

Nonviolence International Southeast Asia
Statement: Universalization Working Group Session
4th Conference of State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty Tokyo, Japan
20-24 August 2018

Thank you Mr. President/Mr Co-Chair

On behalf of Nonviolence International Southeast Asia, the lead NGO working on the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty in this host region, we commend you, Mr. President Ambassador Takamizawa and Mr. Co-Chair Ambassador Korhonen, on your efforts of reaching out to states in the region to join the Arms Trade Treaty.

We recognize that states, especially those from the Global South, are at different stages of development and readiness to implement the ATT. We've made this very assessment in Southeast Asia, where we have determined that countries fall into various degrees of readiness. In past Conferences and even in the past few days, in all our efforts towards universalization, we've sought to address the reasons as to why states may be reluctant to sign or ratify the Treaty through measures that aim to create or increase capacity or build on current national systems to make them compliant to ATT standards.

In this regard, we note the effectiveness of your approach, Mr. President, Mr. Co-Chair, to build the capacities of states now in order to prepare them for ratification and full compliance. Nonviolence International has worked towards building capacities of crucial national agencies in Southeast Asia. By strengthening the institutional foundations of states, we also build support for and therefore momentum towards ratification.

One initiative that has proven effective is the Philippines Arms Trade Treaty-Voluntary Trust Fund project which we are the national implementing partner. We appreciate the support you have shown, Mr. President, through the Japanese Embassy in the Philippines, and your words of encouragement when we launched our ATT-VTF project. Through capacity-building efforts with the lead government agency, the Office of the Special Envoy on Transnational Crime of the Office of the President, implementing agencies in the Philippines were able to gain the endorsement of President Duterte to make ATT ratification a priority. Encouraged by this, the Office of the Special Envoy on Transnational Crime has also started preliminary plans towards a regional initiative to promote universalization in the region. Nonviolence International Southeast Asia welcomes this and reaffirms our support as the Philippines' implementing partner. Such a case only shows that state and civil society relations can be truly effective based on a shared value of reducing human suffering.

National and regional engagements remain to be the most effective means of promoting universalization. Our experience validates this. Political will is certainly important, but this can only be truly effective when government agencies are able to translate this will into real actions and results. By allowing local agencies to own the process of ratification and implementation and raising support from within, we also contribute to long-term institution building.

The challenge of universalization remains the biggest in the Asia, and Nonviolence international Southeast Asia reaffirms our commitment to continually engage states in the region.

Domo arigatou gozaimasu, Mr. President/Mr. Chair.