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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

REPORT ON THE CONTINUING OPERATION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS REGISTER OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS

July 2013

08/07/13

Transparency in armaments helps to build trust among States and enhance international stability and security. For more than two decades, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has served as the primary global instrument for Member States to report on their transfers of conventional arms.

The review of the operation of the Register every three years has enabled it to adapt to emerging security challenges and technological developments in conventional weapons, and to maintain its relevance. This year's review by a group of governmental experts from fifteen different countries addresses the challenges and threats that have affected States in recent years, including the destabilizing accumulation of illicit small arms and light weapons and increased military utility of, and international trade in, armed unmanned aerial vehicles.

The Group concluded that the issue of including small arms and light weapons as a new Register category merited continued review. It also provided clarity on reporting on armed unmanned aerial vehicles and recommended that Member States report international transfers of these weapons.

To further enhance the Register's relevance and achieve its universality, the Group also made a number of recommendations for strengthening the Secretariat and facilitating the reporting capacity of Member States. I commend the Group's recommendations to the General Assembly.

I thank the Chair of the Group and the experts for their efforts to reconcile different points of view and enabling the adoption of the report by consensus. Their work provides a firm basis for the Register to continue to serve as a valuable resource for transparency in the field of conventional arms.

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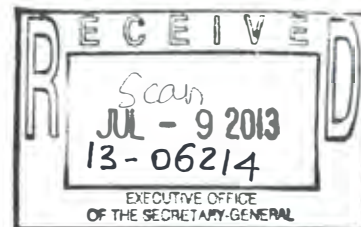
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**Note to the Deputy Secretary-General**

**GROUP OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS TO REVIEW THE CONTINUING  
OPERATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS REGISTER OF CONVENTIONAL  
ARMS AND ITS FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

1. By its resolutions 66/39 of 2 December 2011, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to convene in 2012 a GGE to review and prepare a report on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development. The General Assembly, by its decision 517 of 2 December 2012, decided to convene the Group in 2013 without changes to the other modalities for the group, and requested the Secretary-General to submit the report of the Group to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.
2. The Group held three meetings between April and June 2013. It adopted the report by consensus at its third session.
3. In keeping with the established practice, I have attached a draft foreword by the Secretary-General, which is attached herewith for consideration and approval. An early response would be highly appreciated in view of the 15 July submission deadline to DGACM for processing and issuance as a UN document.

Virginia Gamba  
Officer-in-Charge  
Office for Disarmament Affairs  
8 July 2013

cc: Ms. Kane

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## Draft Foreword by the Secretary-General

Transparency in armament helps build trust among States and enhance international stability and security especially at a regional level. Established in 1992, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is the primary global instrument in the area of arms transparency by which Member States report on their transfers of conventional arms in seven categories.

The review of the operation of the Register every three years have allowed the Register to adapt to emerging security challenges and technological developments in conventional weapons, and maintain its relevance to a large number of Member States.

This year's review of the Register by a group of governmental experts from fifteen States sought to addresses the challenges and threats that have affected States in recent years, including the destabilizing accumulation of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW) and increased military utility of, and international trade in, armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The Group concluded that the issue of the inclusion of SALW as a new Register category merited continued review by future GGEs. The Group provided greater clarity on reporting on armed UAVs in the report and recommended that Member States report international transfers of armed UAVs to the Register. Furthermore, with a view to increasing the relevance of the Register and to achieving its universality, the Group also made a number of recommendations to support the Secretariat and strengthen Member States' capacity to report to the Register. I commend the Group's recommendations to the General Assembly.

I thank the Chair of the Group and the experts for their work and efforts to reconcile different points of views and adopt the report by consensus. I am confident that their work provides a firm basis for the Register to continue to develop in the coming years.

## **Report of the 2013 GGE on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **A. Establishment of the Register**

1. General Assembly resolution 46/36 L of 9 December 1991, entitled “Transparency in armaments” requested the Secretary-General to establish and maintain a universal and non-discriminatory Register of Conventional Arms.<sup>1</sup> Member States were called upon to provide annually for the Register data on exports and imports of conventional arms in the seven categories covered by the Register, and were invited to include information on military holdings and on procurement through national production, and relevant national policies, pending the expansion of its scope.

2. Pursuant to that resolution, the Secretary-General convened a Panel of Technical Experts in 1992 to bring the Register into operation. Endorsing the recommendations of the Panel,<sup>2</sup> the General Assembly called upon all Member States to provide the requested data and information to the Secretary-General annually, beginning in 1993.<sup>3</sup>

#### **B. Review of the Register**

3. In its resolution 46/36 L, the General Assembly decided to look at the Register’s future expansion and to keep the scope of and participation in the Register under review, which is also reflected in the 1992 report of the Panel of Technical Experts. As a result, the Register has been periodically reviewed thus far at three-year intervals, with the exception of the 2013 Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) which was convened four years after the 2009 GGE.

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/46/36 L

<sup>2</sup> A/47/342 and Corr.1

<sup>3</sup> 47/52 L

#### **1994 – 2006 Groups of Governmental Experts**

4. By its resolution 49/75 C,<sup>4</sup> the General Assembly took note of the report of the 1994 GGE<sup>5</sup> and decided to keep the scope of and participation in the Register under review, requesting Member States to provide the Secretary-General with their views in this regard, as well as on transparency measures related to weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

5. The 1997 GGE continued to elaborate on technical procedures to ensure the effective operation of the Register. It proposed extending the reporting deadline from 30 April to 31 May, encouraged the submission of information on national points of contact and the use of the “Remarks” column in the reporting format.<sup>6</sup> It also recommended the inclusion of information, provided on a voluntary basis, on procurement through national production and on military holdings in the annual reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

6. The 2000 GGE recommended, with a view to encouraging greater participation in the Register, the holding of regional and sub-regional workshops and seminars with the assistance of interested Member States; the introduction of a simplified form for providing “nil” returns; and the updating of the United Nations information booklet on the Register.

7. The 2003 GGE concluded that considerable progress had been made towards achieving a relatively high level of participation in the Register.<sup>7</sup> It recommended lowering the reporting threshold of large-calibre artillery systems from 100 mm to 75 mm in Category III; and the inclusion, on an exceptional basis, of man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADS) as a sub-category in Category VII, “Missiles and missiles launchers”. In addition, it noted that

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<sup>4</sup> A/RES/49/75 C

<sup>5</sup> A/49/316

<sup>6</sup> A/52/316

<sup>7</sup> A/58/274

Member States, that were in a position to do so, could provide additional background information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons (SALW) made or modified to military specifications and intended for military use.<sup>8</sup> The recommendations were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/54.

8. The 2006 GGE recommended that the reporting threshold of “Warships” under Category VI be reduced from 750 to 500 metric tons.<sup>9</sup> With regard to international transfers of SALW, the Group recommended that Member States in a position to do so should provide additional background information and utilise the optional standardized reporting form. The recommendations were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/77.

### **2009 Group of Governmental Experts**

9. The 2009 GGE noted that the Register has made significant progress since its establishment in 1992, but that efforts should continue to ensure its relevance for all regions and enhance the universal participation by Member States, including workshops, increased cooperation between the UN Secretariat and relevant regional and subregional organizations, as well as outreach activities by the Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) and the UN Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament.

10. The 2009 GGE also recommended measures to assist Member States to build capacity for the submission of meaningful reports, including on SALW, and made adjustments to the standardized reporting forms. Furthermore, it recommended that the Secretary-General seek the views of Member States on whether the continued absence of SALW as a main category in the Register has limited the relevance of the Register, therewith directly affecting decisions

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<sup>8</sup> A/RES/58/54

<sup>9</sup> A/RES/61/77

on the participation of Member States. The recommendations were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/54.

### **2013 Group of Governmental Experts**

11. The General Assembly, in its resolution 66/39, requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development with the assistance of a GGE to be convened in 2012, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and the reports of the Secretary-General on this issue.

12. Pursuant to a decision by the General Assembly,<sup>10</sup> the GGE was established in 2013, without change to the other modalities for the Group as elaborated in resolution 66/39.

## **II. Review of the continuing operation of the Register**

### **A. General**

13. The Group reviewed the data and information submitted by Member States to the Register for 1993-2012 and tables and graphs with statistical data compiled by the ODA. The Group benefited from non-papers provided by governmental experts and presentations by the Organisation of American States (OAS), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the ODA.

### **B. Relevance and universality of the Register**

14. The Group stressed the importance of maintaining the relevance of the Register and noted that this is connected with the goal of universality. The Group recognised the important role

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<sup>10</sup> General Assembly decision 517 of 2 December 2012 (*replace with document symbol*)



that the Register has played with regards to promoting transparency in military matters. Experts maintained that the Register is an important confidence-building measure and remains relevant in assisting Member States in identifying excessive and destabilising accumulation of arms, including conventional arms, given the objective of enhancing international peace, security and stability.

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15. In discussing relevance and universality, the Group considered a range of factors: (a) the

Group discussed whether the Register addressed the security concerns of all Member States and regions, and the effect of misperceptions on regional participation; (b) the Group discussed the fact that the Register does not include some categories of conventional arms, in particular, SALW; (c) the absence in the Register of data on non-state actors and the impact of the illicit trade on the security interests of Member States in various regions. The Group discussed ways of addressing these issues including the potential contribution that the Register can make in identifying the point of diversion into the illicit trade. Also, the Group considered the need for the Register to address technological developments to ensure that it reflects the security concerns of Member States and remains relevant.

### **C. Extent of participation**

16. Since the inception of the Register, 170 Member States have reported at least once with an average of 98 Governments having submitted reports each year on their international conventional arms transfers. However, the level of participation in the Register has seen a notable decline since 2007, with the lowest level of reporting recorded in 2012 when only 52 Member States provided a submission. The Secretariat provided information on reporting by Member States by the 31 May deadline: 27 of 72 Member States reported in 2010 by 31 May, 33 of 86 Member States in 2011 and 18 of 52 Member States in 2012. The Group considered



several potential factors which may be in part responsible for the decline in reports, including:

(a) reduction in follow-up efforts regarding reporting; (b) an increasing burden on Member States with regards to reporting on conventional arms issues; (c) “reporting fatigue” felt by Member States that reported regularly in the past; (d) limited relevance of the Register while SALW were not included as a main category; and (e) the focus on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) process at the UN in recent years.

17. In this context, the Group noted that a key factor has been the substantial decline in the number of Member States submitting a “nil” return. The proportion of “nil” returns submitted by Member States dropped from 60 out of 113 submissions in 2007 to 13 out of 52 submissions in 2012.

18. The Group regarded “nil” returns as equally important as information on imports and exports for achieving the goal of universal participation in the Register and also for building confidence and trust between Member States. The Group felt that the Secretariat had an important role in ensuring that Member States are aware of the possibility of submitting “nil” returns.

Table. The provision of “nil” returns to the Register, 2007-2012

|                             | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Total no. of submissions    | 113  | 91   | 80   | 72   | 86   | 52   |
| Total no. of “nil” returns  | 60   | 39   | 29   | 30   | 35   | 13   |
| Percentage of “nil” returns | 53%  | 43%  | 37%  | 41%  | 41%  | 25%  |

19. The Group considered the year 2012 in particular as participation declined to the lowest level ever, and many Member States that had been regularly reporting in the past failed to do so. The UN Conference on the ATT and the Review Conference for the UN Programme of Action that took place during 2012 have been cited as reasons for not reporting.

#### **D. Reports on exports and imports**

20. The level of reporting exports was relatively consistent between 2009 and 2011 with 30 Member States reporting in 2009, 32 Member States in 2010, and 33 Member States in 2011 but dropping to 26 Member States in 2012. For 2009, 45 Member States reported imports, dropping to 37 Member States in 2010, increasing to 40 Member States in 2011 and dropping to 26 Member States in 2012.

#### **E. Reports on additional background information**

21. The level of reporting of additional background information mirrored the overall trend in reporting. Whereas the overall level of reporting between 2007 and 2012 has declined, there has been a relative consistency, and sometimes even an increase, in the number of Member States reporting additional background information.

Table: The provision of additional background information

|  | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| Total no. of submissions   | 80   | 72   | 86   | 52   |
| No. of submissions that include additional background information on military holdings | 24   | 24   | 25   | 20   |

|  |    |    |    |    |
|--|----|----|----|----|
| No. of submissions that include additional background information on procurement through national production | 21 | 22 | 21 | 10 |
| No. of submissions that include additional background information on international transfers of SALW         | 47 | 43 | 49 | 32 |

22. Since 1992, 54 Member States have provided additional background information on military holdings at least once, and 48 Member States have provided additional background information on procurement through national production at least once.

23. Experts noted that Member States are called upon to provide the Register with information on only one method for acquiring conventional weapons (import) and are only invited to provide information on procurement through national production. Experts considered whether this situation is inherently discriminatory. Experts recognized the security sensitivities that this information poses for some Member States and also discussed the implications for the Register if the reporting burden is further increased. The Group discussed the issue of the provision of additional background information on military holdings and on procurement through national production for assisting in the identification of excessive and destabilizing accumulations of conventional weapons and for confidence building purposes. It was noted that the Register does not address the issues of transfers to and holdings of non-state actors and the security concerns that some of these pose.

24. Since 2003, 80 Member States have provided additional background information on international transfers of SALW at least once.

25. Based on the recommendation of the 2009 Group, the General Assembly requested Member States to submit their views to the UN Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the Register and whether the absence of SALW as a main category in the Register has limited the relevance of the Register and directly affected decisions on participation.<sup>11</sup> Only ten Member States provided their views in response to this request, nine of which expressed support for the inclusion of SALW as an additional category in the Register.

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#### **F. Assessment of reporting at the regional level**

26. All Member States in Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) have participated in the Register at least once since its inception. Member States in Eastern Europe and the WEOG have been the most consistent participants in the Register. However, since 2009 participation in both regions has declined. Participation by Latin American and Caribbean Member States has fluctuated considerably since 2008, but is far from the peak reporting year of 2002 when 26 Member States from the region reported.

27. The decline in the level of reporting by Member States in Asia and the Pacific had a downward trend for the years 2005-2010. There was a spike in reporting in 2011, before the level of reporting dropped to an all-time low in 2012 with 10 Member States submitting a report. Eight Member States in Asia and the Pacific have never reported to the Register.

28. Africa has the lowest number of Member States reporting to the Register. The level of reporting dropped from 15 Member States in 2007 to eight Member States in 2008, down to four Member States in 2009 and 2010 and two Member States in 2011 and 2012. 15 African Member States have never reported to the Register.

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<sup>11</sup> A/64/296, Para. 75; A/RES/64/54.

Table. Trend in reporting to the Register at the regional level

|  | 2009      | 2010      | 2011      | 2012      |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| African Group<br>(54 Member States)                              | 4         | 4         | 2         | 2         |
| Asia and Pacific<br>Group (53<br>Member States)                  | 18        | 16        | 19        | 10        |
| Eastern<br>European Group<br>(23 Member<br>States)               | 19        | 19        | 21        | 16        |
| Latin American<br>and Caribbean<br>Group (33<br>Member States)   | 13        | 8         | 16        | 6         |
| Western<br>European and<br>Others Group<br>(30 Member<br>States) | 26        | 25        | 28        | 18        |
| <b>Total (193<br/>Member<br/>States)</b>                         | <b>80</b> | <b>72</b> | <b>86</b> | <b>52</b> |

Note: South Sudan became a UN Member State, in the African Group of States on 14 July 2011. It is included in the total number of Member States and African Group of Member States in the left-hand column.

### G. Access to data and information reported

29. In accordance with the 2003 and 2006 GGE recommendations, the Secretariat overhauled the Register database on the ODA website and launched a new map-based database entitled “The Global Reported Arms Trade” in October 2011 (<http://www.un-register.org/HeavyWeapons/Index.aspx>). The new database allows for direct access to and comparison of data on conventional arms exports and imports submitted by Member States since the beginning of the operation of the Register. The Group commended the Secretariat on its efforts to overhaul the Register’s online database using limited resources. However,

experts noted that the website needs further improvement to enable easy access to commonly sought information.

30. One hundred and forty-six Member States have supplied information on national points of contact at least once. In 2012, 35 of the 52 Member States that reported to the Register provided information on national points of contact. The Secretariat noted that 49 Member States had not provided updated information on national points of contact since 2008.

#### **H. Role of the UN Secretariat**

31. The Group recognized that the awareness of the Register among Member States was insufficient and required more attention, and the Group noted the important role of the Secretariat in this regard. The Secretariat maintains information and documents on the Register and on the subject of transparency in international conventional arms transfers on the ODA website, including (a) the annual consolidated reports of the Secretary-General; (b) General Assembly resolutions; (c) the reports of the GGEs; (d) the standardized reporting forms; (e) and the information booklets, such as “Guidelines for Reporting International Transfers: Questions and Answers”. The Group emphasized the important role that the Secretariat has to play in updating the website and database for the Register.

32. In this connection, the Group noted with concern the decline in the level of resources allocated for the Secretariat to maintain the Register and that this could have impacted upon its ability to fulfil its functions.

33. The Group appreciated the significant work of the ODA in producing and disseminating materials related to the Register. The Group strongly expressed the view that technical information on reporting to the Register is useful.

### **I. Reporting methods**

34. Acting on the recommendations of the 2003 and 2006 GGEs,<sup>12</sup> the Secretariat developed an online reporting tool for the electronic filing of reports to the Register, enabling Member States to prepare and submit their reports online. The online reporting tool was launched in May 2012 and has been used by 10 Member States to file their reports to the Register. The online reporting tool is currently only available in English, but translation into all six official UN languages will be completed in 2013. Information provided via the online reporting tool is automatically entered into the new Register database. It allows Member States to easily file reports, including a “nil” return. The Secretariat has provided informal briefing sessions on the electronic filing of reports to the Register and has started developing an online training course on the electronic filing of reports to the Register.

35. The Group highlighted the practical utility of the booklet “Guidelines for reporting International Transfers: Questions & Answers”, which provides guidance to Member States on how to prepare and submit reports, and noted that it has not been updated since 2007. Most of the information contained in the “Guidelines for reporting International Transfers: Questions & Answers” booklet remains relevant but the booklet will need to be updated to reflect developments with regards to the online reporting tool. Experts suggested that this should be carried out using existing resources.

### **III. Further development of the Register**

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<sup>12</sup> 2003 GGE, para. 114 f, 2006 GGE, para 126 n



**A. Maintaining the relevance and universality of the Register**

36. In light of the decline in reporting in recent years, the Group called for the strengthening of efforts to promote the Register and achieve universal participation. Experts discussed various measures that could be taken for this purpose including, *inter alia*: (a) to raise awareness of the Register's aims, strengths and utility to encourage Member States to report;

(b) to explore options for building capacity and providing training to enable Member States to report; (c) to reduce the reporting burden and "reporting fatigue" for Member States; (d) to review technical procedures that the Secretariat could undertake to facilitate reporting; (e) to ensure the relevance of the Register in addressing the security concerns of Member States. The Group paid particular attention towards efforts to encourage reporting by Member States that regularly provided "nil" returns but have not reported to the Register in recent years.

37. The Group noted that the limited resources of the Secretariat impacted its efforts to promote participation in the Register and efforts to achieve universality. Experts exchanged views on means and ways to enhance the capacity of the ODA in administering the Register. Experts also noted the important role of Member States in raising awareness of the Register and in assisting with capacity-building and training to enable Member States to participate in the Register. The Group noted that UN Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament and relevant regional organizations can play a useful role.

38. The Group considered expanding the Register's scope to include SALW and advanced conventional arms that can offer force projection or are force multipliers or provide substantial combat support. The Group also considered the issue of background information on national holdings and on procurement through national production.

39. In discussing the expansion of the Register's scope, the Group discussed the issue of arms transfers to non-state actors and its impact in particular sub-regions and regions. The Group recalled the conclusion of the 2006 GGE that "transfers involving only Member States of the United Nations should be reported to the United Nations Register" and noted that the Register does not include data involving non-state actors. This limits the Register's ability to fully address the problems posed by uncontrolled and unregulated transfers and holdings of arms.

40. The Group noted the adoption of the ATT in April 2013 and considered its potential impact on the operation of the Register. The Group noted that the Register and the ATT serve different functions and have different audiences, and expressed its firm conviction that the Register needs to continue to play its role as a voluntary transparency and confidence-building measure.

#### **B. Categories covered by the Register**

41. The Group considered the potential updating and expansion of the existing categories in light of the Register's mandate. The Group acknowledged that the categories of the Register should reflect the security concerns of Member States as well as technological developments. In this regard, the Group also exchanged views on whether the Register should focus on conventional arms of an offensive nature and whether distinctions between the offensive and defensive nature of conventional arms are still relevant.

#### **Category I**

##### **Battle tanks**

42. The Group did not consider amending category I of the Register.

## **Category II**

### **Armoured combat vehicles**

43. The Group had before it a proposal for the inclusion of (a) armoured recovery vehicles, tank transporters, amphibious and deep water fording vehicles and armoured bridge-launching vehicles and (b) tracked, semi-tracked or wheeled self-propelled vehicles, with armoured protection and cross-country capability specially designed, or modified and equipped: (i) with organic technical means for observation, reconnaissance, target indication, and designed to perform reconnaissance missions; or (ii) with integral organic technical means for command of troops, or (iii) with integral organic electronic and technical means designed for electronic warfare.

## **Category III**

### **Large-calibre artillery systems**

44. The Group considered the possible lowering of the calibre threshold of this category, recognizing the intrinsic link of such consideration to the issue of the inclusion of SALW as a new category.

## **Category IV**

### **Combat aircraft**

45. The Group noted the discussion of the 2006 GGE that category IV already covered armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and the 2009 GGE discussion on a proposal to include a new category of armed UAVs. The Group reviewed proposals for giving greater clarity to category IV and considered the following new description for category IV:

“Combat aircraft includes manned and unmanned aerial vehicles as defined below:

(a) Manned fixed-wing or variable-geometry wing aircraft, designed, equipped or modified to engage targets by employing guided missiles, unguided rockets, bombs, guns, cannons or other weapons of destruction, including versions of these aircraft which perform specialized electronic warfare, suppression of air defence or reconnaissance missions.

(b) Unmanned fixed-wing or variable-geometry wing aircraft, designed, equipped or modified to engage targets by employing guided missiles, unguided rockets, bombs, guns, cannons or other weapons of destruction.

The term “combat aircraft” does not include primary trainer aircraft, unless designed, equipped or modified as described above.”

## **Category V**

### **Attack helicopters**

46. In discussing armed unmanned version of attack helicopters and taking into account its consideration regarding category IV, the Group reviewed proposals with a view to giving greater clarity to category V and considered the following new description for category V:

“Attack helicopters include manned and unmanned aerial vehicles as defined below:

(a) Manned rotary-wing aircraft, designed, equipped or modified to engage targets by employing guided or unguided anti-armour, air-to-surface, air-to-subsurface, or air-to-air weapons and equipped with an integrated fire control and aiming system for these weapons, including versions of these aircraft which perform specialized reconnaissance or electronic warfare missions.

(b) Unmanned rotary-wing aircraft, designed, equipped or modified to engage targets by employing guided or unguided anti-armour, air-to-surface, air-to-subsurface, or air-to-air

weapons and equipped with an integrated fire control and aiming system for these weapons.”

The Group also reviewed a proposal for changing the title of category V to ‘combat helicopters’.

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## **Category VI**

### **Warships**

47. The Group reviewed a proposal for amending category VI to drop the standard displacement of vessels or submarines to 150 tonnes or more and/or remove the reference to the range for missiles and torpedoes. The Group reviewed a proposal to remove the range for torpedoes entirely.

## **Category VII**

### **Missiles and missile launchers**

48. The Group reviewed proposals for amending category VII to lower or eliminate the range threshold for missiles and to include surface-to-air (SAM) missiles and missile launchers.

## **C. Expansion of the scope of the Register**

49. The Group reviewed the issue of expanding the scope of the Register to include SALW as a new main category in the Register. The Group noted that some Member States have been providing additional background information on international transfers of SALW as per the recommendations of the 2003, 2006 and 2009 GGEs. The Group considered whether reporting on international transfers of SALW would actually contribute to identifying excessive and destabilising accumulations. The Group also considered the possibility that this could have an unintended negative effect on levels of reporting, due to an increased reporting

burden and sensitivities that some Member States attach to the transfer of these conventional arms. The Group also considered whether adding a new category for SALW in the Register could enhance its relevance. The Group also noted that some Member States are not in a position to report such data until SALW are included as an eighth category in the Register. The Group reviewed a proposal to define “small arms” as conventional arms with a calibre that is up to and including 0.50”/12.7mm and “light weapons” as conventional arms with a calibre greater than 0.50”/12.7mm and up to and including 75mm. The Group reviewed proposals for reporting SALW as an eighth category in the Register, including *inter alia*: (a) two sub-categories for “small arms” and “light weapons”; and (b) six sub-categories for “small arms” and seven sub-categories for “light weapons” (optional reporting form<sup>13</sup>).

50. The Group reviewed a proposal to invite Member States to provide additional background information on military holdings and on procurement through national production on a standardized reporting form. The Group considered whether the provision of information on a standardized reporting form would provide clarity to facilitate analysis.

51. In discussing the provision of information on military holdings, the Group noted that this information is regarded by some Member States as particularly sensitive and called for it to be considered separately from information on procurement through national production. The Group reviewed a proposal to include procurement through national production in the Register as an integral part of national reporting as Member States can also acquire arms in this way. The Group noted that the low level of reporting on procurement through national production may not provide an accurate representation of global patterns of conventional arms acquisitions. Experts considered whether this would affect the overall level of participation.

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<sup>13</sup> A/61/xxx, page xx (2006 GGE)

#### **D. Review of the Register**

52. The Group emphasized the importance of ~~conducting~~ periodic reviews of the Register to enhance its operation and consider its further development. This is necessary to achieve universal participation and ensure the Register's relevance for Member States as a confidence-building measure in light of changing security dynamics, in particular with regards to technological developments in conventional arms.

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#### **E. Relationship between the Register and other relevant UN and regional instruments**

53. The Group considered Member States reporting to respective UN instruments on conventional arms and the impact on participation in the Register. The Group recognized that Member States may have overlapping reporting commitments related to the transfer of conventional arms and encouraged Member States to identify synergies to reduce the burden of their making such reports. The Group considered the possibilities for the Secretariat and relevant regional and sub-regional organisations to collaborate on encouraging reporting and promoting transparency in international conventional arms transfers.

### **IV. Conclusions and recommendations**

#### **A. Conclusions**

54. The Group concluded that the Register plays an important role in promoting transparency in armaments and is an important confidence-building measure. The Group noted the importance of seeking universal participation in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Register.

55. The Group expressed concern at the decline in reporting in recent years. Efforts by the Secretariat and Member States should be enhanced to encourage Member States to report to



the Register. The Group emphasized the importance of identifying opportunities to promote and raise awareness of the Register.

56. The Group reaffirmed the conclusions of previous GGEs that the Conventional Arms Branch of the ODA should continue to actively support and promote the Register as one of its primary missions. The Group reflected on the human and financial resource challenges faced by the Secretariat and concluded that these challenges should be addressed as a priority. In this context, the Group reaffirmed the need to strengthen the ODA through enhanced budgetary support to enable it to fulfil its mandated responsibilities in the area of transparency in armaments. The Group also encouraged Member States to provide voluntary contributions to the Secretariat.

57. The Group called upon Member States to play an active role in raising awareness of the Register and assisting, upon request, with capacity-building and training to enable Member States to participate in the Register. Regional organisations and the UN Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament can also play a useful role in promoting transparency in armaments.

58. The Group reaffirmed the importance of regular and timely reporting to the Register, including “nil” returns. The Group also emphasized that a “nil” return is as important as a report on Member State’s imports and exports. The Group concluded that a substantial decline in Member States submitting “nil” returns has significantly contributed to the overall decline in participation in recent years.

59. The Group encouraged Member States to report by the 31 May deadline in order to facilitate early compilation and dissemination of data and information. The Secretariat should

continue its practice of circulating the reporting forms and guidance on using the online reporting form to Member States, under cover of a Note Verbale to Permanent Missions in New York at the beginning of each year, and to national points of contact. The Secretariat should also send subsequent reminders to both Permanent Missions in New York and national points of contact to help facilitate submissions.

60. The Group commended the ODA for establishing the online reporting tool for the electronic filing of submissions and the overhaul of the Register's database, implementing the recommendations of the 2003 and 2006 GGEs. The Group encouraged greater use of the online reporting tool for filing national reports.

61. The Group recognized that the Register does not address transfers to and holdings of arms by non-state actors. Due to the complexity of the issue, the Group concluded that it should be reviewed in more detail by future GGEs, bearing in mind the conclusion of the 2006 GGE that the Register covers transfers between Member States only.

62. With regard to the proposals in paragraphs 43 to 51 above, the Group noted that these issues should be further reviewed by future GGEs.

63. The Group recognized the importance of the principle of transparency and its relevance to WMD. In its consideration of proposals to add a new category to include such weapons, the Group reviewed the nature of the Register, regional security concerns and existing international legal instruments concerning the subject matter, as well as General Assembly resolution 46/36 L. In view of all these factors, particularly taking into account that the Register covered conventional arms only, the Group agreed that the question of transparency

in WMD was an issue that should be addressed by the General Assembly.

64. The Group concluded that the issue of the inclusion of SALW as a new Register category merited continued review by future GGEs.

65. The Group concluded that Member States that are in a position to do so should continue to provide background information including military holdings, procurement through national production, international transfers of SALW and national policies on arms transfers, pending the further development of the Register.

66. Further to its consideration of a standardized reporting form for the submission of voluntary information on military holdings and on procurement through national production, the Group noted that the provision of guidance to Member States could have the effect of improving the uniformity and utility of the data provided.

67. The Group reiterated the necessity of regular reviews of the continuing operation of the Register and its further development. The Group noted that due to the decline in resources, the duration of the meetings and the size of the Group have shrunk significantly compared to the previous GGEs, and this has negatively impacted the work of this GGE. The Group stressed that future GGEs be given ample time to review the Register. The Group noted that the Register review process would benefit from more experts representing countries with diverse perspectives on transparency in armaments on the basis of equitable geographical representation.

## **B. Recommendations**

68. Pursuant to its discussions, the Group recommends that Member States report armed UAVs in a manner consistent with paragraphs 45 and 46 of this report.

69. The Group recommends that Member States continue to provide the Secretary-General with their views on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, including whether the absence of SALW as a main category in the Register has limited its relevance and directly affected decisions on participation. The Group recommends that the 2016 GGE further consider, amongst others, the issue of SALW in all its aspects.

70. The Group recommends that Member States that are in a position to do so provide data and information on small arms and light weapons transfers to the Register as part of additional background information on the basis of the standardized reporting form on international transfers of small arms and light weapons.

71. The Group recommends that Member States that are in a position to do so provide data and information on procurement through national production and also on military holdings to the Register as background information.

72. The Group also recommends that Member States consistently submit reports by the 31 May deadline, including “nil” returns, to the Register in order to promote its universality. The Group stressed the importance of the Secretariat’s efforts in encouraging Member States to report to the Register. It also recognized the role that relevant regional organizations and the UN Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament can play in this regard.

73. In this context, the Group strongly recommends enhanced budgetary support and human resources for the Register so that the Conventional Arms Branch of the ODA can increase its role in maintaining and promoting participation in the Register. The Group also encourages Member States, in a position to do so, to provide voluntary contributions to the Register's Secretariat. The Group encourages Member States and the Secretariat to render assistance, upon request, to Member States to build capacity to submit reports to the Register.

74. Based on the recommendations made by the 2003, 2006 and 2009 GGEs (A/58/274, A/61/261, A/64/296), the Group made recommendations to promote reporting to the Register (see Annex I for an illustrative list)

75. The Group recommends holding the next regular review of the Register by a GGE in 2016. The ODA should resume its past practice of including at least 20 experts representing countries with diverse perspectives on transparency in armaments on the basis of equitable geographical representation.

## **Annex I. Illustrative list of measures to promote reporting to the Register**

### **Raise awareness of the Register's aims, strengths and utility to encourage Member States to report to the Register**

- The UN could make an annual high-level statement on the continuing importance of the Register;
- Member States could consider establishing an annual day for promoting the issue of transparency in armaments;
- Member States, with the support of the Secretariat, could arrange a session in the General Assembly dedicated to promote transparency in armaments in general and reporting to the Register in particular;
- Member States, with the support of the Secretariat, could arrange for an event to promote reporting to the Register in connection with other activities in the UN related to conventional arms, where appropriate;
- Member States should consider providing financial support for convening a series of workshops devoted to the Register. The Secretariat should conduct follow-up activities with Member States that have participated in regional workshops to encourage reporting and to collect feedback;
- The UN Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament should explore options for promoting the Register and encourage reporting to the Register in their respective regions;
- Meetings of regional organizations should be used as platforms for promoting transparency in international arms transfers and reporting to the Register in particular, where appropriate;
- A special effort should be made to promote reporting by Member States in the

Middle East and North Africa;

- Member States and relevant regional organizations are encouraged, with the support of the Secretariat, to hold regional workshops on the Register's aims, strengths and utility should be convened for Member States in this region;
- The Secretariat and Member States should explore methods for raising awareness of the Register among civil society.

**Explore options for capacity-building and providing training to enable Member States to report to the Register**

- Regional workshops should be utilized to provide training to enable Member States to report;
- The development of online training tools should be utilized as a cost-effective method to provide training to enable Member States to report;
- Member States should consider providing international assistance to other Member States to help enable reporting.

**Reduce the reporting burden and “reporting fatigue” for Member States**

- Possibilities should be explored for Member States to submit their report to the Register to other relevant instruments that require Member States to report on international arms transfers, such as those at the regional and sub-regional level.

**Review technical procedures that the Secretariat could undertake to facilitate reporting to the Register**

- The Secretariat should maintain more regular contact with Member States, for example by issuing more reminders;



- The Secretariat should conduct follow-up with Member States that have a good record of reporting on imports and exports or providing “nil” returns, but which have not provided a report to the Secretariat by September of each year. This should be carried out on a targeted basis, including utilising other UN disarmament meetings;
- The Secretariat should promote greater use of the online reporting tool;
- The Secretariat should provide Member States with a calendar stipulating deadlines for reports on conventional arms issues at the beginning of each year;
- The Secretariat should ensure that information provided by Member States, even if provided after the reporting deadline, is disseminated in a timely manner via “The Global Reported Arms Trade” map-based database and also in Secretary-General reports made available on the website of the ODA;
- The Secretariat should regularly update contact information and the information booklet available on the website of ODA;
- The Secretariat should prominently display reminders and the current level of reporting on the website of ODA;
- The Secretariat should use existing UN communication platforms—for example the UN Daily News bulletin—to remind Member States of the request to report to the Register or to publish reporting lists.