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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Working Paper No. 3

**Proposed Language on the Protection of Critical Civilian
Infrastructure and Objects Indispensable to Civilian Survival**

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 on the protection of critical civilian infrastructure and objects indispensable to civilian survival.

The paper focuses on the use and deployment of conventional weapons in attacks that damage or destroy water systems, dams, energy facilities, nuclear power plants, hospitals, schools, residential areas, and other infrastructure essential to civilian life.

II. Context

Recent armed conflicts have shown the severe humanitarian consequences of attacks on critical civilian infrastructure. The use of conventional weapons against or near water supplies, dams, power facilities, hospitals, schools, residential areas, and other civilian infrastructure can have consequences far beyond the immediate blast or strike. The destruction of such infrastructure may deprive civilians of water, electricity, medical care, shelter, food systems, sanitation, and safe passage.

For the Philippines, this issue is closely related to international humanitarian law, disaster risk reduction, civilian protection, peace and security, and the prevention of armed violence. It is also relevant to national experience in conflict-affected areas, where the protection of communities and essential services remains central to peacebuilding and human security.

III. Proposed Philippine Position

The Philippines emphasizes that responsible arms transfer decisions should consider the risk that transferred weapons may be used to attack or damage civilian objects and critical infrastructure. This includes water supplies, dams, hospitals, schools, civilian homes, energy facilities, nuclear plants, transport systems, and other objects indispensable to civilian survival.

The Philippines underlines that preventing such harm is consistent with the humanitarian purpose of the ATT and with broader obligations under international humanitarian law.

Arms transfer decisions should include careful assessment of patterns of use, end-user behavior, conflict context, and the potential for widespread civilian harm.

The Philippines further supports international cooperation to strengthen risk assessment methodologies, post-delivery cooperation, information sharing, and documentation of the humanitarian impacts of weapons use.

IV. Proposed Language for CSP12 Outcome Document

The Philippines proposes the following language:

- “States Parties express concern over the severe humanitarian consequences arising from the use of conventional arms in attacks against civilians, civilian objects, and critical infrastructure essential to the survival, safety, and dignity of civilian populations.”
- “States Parties recognize the importance of assessing the risk that transferred conventional arms, ammunition, parts, and components may be used to attack or damage hospitals, schools, residential areas, water systems, dams, energy facilities, nuclear power plants, transport networks, and other objects indispensable to civilian survival.”
- “States Parties reaffirm that effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty contributes to the prevention of civilian harm, the protection of communities, and the promotion of respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law.”
- “States Parties encourage the sharing of national practices on risk assessment, end-use and end-user controls, post-delivery cooperation, and inter-agency coordination to reduce the risk that transferred arms may be used in attacks causing widespread harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure.”
- “States Parties recognize the importance of integrating humanitarian impact considerations into responsible arms transfer decisions, including the foreseeable consequences of weapons use in populated areas and near critical infrastructure, and urge the provision of technical assistance to build national capacities in executing IHL and human rights risk assessments.”