (20) minutes of dialogue with the representatives of the States Parties present at the meeting to identify common solutions and practical strategies that could be supported by the Technical Secretariat to encourage compliance with the reports.

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