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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Working Paper No. 2

**Proposed Language on Drones, Autonomous Drones,
and Emerging Technologies in Conventional Arms Transfers**

I. Purpose

This working paper proposes language for possible inclusion in the outcome document of the Twelfth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty concerning drones, autonomous drones, and emerging technologies associated with conventional weapons systems.

The paper seeks to support discussion on how States Parties can strengthen risk assessment, transfer controls, diversion prevention, and accountability in relation to unmanned and increasingly autonomous systems.

II. Context

Drones and unmanned systems are now increasingly used in armed conflicts, law enforcement, border control, surveillance, and military operations. These systems may include remotely piloted systems, loitering munitions, armed drones, surveillance drones, and systems with varying degrees of autonomy.

While drones may serve legitimate defense, security, humanitarian, disaster response, and monitoring purposes, their transfer and use also raise important concerns. These include diversion to unauthorized users, use by non-State armed groups or criminal networks, cross-border attacks, targeting errors, attacks on civilian areas, and accountability challenges when systems operate with increasing levels of autonomy.

The ATT provides an important framework for considering how conventional arms transfer controls should respond to emerging technologies. The Philippines encourages discussion on how States Parties can ensure that drones, autonomous drones, components, software-enabled systems, and related supply chains are subject to responsible regulation consistent with the Treaty.

III. Philippine Position

The Philippines emphasizes that technological developments, including drones and autonomous drones, and other emerging technologies associated with conventional weapons systems, should be addressed within responsible arms transfer control systems.

Their transfer should be assessed in light of the risk of misuse, diversion, unlawful targeting, cross-border attacks, and contribution to armed violence or instability.

The Philippines underlines the need for practical cooperation on end-use and end-user verification, customs and border controls, information sharing, tracing of components, and monitoring of supply chains involving unmanned systems and related technologies.

The Philippines further supports dialogue among States Parties on how to apply ATT obligations to drones and autonomous drones, and other emerging technologies associated with conventional weapons systems, without undermining legitimate uses for defense, public safety, disaster response, humanitarian action, and maritime security.

IV. Proposed Language for CSP12 Outcome Document

The Philippines proposes the following language:

- “States Parties recognize that technological development, including unmanned aerial systems, armed drones, loitering munitions, autonomous or increasingly autonomous systems, related components, and other emerging technologies associated with conventional weapon systems, may present new challenges for responsible arms transfer controls, diversion prevention, and international cooperation.”
- “States Parties encourage further exchange of national practices on the application of Arms Trade Treaty obligations to the transfer of drones, autonomous systems, components, and enabling software and technologies, consistent with national laws and international obligations.”
- States Parties affirm that consideration of drones and other emerging technologies in the context of Treaty implementation should remain consistent with the scope and existing obligations of the Treaty and should not, by itself, be understood as expanding the categories of conventional arms or other items covered by the Treaty.”
- “States Parties underline the importance of assessing the risk that transferred systems may be used to commit or facilitate violations of international humanitarian law or international human rights law, terrorism, transnational organized crime, attacks against civilians, or destabilizing acts in conflict-affected or border-adjacent areas, or other risks identified under Article 7 of the Treaty.”
- “States Parties encourage cooperation on end-use and end-user controls, customs and border enforcement, component tracing, information sharing, and measures to prevent diversion of unmanned and autonomous systems to unauthorized users.”

- “States Parties recognize the importance of continued dialogue on emerging technologies in order to support effective Treaty implementation and ensure that arms transfer controls remain responsive to changing patterns of warfare, armed violence, and transnational crime.”