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General and complete disarmament: transparency in armaments

Continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution [71/44](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts, with the broadest possible participation, and on the basis of equitable geographical representation, to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development, taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, relevant deliberations within the United Nations, the views expressed by Member States and the reports of the Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, with a view to taking a decision at its seventy-fourth session.

2. Pursuant to that resolution, the Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly the above-mentioned report prepared with the assistance of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development.

* [A/74/50](#).



Report on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development

Summary

Every three years a Group of Governmental Experts reviews the operation and relevance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development. The 2019 Group concluded its work on 21 June 2019, following three one-week sessions in New York and Geneva.

The major recommendations of the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts include a call for Member States to report information on their international transfers of small arms and light weapons in parallel with reporting on the established seven categories of the Register.

The Group of Governmental Experts agreed on decoupling the issue of reporting on procurement through national production from that of reporting on military holdings, by referencing the two issues separately. This is a step towards efforts to elevate national transparency on acquisitions of weaponry through domestic suppliers.

The report of the Group includes a section whose focus is on the use of the Register as a confidence-building tool.

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Foreword by the Secretary-General

In accordance with the practice of undertaking triennial reviews of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to convene a Group of Governmental Experts in 2019 to report on the continuing operation and relevance of the Register and its further development.

For over 25 years, the Register has served as a global instrument for promoting transparency in international arms transfers. Towards this end, the Register helps to build trust among States and enhance international stability and security, which in turn are necessary conditions for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. The current worrying trends in the global arms trade, reflecting growing tensions within the international security environment, underscore the continued importance of the Register and the need to adapt it to emerging technological realities.

Fifteen Member States responded to my invitation to nominate experts to participate in the work of the Group. Through their diligent work and shared commitment, those experts produced the present consensus report, which I am pleased to transmit to the General Assembly.

The Group of Governmental Experts made good progress on addressing the issue of reporting international transfers of small arms and light weapons, which is of great importance to the majority of Member States. The proliferation of and illicit trade in such weapons represent a serious concern to many countries facing armed conflict and violence. It is thus satisfying that the Group reached consensus on a recommendation that Member States, under what the Group calls the seven-plus-one formula, to provide information on the export and import of these types of weapons, in parallel with its reporting on the seven categories of heavy weaponry under the Register.

The Register encourages Member States, in addition to their reporting on international transfers of conventional arms, to provide information on procurement through national production and on military holdings. In this regard, I note with satisfaction that the Group of Governmental Experts has decoupled the treatment of those sensitive issues. This represents a modest yet notable step towards generating a greater balance between the commitments of States that import most of their weapons and the commitments of those that acquire them to a significant degree through domestic manufacturing. The Group's message is clear: countries producing their own weapons should be held to the same standard of transparency as countries that acquire their weaponry abroad.

Furthermore, the Group of Governmental Experts made recommendations on improving the use of the Register by Member States, enhancing the relevance of the instrument and further strengthening the support provided by the United Nations Secretariat. The Group has also provided elements to inform the next review of the Register.

I am grateful to all of the experts who contributed to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts. I am especially pleased that almost half the Group's members were women. I thank the Chairperson of the Group for her leadership, which enabled the Group to fully discharge its mandate and generate an important outcome adopted by consensus.

Letter of transmittal

22 July 2016

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and relevance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development, which was convened by you pursuant to General Assembly resolution [71/44](#).

The report was adopted by consensus after substantive discussions during the three sessions held in Geneva and New York from February to June 2019. A distinguishing feature of the present Group was, that out of the 15 experts, an unprecedented high number of women (eight) participated in its work, which included the following five actions.

First, following the need to address not only the operation but also the relevance of the Register, the Group of Governmental Experts took a new approach to implementing its mandate through the consideration of three interrelated areas: participation, scope and use of the Register, in order to contribute to transparency and confidence-building among Member States.

Second, the Group of Governmental Experts reaffirmed that the Register is as relevant for international peace and security today as when it was established; and considered that participation in it as a shared responsibility. It also highlighted the continuing challenges associated with the level of annual participation in the Register and the need to address this matter urgently. The Group made certain to address the benefits of participation and produced a list of recommended illustrative measures for stimulating higher levels of reporting, as well as concrete measures addressed to both Member States and the Secretariat.

Third, building on the work of previous groups of governmental experts, the current Group of Governmental Experts not only continued the practice of reviewing the scope of the Register, but also took into account its impact on participation in and use of this instrument. In the current year, it was considered relevant, in order to better inform Member States and future expert groups, to strengthen the level of transparency in the deliberations of the Group. The Group also felt that, after nine Register review cycles, there was a need to provide clarification with regard to the current status of the instrument, including its categories and additional background information, as well as the different available reporting methods.

Fourth, the Group of Governmental Experts was able to make a concrete recommendation concerning reporting on exports and imports of small arms and light weapons. This was previously recommended only on a trial basis. This consolidation of the so-called seven-plus-one formula will offer Member States a flexible approach to reporting on those types of weaponry, information on which was previously included only as additional background material.

Fifth, the Group of Governmental Experts fulfilled its mandate by analysing how the Register could be used to implement confidence-building measures adopted by consensus in other forums and recommended measures to this end in an illustrative list.

Considering the review process as a continuous practice, the Group of Governmental Experts underscored a few areas that should merit special attention in the next review of the Register, which it is recommended should take place in 2022, consistent with the practice of holding such reviews on a triennial basis.

I would like to thank the members of the Group of Governmental Experts for electing me to serve as its Chair and for their constructive approach and contributions,

which enabled the Group to fully discharge the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

On behalf of the members of the Group of Governmental Experts, I would also like to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, for her advice and encouragement. Our appreciation also goes to the Secretary of the Group, Mr. Antonio Evora, who, together with the team of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, provided excellent support to the experts. Finally, the Group is grateful to Mr. Paul Holtom, whose excellent work and high level of technical expertise were essential for the Group's success.

(Signed) Mariela **Fogante**
Chair, Group of Governmental Experts
on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

The Group comprised the following experts:

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(Signed) Mariela **Fogante**
Chair, Group of Governmental Experts
on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

Report on the continuing operation and relevance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development

I. Introduction

1. The report of the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and relevance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development consists of three sections. Section I comprises an introduction to the establishment of the Register and its main objectives and operation; and a review of the recommendations of all previous Groups of Governmental Experts on the Register.

2. Section II, which reviews the continuing operation, relevance and further development of the Register, has three subsections. Subsection II.A considers the participation in the Register during the period 2015–2018, reviewing data and information provided by Member States and the Group’s assessment of participation; presents measures to help revitalize participation in the Register; and reviews the role of the Secretariat in promoting and facilitating such participation. Subsection II.B outlines the Group’s consideration of proposals to expand the scope of the Register, describing the exchange of expert views. Subsection II.C addresses the issue of the use and application of the Register and its contribution to confidence-building among Member States.

3. Section III provides the Group’s conclusions and recommendations on enhancing the continuing operation and relevance of the Register, as well as on furthering its development.

A. Establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

4. In its resolution [46/36 L](#) of 9 December 1991 entitled “Transparency in armaments”, the General Assembly, requested the Secretary-General to establish and maintain a universal and non-discriminatory Register of Conventional Arms. The objective of the Register is “to prevent excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms (...) in order to (...) enhance confidence, promote stability, help States to exercise restraint, ease tensions and strengthen regional and international peace and security” (Assembly resolution [46/36 L](#)). Member States were called upon to provide annually to 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.

5. Pursuant to that resolution, the Secretary-General convened a Panel of Governmental Technical Experts in 1992 to bring the Register into operation. Endorsing the recommendations of the Panel (see [A/47/342](#) and Corr.1-3), the General Assembly called upon all Member States to provide the requested data and information to the Secretary-General annually, beginning in 1993.¹

B. Review of the Register

6. In its resolution [46/36 L](#), the General Assembly decided, with a view to future expansion, to keep the scope of and participation in the Register under review, which

¹ See General Assembly resolution [47/52 L](#) of 9 December 1992.

is also reflected in the 1992 report of the Panel of Technical Experts. As a result, the Register has been reviewed periodically thus far at three-year intervals, with the exception of the period between the convening of the 2009 Group of Governmental Experts and that of the 2013 Group of Governmental Experts, which was four years.

1994–2013 Groups of Governmental Experts

7. The General Assembly took note of the report of the 1994 Group of Governmental Experts ([A/49/316](#)) 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. The recommendations contained in the report of the 1994 Group of Governmental Experts were endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution [49/75 C](#).

8. The 1997 Group of Governmental Experts continued the elaboration of technical procedures to ensure the effective operation of the Register. It proposed extending the reporting deadline from 30 April to 31 May; and encouraged the submission of information on national points of contact and the use of the “Remarks” column in the reporting format ([A/52/316](#)). The Group 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. The recommendations contained in the 1997 report of the Group of Governmental Experts were endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution [53/77 V](#).

9. The 2000 Group of Governmental Experts recommended, with a view to encouraging greater participation in the Register, the holding of regional and subregional 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 ([A/55/281](#)). The 2000 Group also agreed that the Register covers conventional arms only and that the transparency of weapons of mass destruction is therefore an issue that should be addressed by the General Assembly. The recommendations contained in the report of the 2000 Group were endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution [57/75](#).

10. The 2003 Group of Governmental Experts concluded that considerable progress had been made towards achieving a relatively high level of participation in the Register ([A/58/274](#)). It recommended lowering the reporting threshold of large-calibre artillery systems from 100 millimetres (mm) to 75 mm in category III; and the inclusion, on an exceptional basis, of man-portable air-defence systems as a sub-category in category VII. In addition, the 2003 Group noted that Member States who were in a position to do so could provide additional background information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons made or modified to military specifications and intended for military use. The recommendations contained in the report were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution [58/54](#).

11. The 2006 Group of Governmental Experts recommended that the reporting threshold of “warships” under category VI be reduced from 750 to 500 metric tons (see [A/61/261](#)). The Group recommended that Member States in a position to do so should provide additional background information and utilize the optional standardized reporting form on international transfers of small arms and light weapons, developed by the Group of Governmental Experts for reporting such transfers. The 2006 Group also began to discuss the issue of reporting the international transfer of armed unmanned aerial vehicles in the context of the Register. The recommendations contained in the report were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution [61/77](#).

12. The 2009 Group of Governmental Experts recommended that efforts should continue to ensure the Register's relevance for all regions and to enhance the universal participation by Member States (see [A/64/296](#)). In particular, the Group recommended that measures should be undertaken to assist Member States in building capacity for the submission of meaningful reports, including on small arms and light weapons, and made adjustments to the standardized reporting forms in order to simplify them. Furthermore, it recommended that the Secretary-General seek the views of Member States on whether the continued absence of small arms and light weapons as a main category in the Register had limited the relevance of the Register, thereby directly affecting decisions on the participation of Member States in this instrument. The Group continued the discussion on reporting international transfers of armed unmanned aerial vehicles. The recommendations contained in the report were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution [64/54](#).

13. The 2013 Group of Governmental Experts recommended that Member States reporting on international transfers of armed unmanned aerial vehicles do so using categories IV and V of the Register ([A/68/140](#)). The 2013 Group repeated the recommendation of the 2009 Group that the Secretary-General seek the views of Member States on whether the continued absence of small arms and light weapons as a main category in the Register had limited the relevance of the Register and directly affected decisions on participation. It also strongly recommended enhanced budgetary support and human resources from within the Conventional Arms Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat for the maintenance and promotion of the Register. The 2013 Group encouraged Member States, in a position to do so, to provide voluntary contributions to the Secretariat and render assistance, upon request, to Member States in building capacity to submit reports to the Register. The recommendations were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution [68/43](#).

2016 Group of Governmental Experts

14. The 2016 Group of Governmental Experts met 25 years after the issuance of the report of the Group of Experts on the Study on Ways and Means of Promoting Transparency in International Transfers of Conventional Arms ([A/46/301](#)) and the adoption of General Assembly resolution [46/36 L](#) of 9 December 1991. The 2016 Group recommended that the title of category IV of the Register be amended to "Combat aircraft and unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs)", reflecting the recommendation that a subcategory for reporting on imports and exports of unmanned combat aerial vehicles be introduced ([A/71/259](#)). The Group also recommended that the Secretary-General appeal to Member States to apply, on a trial basis, a seven-plus-one formula for reporting on their international transfers of small arms and light weapons to inform the deliberations of future Groups on the inclusion of small arms and light weapons as an eighth category in the Register. Under the seven-plus-one formula, Member States report on international transfers of small arms and light weapons in parallel with the seven categories of the Register, using the standardized reporting form for international transfers of small arms and light weapons. The Group further recommended that the Secretariat distribute a questionnaire to Member States to solicit views on national reporting systems and challenges, as well as on the extent to which the absence of a category on small arms and light weapons limited the Register's relevance and directly affected decisions on participation. The Group recommended that Member States be permitted to submit a rolling nil return which could be valid for a maximum of three years. The period of validity for the rolling nil return would end when the Member State submitted a substantive report containing information on imports or exports of conventional arms. The Group also recommended that Member States consider providing financial support to enable the Secretariat to reissue the information booklet entitled "Guidelines for Reporting

International Transfers to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms”, with additional information to enhance the effectiveness of national points of contact and national reporting mechanisms, and that the translation of the online reporting tool into all six official languages of the United Nations be prioritized. The recommendations were endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution [71/44](#).

2019 Group of Governmental Experts

15. The 2019 Group of Governmental Experts was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [71/44](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the continuing operation and relevance of the Register and its further development, taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, relevant deliberations within the United Nations, the views expressed by Member States and the reports of the Secretary-General on this issue.

II. Review of the continuing operation and relevance of the Register and its further development

Description of the mandate of the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts and the organization of work

16. The 2019 Group was conscious of the inclusion in resolution General Assembly [71/44](#) of the request that the mandate of the 2019 Group be not only to consider the operation of the Register and its further development but also to review its relevance. To that end, the Group took a new approach to implementing its mandate through the consideration of three interrelated areas: participation in, and scope and use of, the Register. While in the past the issue of participation in and scope of the Register had been addressed in detail, the issue of the use of the Register had received less attention. The 2019 Group’s approach highlighted how work in developing one area could help to strengthen another area. The discussion showed that the relevance of the Register should be understood in terms not only of the level of participation and scope, but also of how the instrument could be used in such a way as to contribute to transparency and confidence-building among Members States.

17. The 2019 Group reviewed the data and information submitted by Member States related to the Register from 1993 to 2018 and the statistical tables and graphs compiled by the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat, as well as the views submitted to the Secretariat by Member States, including through the questionnaire prepared by the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts. In addition, the Group reviewed relevant work undertaken within the United Nations framework, including the reports of previous Groups of Governmental Experts, the work of subsidiary body 5 under the Conference on Disarmament,² the report of the Disarmament Commission for 2017,³ the publication entitled *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*⁴ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁵ The Group benefited from non-papers provided by governmental experts, a background paper prepared by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and presentations by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Arms Trade Treaty secretariat, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Small Arms Survey and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The Group used this information as a complement to its deliberations in order to develop

² See document [CD/2141](#) of 11 September 2018 on subsidiary body 5.

³ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-second session, Supplement No. 42 (A/72/42)*.

⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.IX.6. Available at https://front.un-arm.org/documents/SG+disarmament+agenda_1.pdf.

⁵ General Assembly resolution [70/1](#).

conclusions and recommendations for improving the relevance of, and promoting universal participation in, the Register.

A Participation in the Register: its relevance and universality

1. Data and information submitted to the Register, 2015–2018

Extent of participation

18. In 2016, 55 Member States provided information to the Secretariat on their imports and exports of the conventional arms classified under the Register's seven categories which were carried out during calendar year 2015. Fifty-seven Member States submitted information in 2017, of which 28 (49 per cent) reported using the seven-plus-one formula; and 60 Member States submitted information in 2018, of which 38 (63 per cent) reported using that formula. Figures I and II provide the regional breakdown for overall submissions for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018; and table 1 provides a regional breakdown for the use of the seven-plus-one formula for the years 2017 and 2018. The Secretariat also provided information on reporting by Member States in accordance with the annual 31 May deadline: 21 of 55 Member States reported in 2016 by 31 May, 12 of 57 Member States by 31 May 2017 and 35 of 60 Member States by 31 May 2018; and 30 reports had been submitted by 31 May 2019. The annual average reporting rate for 2016–2018 was 57, compared with 61 for 2013–2015. Ninety-eight Member States that had participated in the Register at least once during the period 1993–2015 did not report during 2016–2018. Twenty-six Member States have never participated in the Register.

Figure I

Breakdown of overall participation in the Register for 2016–2018, by regional group

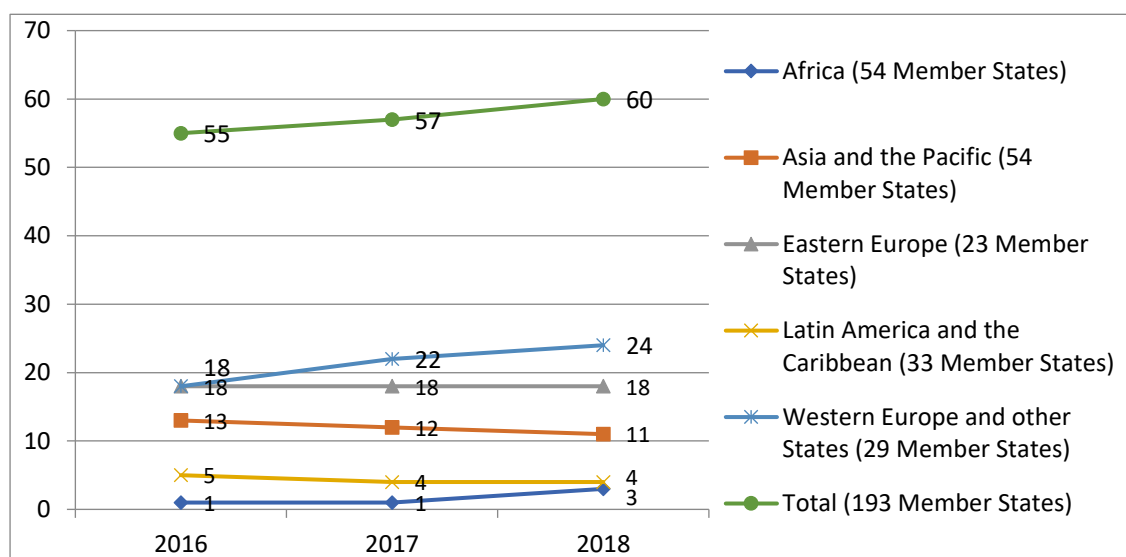


Figure II
Percentage of Member States that participated in the Register during 2016–2018, by regional group

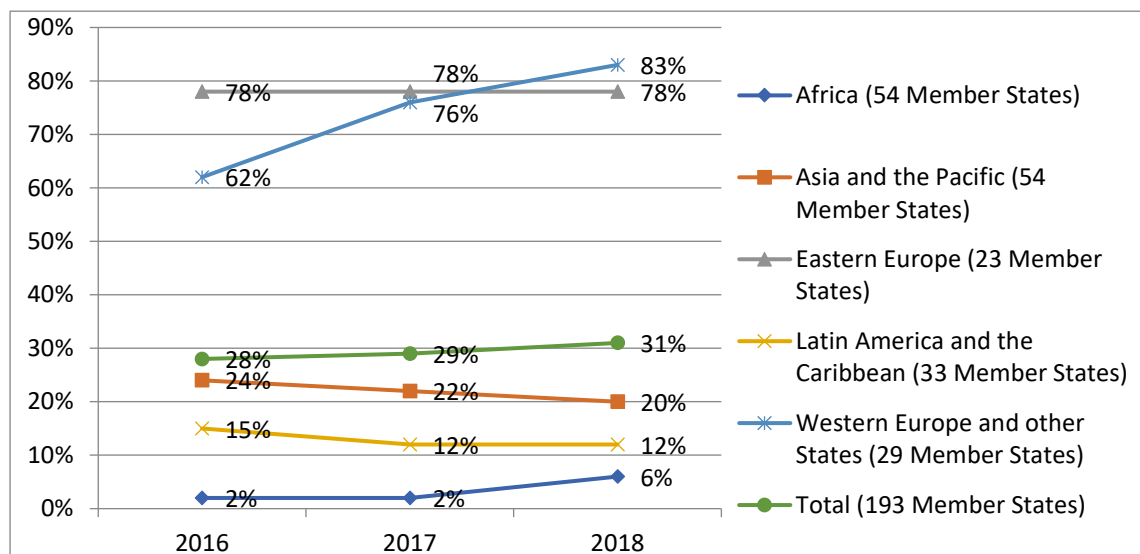


Table 1
Breakdown of use of the seven-plus-one formula during 2017 and 2018, by regional group

Regional group/number of Member States	2017 (No. and percentage)	2018 (No. and percentage)
Africa (54)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)
Asia and the Pacific (54)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Eastern Europe (23)	11 (48%)	15 (65%)
Latin America and the Caribbean (33)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)
Western European and other States (29)	14 (48%)	19 (66%)
Total	28 (49%)	38 (63%)

19. The Group noted that the General Assembly resolution entitled “Transparency in armaments” regularly receives the support of more than three quarters of Member States, with 156 Member States voting in favour of adoption in 2011, 154 in 2013 and 156 in 2016. The only year in which a greater number of Member States voted in favour of adoption was 2006, when 157 Member States voted in favour of adoption. No Member State has ever voted against. Of the 156 Member States that voted in favour of adoption in 2016, 95 did not report to the Register during 2016–2018; 81 had reported at least once during the years 1993–2015; 8 have never reported to the Register.

20. The General Assembly resolution on transparency in armaments was co-sponsored by 96 Member States in 2011, 72 in 2013 and 63 in 2016. Of the 63 Member States that co-sponsored the resolution in 2016, 16 did not report to the Register during 2016–2018. Of those 16, 14 reported at least once during 1993–2015 and 2 have never reported.

Reports on exports and imports

21. The level of reporting for exports under the seven categories of the Register dropped between 2015 and 2016, but increased between 2016 and 2017, before

dropping in 2018. An annual average of 30 Member States reported such exports during 2016–2018, compared with 33 for 2013–2015 (see figure III). The average annual number of Member States reporting imports of conventional arms to the Register during 2016–2018 was 31, compared with an annual average of 28 Member States during 2013–2015.

22. Twenty-three Member States reported exports of small arms and light weapons in accordance with the seven-plus-one formula for the first year of the trial period (i.e., submissions were made in 2017 for exports during calendar year 2016) and 30 reported exports under the formula in 2018 (see figure IV). Twenty-two Member States provided data on imports of small arms and light weapons in 2017 compared with 27 in 2018.

Figure III

Reports on exports and imports under the seven categories for 2016–2018

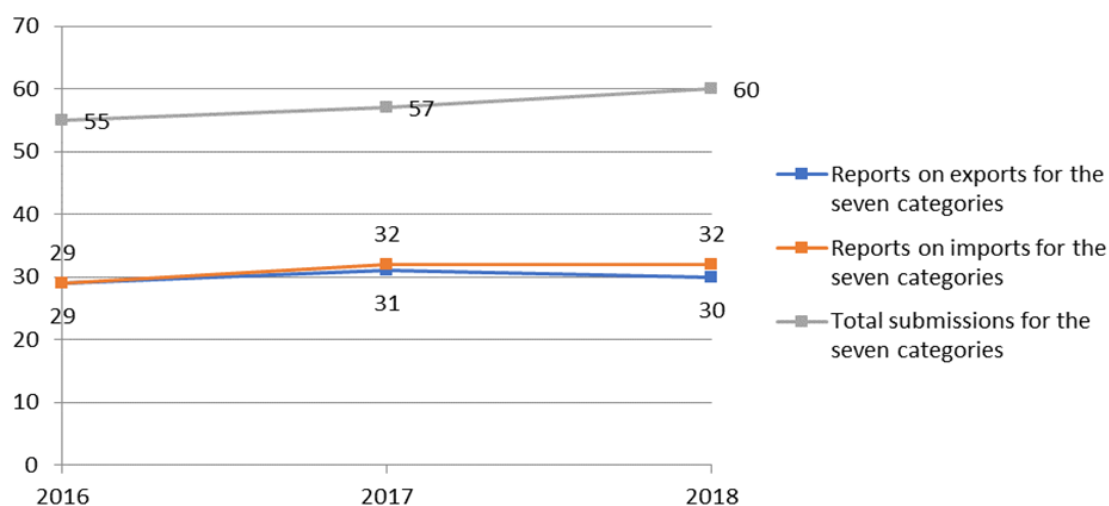
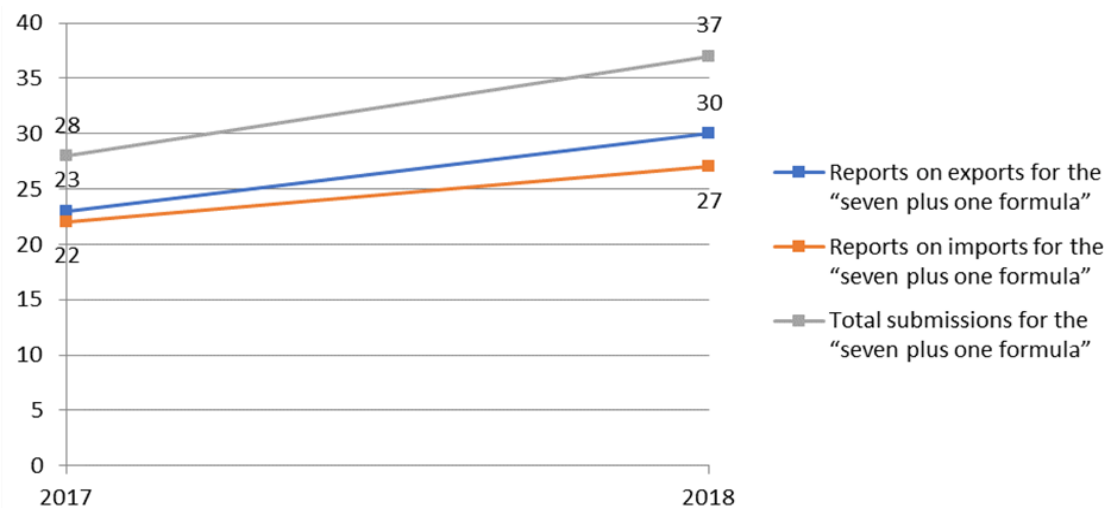


Figure IV

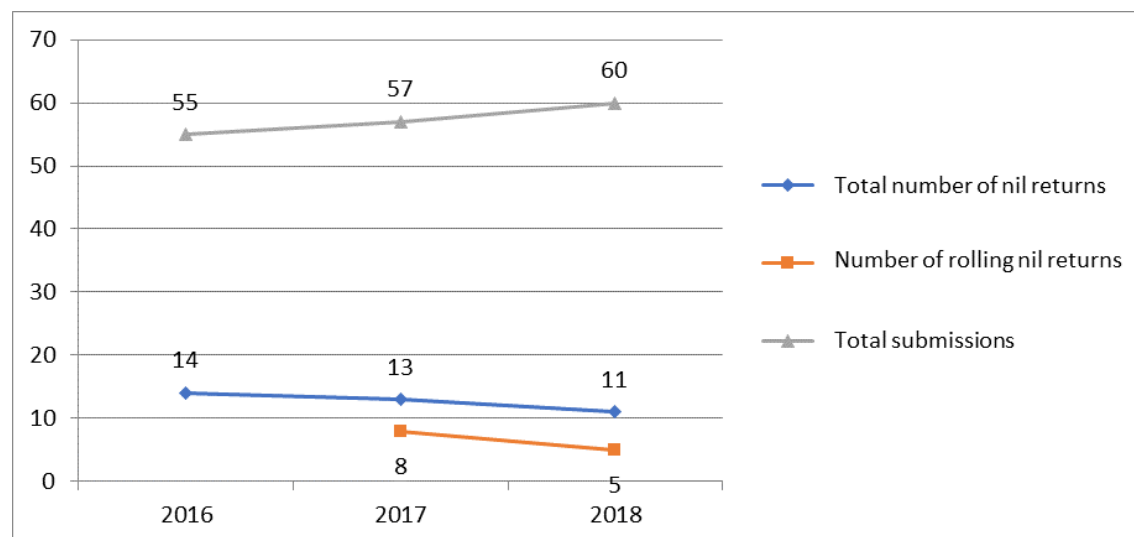
Reports on exports and imports using the seven-plus-one formula for 2017 and 2018



Nil returns

23. Fourteen of the 55 submissions received by the Secretariat in 2016 were nil returns (25 per cent). The overall number of nil returns decreased to 13 out of 57 Member States (23 per cent) in 2017 and to 11 out of 60 Member States (18 per cent) in 2018 (see figure V). The nil returns in 2017 included eight “rolling” nil returns (nil returns that cover up to three years of future reporting because the Member State providing the nil return has no plans to import or export conventional arms during the declared period) and five in 2018.

Figure V
Provision of nil returns to the Register, 2016–2018

*Additional background information*

24. Since 1992, 48 Member States have provided additional background information on procurement through national production at least once. An annual average of 11 Member States provided additional background information on procurement through national production during 2016–2018, compared with an annual average of 10 for 2013–2015 (see figure VI).

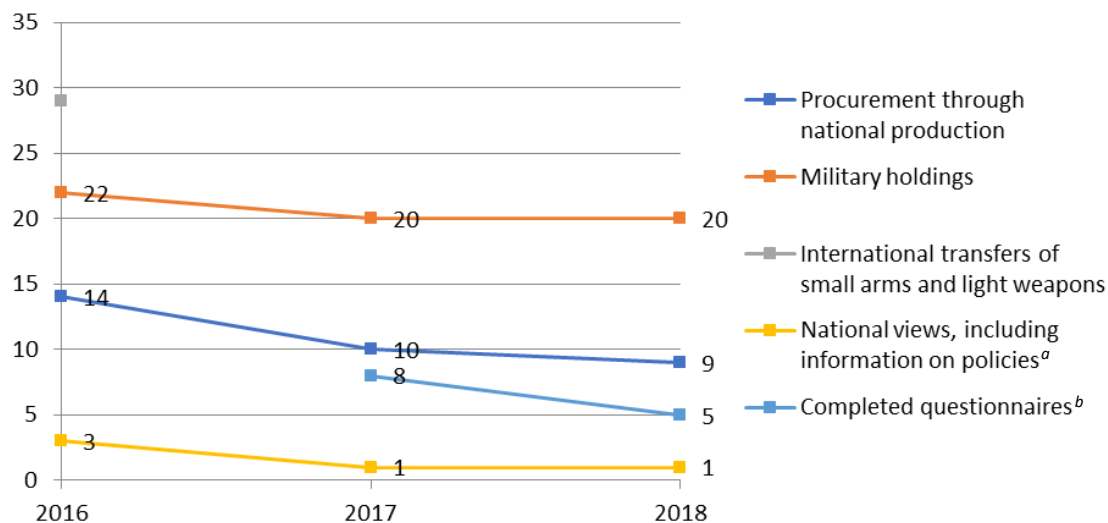
25. Since 1992, 54 Member States have provided additional background information on military holdings at least once. An annual average of 21 Member States provided additional background information on military holdings during 2016–2018, compared with an annual average of 24 for 2013–2015 (see figure VI).

26. During the period 2004–2016, 90 Member States provided additional background information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons at least once, including nil returns. Twenty-nine Member States provided additional background information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons in 2016 (see figure VI). For information on reporting of international transfers of small arms and light weapons in accordance with the seven-plus-one formula, see paragraph 18 and figure III.

27. In its resolution 71/44, the General Assembly called upon Member States to submit their views to the Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, including on whether the absence of small arms and light weapons as a main category in the Register had limited the relevance of the Register and directly affected decisions on participation. Five Member States (Cuba, Japan, Lebanon, Senegal and the United States of America) submitted their views in

this regard to the Secretary-General during 2016–2018, including information on changes to their national policies related to conventional arms transfers, although not all of those Member States submitted data on international transfers. The Secretariat also distributed a questionnaire seeking views on these issues and reporting practices, which was prepared by the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts.⁶ In response, the Secretariat received 17 completed questionnaires in 2017–2019, including for one Member State that did not submit data during 2016–2018.⁷

Figure VI

Provision of additional background information, 2016–2018

^a The number of Member States that provided national views included Member States that did not submit data on exports and imports of conventional arms during 2016–2018.

^b Four Member States submitted a completed questionnaire in 2019.

28. The 2016 Group of Governmental Experts encouraged Member States to indicate in their national submissions whether their data referred to actual transfers or authorizations for exports and imports of conventional arms. Therefore, the Secretariat included an additional question in the online reporting tool to elicit information on whether data contained in a submission were based on authorizations or actual exports and imports. Thirty-six Member States that provided a submission during 2016–2018 indicated that their data referred to actual exports and imports, while four Member States indicated that their sources of data were authorizations. One Member State used data on actual and authorized exports and imports.

2. Revitalization of participation in the Register: consideration of current status and measures to promote participation

29. The Group considered how to revitalize and increase participation in the Register by examining this issue in connection with that of scope, which is explored in section II.B. Rather than focus attention on identifying possible reasons why more Member States did not participate in the Register, the Group examined the factors

⁶ See para. 86 of the 2016 report on the continuing operation of the Register (A/71/259); and General Assembly resolution 71/44, para. 6 (a).

⁷ Finland, Germany, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Singapore, Turkey and Ukraine provided completed questionnaires in 2017; Argentina, Bhutan, China, Madagascar and the Russian Federation returned completed questionnaires in 2018; and Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Japan and the Netherlands provided completed questionnaires in 2019.

accounting for why Member States provided the Register with information. Section II.C considers the benefits that accrue from participation in the Register and demonstrates how better use of the Register might be achieved. Better use could in turn stimulate greater participation.

30. The Register is the only global transparency and confidence-building mechanism in the field of conventional arms. Since its adoption, the Register has made a significant contribution to increasing transparency in the areas of international transfers of conventional arms, procurement through national production and military holdings. At least 170 Member States have participated in the Register at least once. Presentations delivered to the Group estimated that about 90 per cent of the world's international transfers of conventional arms are reported to the Register, thanks to regular reporting by the largest exporters of major conventional arms. In addition, most of the world's largest exporters and importers of small arms and light weapons also report to the Register on their international transfers of small arms and light weapons.

31. The Group expressed concern at the low level of participation by Member States in recent years, despite the fact that the General Assembly continues to garner a high level of support for its resolution on transparency in armaments. The Group considered how to encourage Member States to participate in the Register. The low number of responses to the Secretary-General's request for views, and the fact that completed questionnaires were received from only one Member State which did not provide data for the Register during 2016–2018, meant that the Group could not draw concrete conclusions regarding the lack of participation by Member States that had regularly reported to the Register during 2000–2007 but had not participated recently.

32. The Group considered the merits of targeted engagement and outreach to two groups of Member States: those that had shown political support for the Register, but did not currently participate; and those that had reported regularly but no longer did so. The Group observed that those Member States were in regions characterized by active participation in international and regional instruments. The Group assessed the Secretariat's outreach to these Member States as positive; and discussed whether the Secretariat and interested experts could promote participation in the Register in meetings convened to consider other relevant international and regional instruments.

33. The Group noted that Member States can use a flexible approach to providing a complete submission to the Register. The Group considered that, at a minimum, a submission to the Register consists of a nil return or data on international transfers under the seven categories of conventional arms and, where feasible, small arms and light weapons. Member States should be encouraged to provide additional background information if they are in a position to do so. The Group was aware that the current flexibility granted to Member States with respect to their participation in the Register should not lead to a reduction in the quality of data and additional background information provided to the Register.

34. The Group discussed measures for revitalizing participation in the Register based on the illustrative list of measures contained in the annex to the report of the 2013 Group of Governmental Experts (A/68/140). The Group welcomed the appeal to Member States to participate in the Register made by the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs in 2019; and expressed support for the proposal that the United Nations Secretariat make an annual high-level statement on the continuing importance of the Register. The Group considered the issue of how Member States could promote the Register in events held in the First Committee of the General Assembly, including a proposal for a special event on relevant transparency and confidence-building mechanisms. The Group reviewed proposals to encourage and enable the Secretariat to facilitate reporting in the Register, including

the provision of a calendar at the beginning of each year with the reporting deadline; ensuring that the information provided by Member States was disseminated in a timely manner; regular updating of the information on national points of contact and the information booklet; conducting informal briefings for and with the consent of Member States; and seminars and workshops to provide training and capacity-building for Member States related to their reporting to the Register. The Group recognized that the activities to be undertaken by the Secretariat will require funding beyond that available under the current budget provided for the operation of the Register.

35. The Group stressed that the Register serves as a key point of reference and inspiration for subregional, regional and international confidence-building mechanisms and arms control and transfer control instruments. While recognizing that those instruments had purposes and objectives different than those of the Register, the Group also noted that it was possible to provide the same data and additional background information to the Register and to those other instruments. Several instruments determined their scope based on the categories of the Register at the time of their establishment or entry into force. Yet, not all of these instruments have modified their scope to reflect changes made to the scope of the Register, which can have implications for the reporting burden of Member States seeking to fulfil reporting commitments and obligations to different instruments in the case where their online reporting tools and forms are not aligned with those of the Register. Therefore, the Group encouraged Member States to enhance coordination at the national level so as to ensure that, where possible, data and additional background information provided for the Register could also be included in reports produced for other instruments without adding unduly to the reporting burden. The Group also considered the feasibility of promoting updates of the scope of other international instruments to enable an alignment with the current scope of the Register and thereby provide further aid to Member States in their efforts to simplify data collection and reporting for multiple instruments.

36. The Group noted that the previous Group of Governmental Experts had provided useful guidance on the role, tasks and responsibilities of national points of contact, which is contained in the gGuidelines for reporting international transfers to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Group also stressed the importance for Member States of designating a national point of contact for the Register and ensuring that the contact information for that point of contact was kept up to date through the online reporting tool, in order to facilitate communication with the Secretariat and enable the provision of participation-related assistance.

37. The Group examined the utility of the online reporting tool in enabling participation in the Register. Since May 2012, 46 Member States have filed at least one report to the Register through the online reporting tool. The Secretariat provides an informal annual briefing session on the electronic filing of reports to the Register on the margins of the meetings of the First Committee of the General Assembly. Experts explained that the national point of contact or persons responsible for compiling submissions for the Register in some Member States are unable to use the online reporting tool because it is available only in English. The Group therefore acknowledged that the utility of the online reporting tool was limited because it currently permits submissions to be made only in one official language of the United Nations. The Group considered that further development of the online reporting tool and its translation into all six official languages of the United Nations could help to facilitate increased use of the online reporting tool and thus participation. The Secretariat explained that this is not currently possible under the regular budget.

38. The Group considered the strong correlation between Member States' regular participation in the Register and their possession of well-established transfer control

systems, including administrative procedures for record-keeping for conventional arms exports and imports, as well as legal obligations to report on conventional arms exports at the national and multilateral levels. The Group recognized the high degree of regular participation by the world's largest exporters of conventional arms. However, this fact alone does not ensure the provision of accurate data on international transfers of conventional arms, especially if the world's largest importers consider that they need not report since data on their imports will have already been captured in the submissions of the world's largest exporters. Within the context of this perception, the Group emphasized that the Register is not intended solely as a repository of information designed to increase transparency in international transfers of conventional arms and, indeed, should serve primarily as a transparency and confidence-building mechanism. Therefore, it is important that all Member States provide official national data on their imports and exports as a means of demonstrating their willingness to participate in such mechanisms.

39. The Group emphasized that if the Register is to be used by Member States, and is in turn to fulfil its potential as a transparency and confidence-building mechanism, Member States cannot rely on the reporting of other Member States. All Member States should collect and submit their own national data to the Register. Participation in the Register should not be limited to the world's largest exporters. It is a responsibility shared by all Member States. The Group recognized that increased awareness raising and capacity-building provided to Member States that do not regularly participate in the Register will be required to enable and support the participation of many such Member States, which have shown political support for the Register but currently lack the experience, knowledge and resources to submit annual reports to the Register.

40. The Group also discussed the implications for participation and universality of modifying the scope of the Register, which has been a central consideration for previous Groups of Governmental Experts when they contemplate expanding the scope of the Register to include reporting on international transfers of small arms and light weapons or changing the status of additional background information on procurement through national production, as discussed in section II.B of this report. The Group carefully considered that while amending the Register's scope might increase its relevance for some Member States, such changes could discourage reporting by those Member States that were already regularly reporting to the Register but that might be unwilling to participate in the Register if its scope was expanded to include certain items and activities, or transfers to entities that were not Member States.

3. Role of the Secretariat

41. The Group welcomed the response of the Conventional Arms Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs to the recommendations contained in the report of the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts that the Branch should actively support and promote the Register as one of its primary missions. The Group noted the continuing human and financial resource challenges faced by the Secretariat with regard to implementing all of the recommendations made by the previous Group of Governmental Experts. The Secretariat informed the Group that a Senior Political Affairs Officer (at the P-5 level) in the Office for Disarmament Affairs was currently charged with overseeing the instrument and with serving as secretary of the Group of Governmental Experts, among other duties carried out within the Conventional Arms Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. The Senior Political Affairs Officer is supported by one full-time support staff at the General Service level in efforts to ensure the maintenance of the Register's database, management of reports and provision of technical support to national points of contact ([A/71/259](#), para. 36). The

Group expects that the Office for Disarmament Affairs will ensure that the regular budget of the United Nations can provide for sufficient human resources at the appropriate levels to enable the Secretariat to carry out its core functions required for the effective operation of the Register, as the Group is concerned that the current level is insufficient.

42. The Group expressed its appreciation for the updated Guidelines for Reporting International Transfers: Questions and Answers, which includes the report of the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts. The Secretariat informed the Group that the Guidelines had been distributed to all Member States during meetings of the First Committee and other relevant events. The Group considered the potential of the Secretariat and the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament to conduct training and capacity-building activities on a regional basis in support of participation in the Register, as well as to work with regional organizations and other entities to promote transparency in international transfers together with those responsible for providing information on submissions, compilation of report, and potentially use of the Register for confidence-building purposes. The Group noted that there are other sources of funding currently available, such as the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, which can be utilized to raise awareness of the Register and build capacity needed to enable Member States to participate in the Register.

43. The Group recognized that the Secretariat continues to face challenges in maintaining and updating the list of national points of contact. The Secretariat needs an up-to-date list to ensure that it can communicate regularly and directly with national points of contact on matters pertaining to the Register, in particular on updates on data and additional background information provided by Member States to the Register, new developments with regard to the online reporting tool and guidelines, assistance opportunities for training and capacity-building, and reminders regarding reporting deadline. The Group discussed the importance of regular engagement between the Secretariat and national points of contact to facilitate reporting. The Group noted that the Secretariat has not yet put in place a system providing Member States with a confirmation of receipt once the Secretariat has received a submission, as requested by the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts (A/71/259, para. 77). The Group regarded such a system as of considerable potential benefit in situations in which a report has been submitted through the online reporting tool but has not been received by the Secretariat because it is still classified as a “draft” by the tool. In addition, the Group considered the merit of requiring the Secretariat to contact national points of contact and permanent missions to the United Nations in New York and Geneva when a Member State has not provided a submission by the 31 May deadline.

44. The Group appreciated the clarification provided by the Secretariat on how it considers the status of submissions from Member States. The Secretariat currently includes in its participation figures submissions that contain data on exports and imports only under the seven categories of the Register and data on international transfers of small arms and light weapons. When a Member State provides only additional background information or views on the Register, the Secretariat does not count this in the participation figures. Therefore, the three Member States that submitted national views or returned a completed questionnaire but did not provide any data during 2016–2018 are not included in the participation figures for the Register for those years. The Secretariat requested guidance from the Group on how to classify such submissions. The Group considered the benefits of follow-up conducted by the Secretariat with Member States that do not provide data on exports and imports of conventional arms or “nil” returns.

45. The Group welcomed the Secretariat's willingness to explore opportunities to reduce the reporting burden of Member States and to increase participation in the Register by engaging actively with the secretariats of other international and regional instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, and by conducting outreach to Member States that report on arms transfers to those instruments but not to the Register. While the Secretariat has had experience in working with secretariats of other instruments to help align online reporting for these instruments, this is a time-consuming task. The Secretariat indicated that it had contacted Member States that provided data on exports and imports of conventional arms to fulfil obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty, but did not provide similar data for the Register. In 2018, the Secretariat contacted 25 Member States on such grounds, of which 5 subsequently participated in the Register. These contacts should continue.

B. Review and expansion of the scope of the Register

46. The Group reviewed the current scope of the Register, and considered proposals to expand its scope, in connection with the relevance of the Register. When assessing proposals to amend the descriptions for existing categories or expand the scope of the Register, the Group considered amendments in connection with their potential impact on participation, taking into account the discussion contained in section II.A and issues specific to particular categories of conventional arms or types of additional background information. The Group also assessed proposals on expanding the Register's scope in terms of the utility and quality of data and additional background information contained in the Register for identifying excessive and destabilizing accumulations of conventional arms and for transparency and confidence-building purposes, as well as with regard to the work of the Security Council and United Nations agencies, as shown in section II.C.

47. The Group considered proposals for amending the descriptions of the existing categories and for adding new categories to ensure that the Register remained relevant for the purpose of addressing the security concerns of Member States. In undertaking this task, the Group took note of modalities for expansion, as elaborated by the 1992 Panel of Governmental Technical Experts on the Register of Conventional Arms (A/47/342, para. 38), namely, actions:

- To take account of significant technical developments relating to the weapons within existing categories
- To include weapons not covered by existing categories which should be considered because of their destabilizing potential
- To draw upon the experience of the operation of the Register

The Group carefully weighed all proposals for amending the scope of the Register against the potential impact of such changes on participation in and use of the Register.

48. The Group emphasized the importance of clearly explaining the current status of the Register in order to increase understanding of Member States of the different levels of commitments for reporting to the Register. The Group reflected on how the recommendations of past Groups of Governmental Experts had been adopted by the General Assembly in its resolutions and implemented by the Secretariat and Member States. The Group noted that Member States report to the Register on a voluntary basis. At the same time, there is an understanding among Member States that prior to the report of the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts, there were two levels in a hierarchy of commitments for reporting to the Register. Under the higher-level commitment Member States are "requested" to report on imports and exports of

conventional arms under the seven categories, including rolling nil returns. Paragraph 23 above provides more detailed information on the way in which rolling nil returns represent participation in the Register. Under the lower-level commitment, Member States are “invited” to provide additional background information on their military holdings, procurement through national production and relevant policies, pending the possible expansion of the Register.

49. Following the adoption of the report and recommendations of the 2003 and 2006 Groups of Governmental Experts, Member States were invited to provide additional background information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons. The 2016 Group of Governmental Experts sought to upgrade the status of reporting on international transfers of small arms and light weapons on a trial basis, without formally creating an eighth category. The 2016 Group of Governmental Experts recommended that the Secretary-General appeal to Member States, in a position to do so, to provide data on international transfers of small arms and light weapons using the standardized reporting form for international transfers of small arms and light weapons. This approach entailed use of what was labelled by the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts as the seven-plus-one formula. This was a flexible approach for participating in the Register. The recommendation was framed neither as a “request” nor as an “invitation” but rather as an “appeal” by the Secretary-General for reporting using the seven-plus-one formula. The Group’s understanding of the current status of the Register is explained clearly in paragraph 92 below.

50. During their deliberations, the Group exchanged views on different approaches to the use of the terms “offensive” and “defensive” when considering proposals to amend the descriptions of existing Register categories or expand the scope of the Register to include new categories. The Group considered the original purpose of the Register, with its emphasis on transparency and confidence-building and on enabling Member States to identify potentially destabilizing accumulations of conventional arms, as well as consideration of new technologies and emerging conflict dynamics. Experts elaborated on how under national military doctrines and strategies in some Member States, particular categories of conventional arms are identified as being offensive or defensive in nature, while in other Member States no such distinction is made. Those experts encouraged the Group to place an emphasis on offensive conventional arms which could be used in large-scale offensive military operations as the primary basis for considerations related to amending existing categories or expanding the scope of the Register. Experts recognized that this did not mean that weapons regarded by some Member States as defensive, i.e., essential for national defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, were exempt from inclusion in the Register. For these experts, the inclusion of these types of conventional arms in the Register should be undertaken only after careful consideration of the potential impact on the national defence and security of Member States, including objective requirements for their military needs in preventing external aggression. The Group emphasized the importance of considering how any amendments or changes to the scope of the Register would affect its relevance.

1. Categories covered by the Register

51. The Group reviewed the proposals contained in paragraphs 50 to 59 of the report of the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts, and examined new proposals introduced by experts participating in the 2019 Group. The proposals were considered in light of the discussion reflected in paragraph 50 above, as well as emerging technologies including the discussion outlined in paragraph 52 below. When considering the proposals to amend the descriptions of categories II, IV and V to cover equipment that provided force projection and force multiplier capabilities for national armed forces, experts weighed the implications of the inclusion of such equipment,

balancing the reporting burden and participation in the Register against the relevance for confidence-building purposes and identifying excessive and destabilizing accumulations, in light of technological developments and the changing nature of conflict. The Group also assessed the clarity of existing descriptions, as well as proposals for amendments and changes to prevent overlap between the scope of different categories, to ensure that the Group's report provided information that could be used to assist in making submissions to the Register and preventing misunderstandings which could exert a negative impact on participation.

52. The Group discussed the question of whether the current categories include remotely piloted or unmanned conventional arms that exhibit the characteristics listed in the current descriptions of the categories, noting the specific reference to such items in categories IV and VII. In discussing the amendments to the scope of the Register in connection with technological developments, some experts noted that the Register covers international transfers of weapons systems featuring autonomy that fulfil the technical parameters of the current category descriptions and raised the issue of the potential merit of including subcategories in the existing categories for specific reporting on international transfers of such weapons. Those experts believe that Member States should report international transfers of all conventional arms covered by the Register, regardless of whether those weapons are manned, unmanned, remotely piloted or autonomous, providing information in the "details" column of the standardized reporting form on their model and type. Other experts stressed that the Group should not address the issue of autonomous weapons systems, as these are still in very early stages of development and should not, in principle, be considered within the framework of the Register. The Group also noted that this issue is currently being considered by the open-ended Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, which was established in 2016 pursuant to a decision taken by the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

Category I

Battle tanks

53. After re-examining the proposal considered by the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts to remove the weight threshold for category I, the Group stressed the importance of ensuring that amendments to category descriptions should increase clarity and not create situations in which conventional arms could be classified under more than one category. Therefore, the Group emphasized that Member States should report battle tanks falling below the weight threshold of 16.5 metric tons as "armoured combat vehicles" in category II. The Group did not consider any new proposals to amend the scope of category I.

Category II

Armoured combat vehicles

54. The Group re-examined the proposal considered by the previous Group of Governmental Experts to amend category II to include additional descriptions as follows:

- Armoured combat vehicles equipped for specialized reconnaissance, command and control of troops or electronic warfare;
- Armoured recovery vehicles, tank transporters and amphibious and deep-water fording vehicles, including armoured bridge-launching vehicles.

The Group considered this proposal in connection with the discussion on the inclusion of equipment that provides force projection and force multiplier capabilities for national armed forces. Experts recognized the potential role that such items could play in facilitating large-scale offensive military operations and therefore the potential benefits of providing data on such items for identifying potentially destabilizing accumulations of conventional arms and for confidence-building or conflict prevention purposes. At the same time, experts questioned the utility of requesting data on exports and imports of such equipment if these data were not clearly distinguished from data on armoured combat vehicles covered by the existing description. If Member States provide submissions that indicate imports for items in this category without a description of the items, it could lead to misinterpretations of intent.

Category III

Large-calibre artillery systems

55. The Group reviewed a proposal to lower the calibre threshold for category III to 50 mm or 35mm and to rename the category “Artillery systems”, noting that changes to the description under this category should take into account the intrinsic link to the issue of the potential inclusion of small arms and light weapons as a new category. Experts noted that further reducing the calibre threshold would capture mainly direct fire weapons and move the focus of the category away from its traditional focus on indirect fire weapons.

Category IV

Combat aircraft and unmanned combat aerial vehicles

56. The Group reviewed the proposal contained in paragraph 54 of the report of the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts to amend the description of category IV to include:

Fixed-wing or variable geometry wing aircraft which are designed, equipped or modified to perform reconnaissance, command and control of troops, specialized electronic warfare, and refuelling or airdrop missions.

When discussing this proposal, experts considered that fixed-wing or variable geometry aircraft that provide force projection and force multiplier capabilities for national armed forces make other platforms more effective or more able to travel longer distances for participation in overseas operations, including offensive attacks. The Group considered the merit of including only some of the functions outlined in the proposal because of concerns that amending the description of category IV to include aircraft that can perform all such functions would expand the scope of the category to such an extent that a large number of items could be reported, thereby placing an excessive reporting burden on some Member States.

Category V

Attack helicopters

57. In accordance with the recommendation contained in paragraph 82 of the report of the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts, the Group reviewed the proposal elaborated in paragraph 57 of the report of the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts to amend both the heading and description of category V as follows:

V. Attack helicopters and rotary-wing unmanned combat aerial vehicles

Includes rotary-wing 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 noted that a limited number of international transfers of rotary-wing unmanned combat aerial vehicles have taken place since the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts concluded its work and that rotary-wing unmanned combat aerial vehicles are in the military holdings of several Member States and are being marketed for export.

58. The Group re-examined the proposal contained in paragraph 56 of the report of the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts to amend the description of category V to include:

Rotary-wing aircraft which are designed, equipped or modified to perform specialized reconnaissance, target acquisition, communications, command and control of troops, electronic warfare, mine-laying missions, or troop transport tasks.

The Group's consideration of this proposal covered the same issues as outlined in paragraph 56 of that report.

Category VI Warships

59. The Group reviewed the proposal considered by the previous Group of Governmental Experts to lower the threshold for the minimum standard displacement of vessels or submarines from 500 to 150 tons. The Group also examined proposals to lower or remove the 25-kilometre range threshold for missiles and torpedoes. The discussion on these proposals revealed different views on the issue of whether conventional arms can be regarded as inherently "offensive" or "defensive", and ways to assess the contribution of particular items in relation to national doctrine. The Group noted that category VI already includes vessels with a standard displacement below 500 tons if armed with missiles or torpedoes with a minimum range of 25 kilometres. Experts discussed whether there are vessels that can contribute to excessive and destabilizing accumulations that are not covered by the current description for this category, noting that vessels below this threshold that are not armed with missiles or torpedoes with a minimum range of 25 kilometres are intended primarily for coastal patrol duties. In this regard, experts considered technological developments for unmanned and remotely piloted vessels or submarines that fall outside the description of category VI, but which could represent threats to international peace and security and contribute to offensive operations.

Category VII Missiles and missile launchers

60. The Group examined a new proposal to amend the description for category VII to remove the exemption for ground-to-air missiles:

(a) Guided or unguided rockets, ballistic or cruise missiles capable of delivering a warhead or weapon of destruction to a range of at least 25 kilometres and means designed or modified specifically for launching such missiles or rockets, if not

covered by categories I through VI or small arms and light weapons. For the purpose of the Register, this subcategory includes remotely piloted vehicles with the characteristics for missiles as defined above;

(b) Man-portable air-defence systems.

Experts explained that the proposal was made to capture weapons whose transfer can clearly be destabilizing and would address the inconsistency in requiring Member States to report on transfers of naval surface-to-air missiles while exempting land-based versions of the same missiles. Experts considered that some Member States view ground-to-air missiles and missile launchers as falling within the category of defensive weapons which they believe should be exempt from reporting to the Register. For these Member States, reporting on exports and imports of these missiles and missile launchers would reveal data considered particularly sensitive, as they could be used in attack planning by potential aggressor States.

61. The Group also reviewed the proposals considered by the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts to lower or remove the range threshold for missiles covered by category VII. The proposals were considered in light of the broader discussion on offensive and defensive weapons and military doctrine and strategy. Experts noted the sensitive nature of reporting on ammunition, munitions, missiles and torpedoes, and the fact that some Member States exclude information on the number of missiles exported or imported in their national submissions to the Register, even if those Member States show that international transfers have taken place by indicating the exporting and importing Member States and a providing a description of the missiles. Experts regarded such an approach as showing the flexibility that can be exercised by Member States when submitting data for the Register.

2. Small arms and light weapons

62. The Group recognized the widespread use of small arms and light weapons in armed conflict and the way in which destabilizing accumulations can have a negative impact on the security, stability and sustainable development of Member States. The Register is not intended as an instrument for addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and does not include information on transfers to non-state actors, as it covers only transfers between Member States. However, by providing information on authorized transfers, Member States can contribute to assessing the risk of diversion of small arms and light weapons. At the same time, the reporting of official national data on international transfers of small arms and light weapons can be used to inform assessments of potentially destabilizing accumulations, as well as provide official data to be used for confidence-building purposes and increasing trust between Member States.

63. In accordance with the recommendation contained in paragraph 83 of the report of the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts, the Group reviewed the relevant information contained in the views and questionnaires submitted by Member States on the issue of adding an eighth category for small arms and light weapons to the Register and the data for the two years in which the seven-plus-one formula had been in use. The information and data were used in their deliberations on including small arms and light weapons as a new category in the Register. The Group concluded that the number of responses to the questionnaire and the Secretary-General's request for views on participation if the Register contained an eighth category for small arms and light weapons was too small and the sample too unrepresentative to inform the Group's deliberations, even when taking into account the responses to requests made in 2009 and 2013. The meetings of the Group had been held when only two years of data were available for use by the Group in assessing the "trial" of the seven-plus-one formula. The Group noted that 49 per cent of Member States' submissions in 2017

and 63 per cent in 2018 utilized the seven-plus-one formula. Three Member States, which had never provided additional background information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons, reported using the seven-plus-one formula in those years.

64. The Group considered proposals for an eighth category for reporting imports and exports of small arms and light weapons including the following description:

**Category VIII.
Small arms and light weapons**

Small arms and light weapons are any man-portable lethal weapons that expel or launch, are designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch, a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive, excluding antique small arms and light weapons or their replicas. Antique small arms and light weapons and their replicas will be defined in accordance with domestic law. In no case will antique small arms and light weapons include those manufactured after 1899:

(a) “Small arms” are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for individual use. They include, inter alia, revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns;

(b) “Light weapons” are, broadly speaking, weapons designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew, although some may be carried and used by a single person. They include, inter alia, heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of a calibre of less than 75 millimetres.

The description is based on the definition of small arms and light weapons in the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The only difference between the description formulated for the Register and the definition under the International Instrument is that the calibre for mortars in the present description is 75 mm and not 100 mm (as in the International Instrument), in order to ensure that it is compatible with the current Register description for category III. Experts noted that Member States currently reporting to the Register on international transfers of small arms and light weapons do not distinguish between small arms and light weapons intended for military use and those intended for law enforcement agencies or civilians. Experts recognized that Member States can determine for themselves whether to apply the description of small arms and light weapons provided above or a national description.

65. The Group gave careful consideration to the issue of the potential impact of adding a new category for small arms and light weapons on participation in the Register. Including small arms and light weapons as an eighth category in the Register would mean that all of the main types of conventional arms would be covered by the Register. This could increase the relevance of the Register for Member States for which poorly regulated international transfers of small arms and light weapons pose a national or regional threat to security, stability and sustainable development. It would not necessarily lead to an increase in participation by such Member States owing to constraints on their capacity and resources for data collection and reporting. The increase in the reporting burden arising from collecting information on exports and imports of small arms and light weapons could also have a negative impact on participation by other Member States, as their submissions would be “incomplete” without providing information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons in an eighth category. Therefore, the Group recognized the flexibility that

the seven-plus-one formula provides for Member States that currently face challenges in reporting to the Register on international transfers of small arms and light weapons.

66. The Group considered not only the impact on participation of creating an eighth category for small arms and light weapons, but also how such a category could affect the use of the Register as a confidence-building measure and for assisting Member States in identifying destabilizing accumulations, as well as the use on some occasion of the Register's scope as a tool for use in the work of Member States in the Security Council, as discussed in paragraph 89.

3. Procurement through national production

67. The Group discussed whether there is an imbalance in the structure of the Register in respect of its treatment of reporting on the two main methods by which Member States acquire conventional arms, i.e., through imports and by procurement through national production. Member States are "requested" to provide data on imports of conventional arms for the Register but only "invited" to provide additional background information on the procurement of conventional arms through national production. Experts recognized that some Member States consider this situation to be inherently discriminatory because it means that there is greater transparency for Member States that need to import conventional arms than there is for Member States that primarily or exclusively acquire their conventional arms through national production. This could limit the potential of the Register to serve as a confidence-building mechanism in the field of conventional arms.

68. As Member States increasingly acquire conventional arms through licensed production arrangements, enabling the indigenous production of conventional arms as opposed to imports, the Register's ability to assist Member States in identifying destabilizing accumulations of conventional arms is becoming more limited. At the same time, the Group noted that many national Governments make information on their national procurement plans and programmes for conventional arms publicly available. Arms producing companies also make information publicly available on contracts concluded with, and deliveries of conventional arms for, the Governments of Member States in which they are located.

69. The Group considered the potential effect on participation and use of requesting Member States to provide data on procurement through national production on the same level as for exports and imports of conventional arms, including nil returns. Experts reviewed the issues outlined in paragraphs 67–68 in connection with the potential to increase the relevance of the Register if the status of reporting procurement through national production was moved to the same level as reporting imports and exports for the Register. Experts also recognized the additional burden that this could place on Member States and the fact that some Member States which consider such information to be sensitive might not participate in the Register if requested to provide data on procurement through national production.

70. The Group reviewed a proposal for an optional standardized reporting template for this type of additional background information to facilitate reporting and comparability. The Group noted that Member States can provide this additional background information through the online reporting tool, but that this option is currently available only in English, as explained in paragraph 37 above. Therefore, the Group considered the potential benefits of recommending the adoption of an optional standardized reporting template for providing additional background information on procurement through national production. Experts mentioned that the use of a standardized form for the provision of additional background information could be viewed by some Member States as limiting the current flexibility. The

development of a standardized reporting form does not preclude Member States from using a national format to provide such additional background information.

4. Military holdings

71. The Group discussed the provision of additional background information on military holdings for the purpose of assisting in the identification of excessive and destabilizing accumulations of conventional weapons and for confidence-building purposes separately from the issue of procurement through national production. Experts considered that conventional arms can be acquired for military holdings through either procurement through national production or imports.

72. Experts recognized that providing additional background information on military holdings for some Member States is a particularly sensitive issue. Even taking into account that it is possible to aggregate such additional background information in a format that does not reveal sensitive information in order to contribute to trust and confidence-building among Member States, the Group recognized that this type of additional background information is still sensitive for many Member States. At the same time, the Group noted that more Member States provided additional background information on military holdings during 2016–2018 than on procurement through national production.

5. Relevant policies

73. The Group recalled that in its resolution [46/36 L](#), the General Assembly invited Member States to provide additional background information on relevant policies in their Register submissions, while the 1992 Panel of Governmental Technical Experts recommended that Member States should assign titles to their additional background information ([A/47/342](#), para. 27). The previous Group of Governmental Experts did not focus on this issue, and the Secretariat noted that only a few Member States regularly provide additional background information on relevant policies, although a small number of Member States have provided their views on the operation and further development of the Register, which is also treated as additional background information. The Group considered the relevance of such additional background information for the Register and the importance of considering this issue in future Groups of Governmental Experts. The Group encouraged Member States to provide additional background information on relevant policies, including national military doctrines and strategy documents, which could further enhance the role of the Register as a confidence-building mechanism.

C. Use and application of the Register and access to reported data and information

74. In accordance with its mandate, the Group sought to clearly identify how the Register can be used to increase transparency and build confidence in the field of conventional arms, thus enhancing its relevance and realizing its potential to serve as a universal transparency and confidence-building mechanism. The Register was created during a time of heightened interest in and attention focused on initiatives for increasing transparency and confidence-building in the field of conventional arms, which was reflected in the development of related regional instruments in Africa, the Americas and Europe, as well as in parts of the Asia and Pacific region

75. The Group considered that the current international security environment offered a timely opportunity to highlight the benefits of participating in the Register in order to raise awareness of the potential uses for the Register, and in turn revitalize what is in fact the only global transparency and confidence-building mechanism in

the field of conventional arms. The Group regarded this approach as representing an important divergence from that considered in the deliberations of previous Groups of Governmental Experts. Experts shared examples of the ways in which Member States use the Register to provide benefits at the national, bilateral, regional and global levels, as well as in the context of the work of the United Nations.

1. Access to data and information reported

76. The Group expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's efforts to develop a user-friendly Register website (<https://www.unroca.org/>), enabling the analysis of data to help identify destabilizing accumulations, as well as facilitate consultations and exchanges between Member States. The Group stressed the need for the Secretariat to ensure that information provided by Member States is made available and accessible in a timely manner through the Register website. Experts agreed that keeping the database up to date in English but not in the other official languages of the United Nations potentially limits the use of the Register in regions where the English language is not widely used, especially by military officials. Therefore, the Group requested that the Secretariat establish the Register website in all six official languages of the United Nations and regularly update each version to help raise awareness of the importance of the Register. The Secretariat explained that the regular budget does not allocate funding for such tasks. The Group therefore considered that, at a minimum, the Secretariat should ensure that the Register website is accessible from the main website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in all six official languages of the United Nations.

77. The Group welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to conduct awareness-raising and capacity-building activities with military officials on the benefits of participating in and using the Register for regional confidence-building mechanisms and dialogues in military matters.⁸ The Group emphasized the importance of targeting training and capacity-building activities not only for government officials that are responsible for collecting and submitting national data for the Register, but also for military personnel that are responsible for keeping records of conventional arms transfers, procurement through national production and military holdings, as well as those military officials that could use this information to enable participation in transparency and confidence-building mechanisms. In addition to targeting engagement with particular types of government officials, the Group also considered the potential for outreach to subregional and regional organizations whose members are characterized by a low level of reporting to the Register, but whose participation in the Register could provide positive benefits with regard to confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms and regional security.

2. Use and application of the Register

78. As stated in paragraph 16 above, the Group reviewed the use and application of the Register alongside considerations of participation in, and scope of, the instrument. The Group examined the use of the Register to better understand how this could have a positive impact on participation and its relationship with discussions on scope; and considered the ways in which the Register is currently used as a practical confidence-building measure, and other, potential ways of using the Register. Experts exchanged examples of the positive benefits of participating in and using the Register at the national, bilateral, regional and global levels.

79. In addressing the use of the Register, experts shared national experiences on how participating in the Register helped to foster positive relations at the national level between different ministries, departments and government agencies and on how

⁸ See *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, p. 46. See, also, note 4 above.

its use can encourage information sharing and dialogue on national security issues. For example, while the ministry of foreign affairs might be responsible for collecting and submitting data for the Register and compiling additional background information, the relevant data could be retained as part of the records of the ministry of defence, the ministry of public security, the ministry of the interior, the ministries or government agencies responsible for controlling exports and imports of conventional arms, the customs department within the ministry of finance, or other government ministries, departments or government agencies. Therefore, in order to be able to report to the Register, some Member States have established and maintain interministerial, interdepartmental or inter-agency working groups with responsibility for collecting and compiling relevant data, but also for sensitizing key national stakeholders and familiarizing them with the benefits to national and international security of providing data and additional background information to multilateral transparency- and confidence-building mechanisms, in cases where such data and additional background information could be considered highly sensitive on national security grounds. Reporting to the Register can help to build confidence and trust, as well as encourage regular exchanges of information among government ministries, departments and agencies that are responsible for national and international security.

80. The Group determined that, while there are an increasing number of reliable open-source mechanisms that provide information on international transfers of conventional arms, the Register remains of importance for two principal reasons. First, Member States are responsible for data and additional background information submitted to the Register, making such data and additional background information qualitatively different in nature from open-source materials. Data and additional background information submitted to the Register are essential for confidence-building purposes in cases where a Member State does not provide the data and additional background information to other transparency and confidence-building mechanisms. Second, for some Member States, the data and additional background information contained in their submission to the Register might be the only official source of such materials.

81. The Group emphasized that if a Member State provides data and additional background information to the Register, it thereby demonstrates that its acquisitions are aligned with its national defence and security needs and that it does not regard such acquisitions as constituting a destabilizing accumulation of conventional arms or as representing a threat to regional or international peace and security. The Member State also demonstrates that it has a national transfer control system in place which can regulate and collect data on imports and exports of conventional arms. When authorization of an export of conventional arms is being considered, participation in the Register could be seen in a positive light within this context and as a basis for building confidence among Member States.

82. Experts shared examples of how reporting to the Register can be used as a topic in bilateral consultations. Such bilateral consultations can be held before or after the submission of information to the Register, for the purpose of pointing out or clarifying discrepancies between imports and exports which may appear in the reports of the parties to those consultations. In this regard, participation in the Register can be an effective means of enhancing transparency and building confidence between Member States.

83. The Group identified and reviewed several documents that had recently been adopted by consensus by Member States in United Nations frameworks or had been produced by the United Nations Secretariat, in which the subject of confidence-building in the field of conventional arms and military matters was considered. The Group examined the recommendations and practical confidence-building measures presented in those documents as part of its efforts to identify and clarify the potential

uses of the Register. In so doing, the Group fulfilled its mandate of addressing the relevance of the Register using two approaches: it offered up a set of illustrative measures through whose application the Register could be used to demonstrate its potential benefits with a view to strengthening the future participation of a greater number of Member States in the Register.

84. The Group examined the report of the Disarmament Commission for 2017 (A/72/42), adopted by consensus, which included recommendations for practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. The Group noted that in this report, Member States were encouraged “to consider making use of existing United Nations, and other regional and subregional mechanisms on transparency and information exchange in the field of conventional weapons”, as well as “consider promoting dialogue, as appropriate, and on the basis of mutually agreed parameters, on strategies and policies governing the use, deployment [and] control as well as trade and transfer of conventional weapons” (A/72/42, annex, paras. 4.3 and 4.10). The Group considered that those recommendations included implicit reference to the Register, as did recommendations on several other practical measures for bilateral or regional confidence-building mechanisms found in the report (see A/72/42, annex, paras. 4.6–4.9).

85. The Group also considered the United Nations repository of military confidence-building measures, maintained by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, which utilizes information provided by Member States on practical measures undertaken in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe. The potential contribution of the Register is most clearly elaborated in a subsection of the repository online document on information exchange, under section I on communication and coordination measures.

86. The Group reviewed *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, launched in May 2018, in which it was affirmed that “[t]ransparency in military activities, such as reporting on military spending and on arms imports and exports, promotes democratic accountability and responsible governance” and that “exchange of information ... can also create mutual understanding and trust, reduce misperceptions and miscalculations and thereby help both to prevent military confrontation and to foster regional and global stability” (p. 44). The Group also considered the connections made in the publication between the Register, confidence-building mechanisms and target 16.6 under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is to “[d]evelop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels”.

87. In considering these documents, the Group identified areas where the Register could have a potential use in better implementing traditional confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. The Group also considered the possibility of summarizing relevant confidence-building measures identified by experts in an illustrative list so as to highlight and clarify the potential uses and role of the Register and, in turn, emphasize the potential benefits of participating in the Register.

88. The Group discussed the relationship between the use of the Register and the level of participation, highlighting the correlation between high levels of reporting to the Register by Member States and their political commitments or legal obligations for reporting similar information under regional or other multilateral instruments in the field of conventional arms control and transfer controls, which also provide mechanisms for consultations on the data and information exchanged. The Group contrasted this with the levels of reporting for subregions that have political commitments or legal obligations with respect to exchanging data and information between Member States on transfers of small arms and light weapons, or for regions in which reporting to the Register is encouraged in political declarations, but where

no mechanism is provided for discussion of data and information. Therefore, the Group encouraged Member States and subregional and regional organizations to explore opportunities for sharing experiences in reporting in the field of conventional arms for transparency and confidence-building purposes.

89. The Group considered the relationship between the use of the Register and its scope, highlighting that the seven categories under this designated transparency and confidence-building mechanism were used to determine the scope of some United Nations arms embargoes. At the same time, the Group noted that the scope of most United Nations arms embargoes currently in force applied to “arms and related materiel of all types” and did not include mention of the categories of the Register. The Group noted that groups and panels of experts tasked with monitoring the implementation of United Nations arms embargoes use the Register as one of their sources of information for investigating potential violations. United Nations groups and panels of experts have also recommended that Member States that have requested the Security Council to lift United Nations arms embargoes to which they are subject, could provide the Register with information that might serve as a basis for building confidence and trust. At the same time, it has been recognized that if a Member State is emerging from conflict, its Government might require assistance in building the capacity necessary to collect and report such information.

90. The Group noted that data and additional background information provided by Member States to the Register continues to be utilized not only by Member States and the United Nations for building trust and confidence building, but also in peace and conflict analysis conducted by regional and international organizations, academic researchers, non-governmental organizations and the media. The Secretariat should continue to raise awareness on the Register among a broad range of interested parties.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

91. The Group welcomed the mandate given to the 2019 Group to consider the operation, relevance and further development of the Register. In order to fulfil this mandate, the Group carefully considered how best to strengthen three interrelated areas: participation, scope and use of the Register. The Group emphasized that increasing the relevance of the Register entails addressing not only the level of participation and scope of the Register, but also how the instrument can be used to contribute to transparency and confidence-building between Members States. The Group concluded that this approach helped to increase the efficiency of its deliberations and provided clarity in each of these three interrelated areas, as reflected in the present report.

92. The Group noted that reporting to the Register is a commitment undertaken by Member States on a voluntary basis. The Register encompasses different levels of transparency, providing Member States with a flexible approach to participation. The Group concluded that as a result of the amendments made to the Register after nine review cycles, there is value in providing a summary of the current status of the Register. Pursuant to a clear identification of the Register’s different levels and the types of data and additional background information that can be submitted, it is expected that Member States will be better informed on what and how to report to the Register, which will in turn facilitate higher levels of participation in the future. The Group highlighted that there are two levels in the hierarchy under the reporting commitment for the Register.

- First, at a minimum, Member States participate in the Register by providing a report on their international transfers of conventional arms. This includes reporting on either: (a) imports and exports in all seven categories of conventional arms (annex I); or (b) under the seven-plus-one formula, which includes the seven categories of major conventional weapons and also international transfers of small arms and light weapons. Such reports should be submitted using the online reporting tool or the standardized form for reporting international transfers of conventional arms (annex II) or the optional standardized form for reporting international transfers of small arms and light weapons (annex III). If a Member State has not imported or exported conventional arms covered by the seven categories during the previous calendar year, it can submit a nil return, which is valid for up to three years after the year of submission in accordance with the description of rolling nil returns contained in paragraph 23. Member States can submit a nil return for imports and exports of conventional arms in any of the seven categories and provide data on imports and exports of small arms and light weapons.
- Second, Member States could, on a voluntary basis, provide additional background information on procurement through national production, military holdings and relevant policies, pending the possible expansion of the Register to include these types of additional background information as entailing higher-level transparency commitments for participation in the Register. Member States that provide only additional background information, including national views on the operation, relevance and scope of the Register, are considered not to have participated in the Register. Member States can use the online reporting tool to provide additional background information on procurement through national production or military holdings, or any other method of reporting that they deem appropriate.

93. When reviewing participation in the Register during the period 2016–2018, the Group emphasized that the Register is the only global transparency- and confidence-building mechanism in the field of conventional arms and serves as a key point of reference and inspiration for subregional, regional and international confidence-building mechanisms and arms control and transfer control instruments. The Group emphasized that the Register is as relevant for international peace and security today as when it was established at the beginning of the 1990s. When analysing the profile of Member States that have most frequently participated in the instrument, the Group noted that the world's largest arms exporters, collectively accounting for more than 90 per cent of the volume of international transfers of conventional weapons, regularly report to the Register. Nevertheless, this would be insufficient for enabling the Register to achieve its goal of serving as a universal transparency- and confidence-building mechanism in the field of conventional arms. Participating in the Register is a shared responsibility of all Member States. Member States that only import conventional arms, as well as those that have neither imports nor exports to report to the Register, are still to be encouraged to participate in the Register in order to strengthen the utility of the instrument for confidence-building purposes.

94. In light of the analysis provided in paragraph 92 above, the Group concluded that there is an urgent need to address the decline in participation since 2008. The annual level of participation in the Register during 2016–2018 consisted of about one quarter of Member States. The Group concluded that there are a range of reasons for non-reporting by Member States, including limited understanding of the purpose of participating in the Register, inadequate resources and capacity for collecting relevant data and compiling annual reports, security concerns and lack of political will. Owing to the low number of completed questionnaires provided by Member States that do

not report to the Register, this source of information did not substantially inform the Group's understanding of reasons for non-reporting.

95. Instead, the Group focused its attention on identifying the benefits of participating in the Register and on concrete measures designed to stimulate higher levels of participation therein, emphasizing the importance of making it clear-cut and easy to report to the Register so as to facilitate participation; ensuring that the Register's scope includes the categories of conventional arms that are of most concern to Member States; and also ensuring that the benefits for those Member States that participate in and use the easily accessible data and additional background information contained in the Register for confidence-building purposes are clearly understood.

96. The Group's analysis of participation during 2016–2018 led it to conclude that there needs to be targeted engagement with the large number of Member States that express political support for the Register by voting in favour of the General Assembly resolution on transparency in armaments, but that do not participate in the Register each year. In connection with this point, the Group emphasized the need for targeted measures to promote the participation of Member States that only import conventional arms, Member States that neither import nor export conventional arms and Member States that do not currently submit data or nil returns to the Register.

97. The Group recognized that there is a strong correlation between Member States that have a well-established national transfer control system, with administrative procedures for record-keeping on conventional arms exports and imports, and those that regularly report to the Register. Therefore, the Group emphasized the importance of targeted awareness-raising and capacity-building for Member States that do not regularly participate in the Register to enable and support their participation, particularly the many Member States that have shown political support for the Register or that previously participated in the Register, but that seem currently to lack the experience, knowledge and resources needed to be able to submit annual returns for the Register.

98. The Group concluded that the Register has been a successful instrument which has served as a source of inspiration to other instruments. In this regard, the Group concluded that some Member States provide data on international transfers of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, as well as additional background information on procurement through national production and military holdings, for various international mechanisms and instruments, but are not participating in the Register. The Group therefore considered two ways in which Member States in this situation could participate in the Register without increasing their reporting burden unduly. First, Member States could ensure that their national system can collect and compile data in such a way as to satisfy reporting obligations and commitments for different instruments. Second, Member States could consider amending the scope of international instruments that is based on the scope of the Register so as to more closely align the data and information submitted to these instruments with those submitted to the Register.

99. The Group noted that the previous Group of Governmental Experts and the Secretariat have provided tools and resources that can be used to enable a better understanding of the role and function of a national point of contact for the Register. The Group concluded that it is the responsibility of Member States to designate a national point of contact for the Register and ensure that the contact information for this national point of contact is kept up to date through the online reporting tool, in order to facilitate communication with the Secretariat and enable assistance for participation.

100. The Group considered a range of measures that could be undertaken by the Secretariat to facilitate, and increase the level of, participation in the Register, while recognizing the resource challenges faced by the Secretariat. The first set of measures, which are related to regular communication with the national points of contact, include provision of relevant information and materials to support reporting; informal briefings on the online reporting tool; confirmation that reports have been received by the Secretariat; and transmission of reminders to Member States that regularly report but that have not reported within their usual time frame. The second set of measures cover translation of the online reporting tool into all six official languages of the United Nations so as to facilitate increased use of the tool and hence participation. The third set of measures are related to active engagement with secretariats of other international and regional instruments in order to identify national points of contact in Member States that have reported to those other instruments, but not to the Register. In particular, the Group considered that the Register secretariat could cooperate with the Arms Trade Treaty secretariat so as to enable contact to be made with States parties to the Treaty that have submitted an annual report on exports and imports of conventional arms under the Arms Trade Treaty but that have not submitted data for the Register. The fourth set of measures addresses the role of the Register secretariat in providing or facilitating the provision of capacity-building and technical assistance to enable Member States to participate in the Register. This can be carried out with the financial support of interested Member States or through dedicated funding instruments (e.g., the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation or the Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT)).

101. In reviewing the operation and relevance of the Register and its further development, the Group continued the practice of reviewing the scope of the instrument as well. In general terms, the Group concluded that in order to better inform Member States and future Groups of Governmental Experts, there is a need for openness regarding its deliberations. The Group considered it important to clarify the scope of the Register and outline the key issues raised when experts reviewed proposals for amending the scope of the Register in the context of its relevance, in particular the technological developments in the area of conventional arms and the destabilizing potential of weapons not currently included in the scope of the Register. In paragraphs 51 to 61, the present report provides clarity on the current descriptions of the categories in order to assist in the compilation of submissions to the Register and prevent misunderstandings that could exert a negative impact on participation. The Group emphasized the importance of considering how amendments or changes to the scope of the Register would affect its relevance, including implications for participation and the use of the Register.

102. Following the recommendation of the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts, the Group reviewed the proposal to clarify the status of rotary-wing unmanned aerial vehicles in category V (Attack helicopters). The Group concluded that this issue merits further consideration, taking into account future technological developments and trends in international transfers of such items.

103. In seeking to clarify the current scope and descriptions of the categories covered by the Register, the Group concluded that Member States should report on imports and exports of remotely piloted or unmanned conventional arms that exhibit the characteristics described in the current categories. The Group discussed the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems, as mentioned in paragraph 52 above, noting that this issue is currently being considered by the open-ended Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, established pursuant to a 2016 decision taken by the High Contracting

Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons.

104. When the Group reviewed proposals to amend the descriptions of items in the current categories, the Group's discussions revealed different approaches to the concepts underlying the terms "offensive" and "defensive" in relation to national doctrines and the classification of conventional arms, which influenced the Group's ability to amend the descriptions for current categories or adopt new categories, as described in paragraph 50 above.

105. When considering whether to include force projection and force multiplier equipment, the Group paid particular attention to the potential impact of the inclusion of such items on meeting the objectives of the Register, as well as the implications for the reporting burden of Member States and the potential for misunderstandings that could result from the inclusion of data on such items without a clear distinction made between such items and the conventional arms covered by the Register's current descriptions.

106. When considering the proposal for an eighth category for reporting imports and exports of small arms and light weapons, the Group gave consideration to the responses to the questionnaire that had been prepared by the 2016 Group of Governmental Experts and distributed by the Secretariat, as well as the use of the seven-plus-one formula for reporting by 28 States in 2017 and 38 in 2018. The Group reviewed the description for small arms and light weapons, which was proposed by some experts, and is contained in paragraph 64 above, noting that Member States that currently report to the Register on international transfers of small arms and light weapons do not distinguish between those items intended for military use and those intended for law enforcement agencies or civilians. When considering the relevance of updating the status of small arms and light weapons, the Group gave particular consideration to the impact that the different options discussed by the Group (creation of an eighth category and the use of the seven-plus-one formula) would have on both participation and use, as stated in paragraph 66 above. In particular, the Group recognized the benefits for all Member States of utilizing the flexible approach based on the seven-plus-one formula.

107. The Group discussed separately each of the three types of additional background information, i.e., information on procurement through national production, on military holdings and on relevant policies. The Group noted the importance of these types of additional background information for fulfilling the objective of the Register, as well as the sensitive nature of these types of information for some Member States, as discussed in paragraphs 67–72 above. In this context, the Group considered the proposal to adopt an optional standardized reporting template for providing additional background information on procurement through national production.

108. The Group recognized that Member States could be encouraged to submit additional background information – although not widely used – on relevant policies for confidence-building such as national military doctrine and strategy documents, and views on the operation and further development of the Register. The Group noted that some Member States provide additional background information only on relevant policies or their views on the operation and further development of the Register: they do not submit data on exports and imports of conventional arms or additional background information on procurement through national production or military holdings. The Group concluded that there is a need to give clear guidance to the Secretariat on how to process submissions that consist only of this type of additional background information.

109. The Group conducted an analysis within a third area, associated with the operation and relevance of the Register, namely, its use. First, the Group emphasized

that the use of the Register has a close connection with ease of access to relevant data and additional background information which is required if the Register is to fulfil its goal and objective of enabling Member States to identify destabilizing and excessive accumulations of conventional arms and for confidence-building purposes. The Group stressed that there is a need for the online database to be kept up to date not only in English but also in the other five official languages of the United Nations, in accordance with established practice and to ensure that it can be used effectively and broadly by Member States.

110. Second, the Group explored for the first time the relationship between the use of the Register and the level of participation. The Group approached this relationship by analysing the current use of the Register by Member States at national, bilateral, regional and global levels, as well as its use by United Nations bodies and agencies and other regional and international organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, as described in section II.C.2.

111. Third, the Group examined the subject of the use of the Register in confidence-building measures, in particular the issue of how the Register could be used to better implement the well-established and agreed measures described in paragraph 84 and annex V. The Group identified an illustrative list of measures related to use of the Register for confidence-building between Member States in the field of conventional arms and military matters, based on documents that had been recently adopted by consensus by Member States within the context of United Nations frameworks or issued by the United Nations Secretariat, including the report of the Disarmament Commission for 2017. In annex V can be found a summary of the relevant confidence-building measures identified by experts in order to highlight and clarify the potential uses and role of the Register.

112. The Group stressed the importance of regular reviews of the continuing operation and relevance of the Register and its further development. The Group reaffirmed the calls of the 2009, 2013 and 2016 Groups of Governmental Experts for the regular review of the Register by Groups of Governmental Experts, given ample time to conduct their review and representing different perspectives on transparency in armaments, on the basis of equitable geographical representation.

B. Recommendations

113. The Group recommends that the next Group of Governmental Experts should further review the proposals for amendments to the existing categories contained in paragraphs 51 to 61 above, taking into account all of the technological developments in conventional arms and the destabilizing potential of conventional arms not currently covered by the Register.

114. The Group recommends that the next Group of Governmental Experts further consider the proposal contained in paragraph 57 above to amend the heading and definitions for category V, Attack helicopters, paying particular attention to actual transfers of, and developments in relevant technologies of, rotary-wing unmanned combat aerial vehicles. Pending the recommendation of a future Group of Governmental Experts to amend the heading and definitions for category V, those Member States providing information on international transfers of rotary-wing unmanned combat aerial vehicles are encouraged to utilize the “Comments” column of the reporting form to identify those systems.

115. The Group recommends that those Member States in a position to do so, using the seven-plus-one formula, provide information on exports and imports of small arms and light weapons, as appropriate, through the online reporting tool or the

optional standardized form for reporting international transfers of small arms and light weapons (see annex III).

116. The Group recommends that the Secretary-General continue to invite Member States that are in a position to do so, to provide the Register with additional background information on procurement through national production. Member States providing such additional background information are invited to use the online reporting tool or any other method of reporting that they deem appropriate.

117. The Group recommends that the Secretary-General continue to invite Member States in a position to do so to provide additional background information on military holdings to the Register. Member States providing such additional background information are invited to use the online reporting tool or any other method of reporting that they deem appropriate.

118. The Group recommends that the Secretary-General continue to invite Member States that are in a position to do so, to provide additional background information on relevant policies using any format that they deem appropriate.

119. The Group recommends that the next Group of Governmental Experts continue the discussion on the potential expansion of the scope of the Register, including categories covered by the Register, small arms and light weapons, procurement through national production, military holdings, relevant policies and other issues covered in section II.B.

120. The Group recommends that the next Group of Governmental Experts continue to examine the relevance of the Register, as part of its mandate, by exploring the relationship among participation, scope and use of the Register.

121. The Group recommends that Member States:

(a) Provide the Secretariat with details of their national points of contact, preferably through the online reporting tool, and keep these updated in a timely manner;

(b) Report by the 31 May deadline in order to facilitate early compilation and dissemination of data and additional background information provided in the annual submissions of Member States;

(c) Utilize the online reporting tool for the electronic filing of reports;

(d) Keep in mind the flexible approach that can be used for participation in the Register (i.e., entailing the use of rolling nil reports or the seven-plus-one formula). At the same time, Member States should ensure that the data and additional background information submitted are of sufficient quality to contribute to the purpose of the instrument;

(e) Enhance coordination among relevant government agencies, ministries and departments so as to ensure that national procedures and processes are in place for collecting and submitting data and additional background information to the Register and other relevant instruments;

(f) Continue to provide information to the Secretariat on national reporting systems, as well as on challenges faced by Member States in reporting to the Register and needs for assistance, as well as views on the continuing operation and relevance of the Register and its further development;

(g) Take measures to promote participation in the Register, in accordance with the indicative list of measures contained in annex IV below;

(h) Use the Register in relation to relevant confidence-building measures, drawing inspiration from the indicative list of confidence-building measures for Member States contained in annex V;

(i) Conduct targeted engagement, awareness raising and capacity-building for key stakeholders in Member States that have shown political support for the Register or that have reported to the Register but that no longer do so;

(j) Conduct targeted engagement and awareness raising through bilateral consultations and participation in multilateral instruments with those Member States that are regular importers but that do not participate in the Register. The Group recommends that major exporters of conventional arms, which also regularly report to the Register, seize opportunities to promote participation in the Register;

(k) Consider providing financial support to the Secretariat to fulfil recommendations contained in paragraph 122 (i) to 122 (m).

122. The Group recommends that the Secretariat:

(a) Circulate to Member States the deadline for reporting to the Register, reporting forms, a clear description of the current status of the Register as described in paragraph 92 above and descriptions of categories, and guidance on using the online reporting tool for the electronic filing of submissions, under cover of a note verbale to permanent missions to the United Nations in New York and Geneva, as well as copies to national points of contact located in national capitals, at the beginning of each calendar year;

(b) Send subsequent reminders to permanent missions to the United Nations in New York and Geneva, as well as national points of contact, containing the information listed in paragraph 122 (a) in order to encourage submissions;

(c) Contact the permanent missions to the United Nations in New York and Geneva, as well as national points of contact, in particular those that are considered to be “regular reporters”, when the Secretariat has not received a submission by 31 July, to elicit information on the status of the submission or to ensure that there have not been technical problems with the use of the online reporting tool;

(d) Provide confirmation to the permanent missions to the United Nations in New York and Geneva, as well as to the national points of contact, when a submission has been received, including a summary of data and additional background information contained in the submission. The Secretariat can also request further clarification on the submission, as appropriate;

(e) Use resources made available through the regular budget to translate the online reporting tool and the content of the Register database website into all six official languages of the United Nations as a priority for the continuing operation of the Register;

(f) Ensure that data and additional background information provided by Member States is made available and accessible in a timely manner through the Register website (<http://unroca.org>);

(g) Update and reissue the Guidelines for Reporting International Transfers to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms pursuant to the conclusions and recommendations of the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts;

(h) Maintain regular contact with secretariats of relevant international instruments, including the Arms Trade Treaty, to enable the Register secretariat to engage in direct communication with Member States that have provided data on exports and imports of conventional arms for other relevant instruments, but that have not participated in the Register. The Register secretariat should ask these Member

States whether the data provided for other relevant instruments can be included in a submission to the Register;

(i) Take measures to promote participation in the Register, in accordance with the indicative list of measures contained in annex IV;

(j) Support interested Member States in organizing a special event to promote reporting to the Register in order to and raise awareness of the Register's relevance and increase participation, including its implications for enhancing the use of confidence-building measures, in connection with the sessions of the General Assembly or other activities within the United Nations related to conventional arms, where appropriate;

(k) Assist Member States in conducting targeted engagement, awareness raising and capacity-building for key stakeholders in Member States that have shown political support for the Register or that did report to the Register but that no longer do so, in particular Member States that are recognized as significant importers of conventional arms;

(l) Assist Member States and their points of contact with respect to their participation in the Register. Such activities could include regular updating of the information booklet in coordination with the report of each Group of Governmental Experts;

(m) Make information available to Member States on opportunities for capacity-building to enable participation in the Register, such as possible work with non-governmental organizations and regional organizations in undertaking capacity-building activities in support of participation in the Register, with support from dedicated funding instruments;

(n) Consider that a Member State has participated in the Register only if it submits data on international transfers of conventional arms, including nil returns. The Secretariat shall not consider a Member State that provides only additional background information as participating in the Register.

123. The Group recommends that the next Group of Governmental Experts review the impact of the implementation of the measures described in paragraphs 121 and 122 on the promotion of participation in the Register.

124. Taking into account the concerns expressed in paragraph 41, the Group recommends that the next General Assembly resolution on transparency in armaments include an explicit request that sufficient resources be made available by the United Nations to enable the Secretariat to effectively implement its core functions for the effective operation of the Register, as outlined in paragraph 122 (a) to 122 (h) above.

125. With a view to facilitating universal participation and the continued relevance and development of the Register, the Group recommends the convening of a Group of Governmental Experts in 2022 to review the operation and relevance of the Register and consider its further development. The Group should consist of approximately 20 experts representing the diverse perspectives on transparency in armaments of Member States on the basis of equitable geographical representation.

126. The Group recommends that future reviews of the continuing operation, relevance and further development of the Register consider the conclusions and recommendations of the present report, as well as those contained in the reports of previous Groups of Governmental Experts.

Annex I

Categories of equipment and their descriptions

Category I

Battle tanks

Tracked or wheeled self-propelled armoured fighting vehicles with high cross-country mobility and a high level of self-protection, weighing at least 16.5 metric tons unladen weight, with a high muzzle velocity direct fire main gun of at least 75 millimetres calibre.

Category II

Armoured combat vehicles

Tracked, semi-tracked or wheeled self-propelled vehicles, with armoured protection and cross-country capability, either (a) designed and equipped to transport a squad of four or more infantrymen; or (b) armed with an integral or organic weapon of at least 12.5 millimetres calibre or a missile launcher.

Category III

Large-calibre artillery systems

Guns, howitzers, artillery pieces, combining the characteristics of a gun or a howitzer, mortars or multiple-launch rocket systems, capable of engaging surface targets by delivering primarily indirect fire, with a calibre of 75 millimetres and above.

Category IV

Combat aircraft and unmanned combat aerial vehicles

Includes fixed-wing or variable-geometry wing 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 terms “combat aircraft” and “unmanned combat aerial vehicles” do not include primary trainer aircraft, unless designed, equipped or modified as described above.

Category V

Attack helicopters

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.

**Category VI
Warships**

Vessels or submarines armed and equipped for military use with a standard displacement of 500 metric tons or above, and those with a standard displacement of less than 500 metric tons, equipped for launching missiles with a range of at least 25 kilometres or torpedoes with similar range.

**Category VII
Missiles and missile launchers**

(a) Guided or unguided rockets, ballistic or cruise missiles capable of delivering a warhead or weapon of destruction to a range of at least 25 kilometres, and means designed or modified specifically for launching such missiles or rockets, if not covered by categories I through VI. For the purpose of the Register, this subcategory includes remotely piloted vehicles with the characteristics for missiles as defined above but does not include ground-to-air missiles;

(b) Man-portable air-defence systems.

Annex II**A. Standardized form for reporting international transfers of conventional arms: exports****Exports^a**

Report of international conventional arms transfers
(according to General Assembly resolutions [46/36 L](#) and [58/54](#))

Reporting country: _____

National point of contact: _____

(Organization, Division/Section, telephone, fax, email) (FOR GOVERNMENTAL USE ONLY)

Calendar year: _____

<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D^b</i>	<i>E^b</i>	<i>Remarks^c</i>	
					<i>Description of item</i>	<i>Comments on the transfer</i>
<i>Category (I–VII)</i>	<i>Final importer State(s)</i>	<i>Number of items</i>	<i>State of origin (if not exporter)</i>	<i>Intermediate location (if any)</i>		
I. Battle tanks						
II. Armoured combat vehicles						
III. Large-calibre artillery systems						
IV. Combat aircraft and unmanned combat aerial vehicles (a) Combat aircraft (b) Unmanned combat aerial vehicles						
V. Attack helicopters						
VI. Warships						
VII. Missiles and missile launchers ^d (a) Missiles and missile launchers (b) Man-portable air-defence system						

National criteria on transfers:

^{a b c d} See explanatory notes.

The nature of information provided should be indicated in accordance with explanatory notes e and f.

B. Standardized form for reporting international transfers of conventional arms: imports

Imports^a

Report of international conventional arms transfers
(according to General Assembly resolutions 46/36 L and 58/54)

Reporting country: _____

National point of contact: _____

(Organization, Division/Section, telephone, fax, email) (FOR GOVERNMENTAL USE ONLY)

Calendar year: _____

<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D^b</i>	<i>E^b</i>	<i>Remarks^c</i>	
					<i>Description of item</i>	<i>Comments on the transfer</i>
<i>Category (I–VII)</i>	<i>Exporter State(s)</i>	<i>Number of items</i>	<i>State of origin (if not exporter)</i>	<i>Intermediate location (if any)</i>		
I. Battle tanks						
II. Armoured combat vehicles						
III. Large-calibre artillery systems						
IV. Combat aircraft and unmanned combat aerial vehicles (a) Combat aircraft (b) Unmanned combat aerial vehicles						
V. Attack helicopters						
VI. Warships						
VII. Missiles and missile launchers ^d (a) Missiles and missile launchers (b) Man-portable air-defence system						

National criteria on transfers:

^{a b c d} See explanatory notes.

The nature of information provided should be indicated in accordance with explanatory notes e and f.

Explanatory notes

- (a) Member States that do not have anything to report should file a “nil report” clearly stating that no exports or imports have taken place in any of the categories during the reporting period.
- (b) International arms transfers involve, in addition to the physical movement of equipment into or from national territory, the transfer of title to and control over the equipment. Member States are invited to provide with their return a concise explanation of national criteria used to determine when an arms transfer becomes effective. (See paragraph 42 of the annex to document [A/49/316](#).)
- (c) In the “Remarks” column, Member States may wish to describe the item transferred by entering the designation, type, model or any other information considered relevant. Member States may also wish to use the “Remarks” column to explain or clarify aspects relevant to the transfer.
- (d) Multiple-launch rocket systems are covered by the definition of category III. Rockets qualifying for registration are covered under category VII. MANPADS should be reported if the MANPAD system is supplied as a complete unit, i.e., the missile and launcher/grip stock form an integral unit. In addition, individual launching mechanisms or grip stocks should also be reported. Individual missiles, not supplied with a launching mechanism or grip stock, need not be reported.
- (e) Check any of the following provided as part of your submission:

- | | <i>Check</i> |
|--|--------------|
| (i) Standardized form for reporting exports of conventional arms | _____ |
| (ii) Standardized form for reporting imports of conventional arms | _____ |
| (iii) Optional standardized form for reporting exports of small arms and light weapons | _____ |
| (iv) Optional standardized form for reporting imports of small arms and light weapons | _____ |
| (v) Additional background information on military holdings | _____ |
| (vi) Additional background information on procurement through national production | _____ |
| (vii) Additional background information on relevant policies and/or national legislation | _____ |
| (viii) Other (please describe) | _____ |

- (f) When reporting transfers, which of the following criteria, drawn from paragraph 42 of the annex to document [A/49/316](#), were used:

- | | <i>Check</i> |
|--|--------------|
| (i) Departure of equipment from the exporter’s territory | _____ |
| (ii) Arrival of equipment in the importer’s territory | _____ |
| (iii) Transfer of title | _____ |
| (iv) Transfer of control | _____ |
| (v) Other (please provide brief description below) | _____ |

Annex III**A. Optional standardized form for reporting international transfers of small arms and light weapons: exports^{a,b,c}****Exports**

Reporting country: _____

National point of contact: _____

(Organization, Division/Section, telephone, fax, e-mail) (FOR GOVERNMENTAL USE ONLY)

Calendar year: _____

A	B	C	D	E	REMARKS	
	<i>Final importer State(s)</i>	<i>Number of items</i>	<i>State of origin (if not exporter)</i>	<i>Intermediate location (if any)</i>	<i>Description of item</i>	<i>Comments on the transfer</i>
SMALL ARMS						
1. Revolvers and self-loading pistols						
2. Rifles and carbines						
3. Sub-machine guns						
4. Assault rifles						
5. Light machine guns						
6. Others						
LIGHT WEAPONS						
1. Heavy machine guns						
2. Hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers						
3. Portable anti-tank guns						
4. Recoilless rifles						
5. Portable anti-tank missile launchers and rocket systems						
6. Mortars of calibres less than 75 mm						
7. Others						

National criteria on transfers:

^a The optional standardized form provides options for reporting only aggregate quantities under the generic categories of “Small arms” and “Light weapons” and/or under their respective subcategories. See the United Nations information booklet (available at <http://disarmament.un.org/cab/register.html>) for questions and answers regarding the reporting of small arms and light weapons.

^b The descriptions in the categories provided in the optional standardized reporting form do not constitute a definition of “small arms” or “light weapons”.

^c This optional standardized reporting form is intended for use in providing information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons in accordance with the recommendation contained in paragraph 115 of the report of the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts.

B. Optional standardized form for reporting international transfers of small arms and light weapons: imports^{a,b,c}

Imports

Reporting country: _____

National point of contact: _____

(Organization, Division/Section, telephone, fax, e-mail) (FOR GOVERNMENTAL USE ONLY)

Calendar year: _____

A	B	C	D	E	REMARKS	
	<i>Final exporter State(s)</i>	<i>Number of items</i>	<i>State of origin (if not exporter)</i>	<i>Intermediate location (if any)</i>	<i>Description of item</i>	<i>Comments on the transfer</i>
SMALL ARMS						
1. Revolvers and self-loading pistols						
2. Rifles and carbines						
3. Sub-machine guns						
4. Assault rifles						
5. Light machine guns						
6. Others						
LIGHT WEAPONS						
1. Heavy machine guns						
2. Hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers						
3. Portable anti-tank guns						
4. Recoilless rifles						
5. Portable anti-tank missile launchers and rocket systems						
6. Mortars of calibres less than 75 mm						
7. Others						

National criteria on transfers:

^a The optional standardized form provides options for reporting only aggregate quantities under the generic categories of “Small arms” and “Light weapons” and/or under their respective subcategories. See the United Nations information booklet (available at <http://disarmament.un.org/cab/register.html>) for questions and answers regarding the reporting of small arms and light weapons.

^b The descriptions in the categories provided in the optional standardized reporting form do not constitute a definition of “small arms” or “light weapons”.

^c This optional standardized reporting form is intended for use in providing information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons in accordance with the recommendation contained in paragraph 115 of the report. Of the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts

Annex IV

List of concrete measures for promoting participation in the Register

Based on the illustrative list of measures contained in the annex to the report of the 2013 Group of Governmental Experts on the Register (A/68/140) and discussions that were held during the 2016 and 2019 Groups of Governmental Experts, the 2019 Group of Governmental Experts recommends the prioritization of the following concrete measures in order to promote participation in the Register.

1. The United Nations Secretary-General could make an annual high-level statement on the continuing importance of the Register.
2. Member States, with the support of the Secretariat, could arrange for a special event to promote reporting to the Register in order to raise awareness of the Register's relevance and increase participation, including its implications for enhancing the use of confidence-building measures, in connection with the sessions of the General Assembly or other activities in the United Nations relating to conventional arms, where appropriate.
3. Member States, with the support of the Secretariat, could provide financial support, on a voluntary basis, for the organization of international or regional seminars and workshops devoted to the Register, with a view to promoting awareness of the aims, importance and utility of the Register, and to provide training and explore options for building capacity to enable Member States to report to the Register.
4. Online tools should be developed as a cost-effective method for providing training to enable Member States to report to the Register. All basic data and information on the website of the Register should be made more user-friendly and up to date and should be available in all official languages of the United Nations.
5. The Secretariat is encouraged to play an active role in facilitating reporting to the Register, including through:
 - (a) Providing Member States with a calendar stipulating deadlines for reports on conventional arms-related issues at the beginning of each year;
 - (b) Ensuring that information provided by Member States, even if provided after the reporting deadline, is disseminated in a timely manner through the map-based database entitled "The global reported arms trade" as well as in reports of the Secretary-General made available on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat;
 - (c) Regularly updating the contact information and the information booklet available on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs;
 - (d) Maintaining an updated list of national points of contact pursuant to requesting such information, in order to keep its record up to date, and circulating that information to all Member States;
 - (e) Conducting informal briefing meetings, with the consent of Member States, in conjunction with the meetings of the First Committee of the General Assembly, in order to promote understanding of the Register's procedures.
6. The General Assembly should consider providing additional resources to ensure that the Secretariat can fulfil the above tasks.

Annex V

Practical means of using the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in carrying out confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons

The 2019 Group of Government Experts recommends the use of the Register of Conventional Arms in carrying out practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, as set out in the report of the Disarmament Commission for 2017.⁹ Those measures are discussed below.

1. Taking into account national security considerations, Member States are encouraged to consider making use of existing United Nations and other regional and subregional mechanisms on transparency and information exchange in the field of conventional weapons.
2. Member States in a position to do so, and where appropriate, are encouraged to enhance cooperation and provide, upon request, assistance, including technical and financial assistance, and also through the establishment of possible funding arrangements, in the areas contributing to confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, including reporting, sharing of best practices, organization of meetings, capacity-building, training and sponsorship programmes.
3. Relevant bodies of the United Nations and relevant subregional and regional organizations are encouraged to promote, in accordance with their respective mandates, practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons and to support, upon request, the efforts of Member States to carry out such measures.
4. Non-governmental organizations as well as research and educational institutions are encouraged to promote studies and research on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.
5. Member States in a position to do so are encouraged, as appropriate, to consider organizing or supporting the organization of seminars and workshops with the aim of promoting transparency and dialogue, and raising awareness on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, including these recommendations.
6. Member States are encouraged to consider promoting dialogue, as appropriate, and on the basis of mutually agreed parameters, on strategies and policies governing the use, deployment and control as well as the trade and transfer of conventional weapons.

⁹ [A/72/42](#), paras. 4–5.