

Agenda Item 5 – Treaty Implementation

Madam President,

The International Humanitarian Law and Youth Initiative thanks States Parties and the Chair of the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation for their efforts to advance practical implementation of the Treaty. It has now been one year since the UN Secretary-General released “The Security We Need: Rebalancing Military Spending for a Sustainable and Peaceful Future,” warning that rising military expenditure risks undermining progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. IHLI contributed to the consultations for this report, emphasizing that security must also be measured by our ability to protect people, invest in peace and development, and prevent violence.

This is particularly important for young people living in conflict-affected communities, who face displacement, disrupted education and livelihoods, and exposure to violence.

What we are witnessing in Sudan, Gaza, Lebanon and Libya reminds us that arms transfers, risk assessment and diversion prevention are not merely technical processes. They have direct consequences for civilian protection and regional stability.

Madam President,

During Youth4ATT 2026, our six regional groups identified continuing gaps in effective Treaty implementation and highlighted the need for stronger national capacities, better information-sharing, and meaningful participation of affected communities and youth.

These discussions resulted in the Youth4ATT 2026 Working Paper, “Youth Recommendations for Strengthening the Arms Trade Treaty,” which places particular emphasis on closing the implementation gap.

The West and Central Africa Regional Working Group provided an important practical example, referring to the destruction of more than 31,000 weapons, the collection of approximately 13,000 weapons, cooperation with Dozo hunters, and the rehabilitation of 175 armouries and 74 depots.

We believe such experiences can provide valuable peer learning and practical cooperation for other conflict-affected regions, including the Arab region, where communities continue to face the consequences of prolonged armed violence and arms flows.

We therefore welcome the WGETI’s focus on risk assessment, reassessment of authorizations, inter-agency cooperation, information-sharing and capacity-building.

Finally, we encourage the Working Group to engage with Youth4ATT in future dialogues, creating space for young people, including those affected by armed conflict, alongside youth organizations, researchers and academics.

Effective Treaty implementation should ultimately be measured not only by laws and policies, but by our ability to prevent arms from fuelling conflict, protect civilians, and reduce human suffering.

Thank you, Madam President.