



Twelfth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty

26 August 2026
CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

Agenda Item 7: Universalization



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Madame President,

The Philippines thanks the Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Treaty Universalization and welcomes Vanuatu and Ecuador as the newest States Parties.

The Philippine experience affirms that universalization is a process of dialogue, preparation, and national ownership. Our path from signature in 2013 to ratification in 2022 required legislative scrutiny, inter-agency coordination, and engagement with civil society and industry. Concerns regarding compliance, risk assessment, and administrative capacity were best addressed through in-depth discussions and practical clarification.

Our experience also demonstrates the value of connecting universalization with implementation readiness. Relevant national controls were already in place before our ratification, including legislation governing strategic trade and firearms and ammunition. Since becoming a State Party, we have continued to strengthen the practical application of these controls.

Universalization efforts should help prospective States understand not only what the Treaty requires, but also how those requirements can be implemented within existing national legal and institutional frameworks and capacities.



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For this reason, universalization should connect political outreach with implementation support. States considering ratification or accession should be able to examine model legislation, national control systems, reporting requirements, and assistance opportunities before joining. The Voluntary Trust Fund and Sponsorship Programme can help convert political intent into workable institutional arrangements.

Regional context matters. In Southeast Asia and the wider Asia-Pacific, many States confront extensive maritime borders, major transit and transshipment routes, diverse legal systems, and limited enforcement resources. Diverse regional legal systems and varying capabilities hamper the ability to adopt a common standard of arms control enforcement. Outreach should therefore speak to national and regional security concerns, including diversion, illicit trafficking, transnational organized crime, border management, and the protection of communities. The maritime and emerging technology issues raised in the Philippine working papers can provide practical entry points for engaging States that may see the Treaty as distant from their immediate priorities.

The Philippines supports targeted engagement with signatory States and non States Parties that have expressed interest in joining. We also support peer-to-peer exchanges, parliamentary engagement, and meaningful participation by civil society, youth, and relevant technical institutions.

Universalization should be measured by more than figures. It should build a broader community capable of responsible transfers, credible reporting, effective diversion prevention, and sustained cooperation. We support integrating these aims into the five-year strategy, with realistic milestones and regular review that do not create new reporting burdens.



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The Philippines remains ready to share its ratification and domestication experience with States facing similar circumstances. In line with this, in November, the Philippines will conduct to advance the treaty's universalization especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

Thank you, Madame President.