

Statement by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
Twelfth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (CSP12)

Agenda item 7 – Treaty Universalization

Wednesday, 26 August 2026, Geneva (morning session)

Madam President,

I am honoured to address the Twelfth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty on behalf of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Treaty Universalization and the ATT Secretariat for their presentation of the work undertaken since CSP11. UNODA commends these efforts and will continue to support States in advancing the universalization of the Treaty.

UNODA welcomes the recommendations put forward by the Working Group and, more broadly, the ongoing efforts to strengthen the strategic direction of the Treaty, including through the development of a five-year strategy.

Allow me to highlight some of the work undertaken by UNODA, including through its Regional Centres, to support universalization, as well as some regional trends and priorities.

Starting with the Asia-Pacific region.

The Asia-Pacific region continues to have a relatively low number of States acceding to the ATT. Currently, only around one quarter of States in the region are States Parties or have taken formal steps towards accession. The challenges are multifaceted, ranging from national capacity and differing political priorities to technical and financial resource constraints.

At the same time, there is broad underlying support across the region for the object and purpose of the Treaty. Strengthening regional dialogue and building the capacity of officials working on arms transfer controls can help translate this support into further progress towards universalization.

In this regard, in partnership with the Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control of Germany, UNODA, through its Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) will host an ATT universalization initiative for the Asia-Pacific Region in December this year. The Centre is also continuing to advance universalization efforts in the Pacific, with the Governments of Fiji and Kiribati supported through the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund.

Sustained engagement at the national level will remain important. Regional and subregional organizations, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, can also play an important role in facilitating dialogue and cooperation that is responsive to the specific circumstances of the region.

Turning to Africa.

Engagement with the ATT continues to deepen across the continent, with 31 African States now States Parties to the Treaty. At the same time, universalization remains an important area of work. UNODA, through the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), continues to support universalization and effective implementation through capacity-building, need assessments, targeted technical assistance and gender-responsive initiatives. These efforts are carried out in partnership with the African Union, subregional organizations and States across the continent.

As reflected in UNREC's engagement, progress is real, but momentum must be sustained.

Finally, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The region continues to demonstrate strong political support for the objectives of the Treaty. With Ecuador having become the 118th State Party in February this year, the region has further strengthened its commitment to responsible arms transfers and the prevention of diversion.

At the same time, States across the region continue to address the interconnected challenges posed by illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, organized crime and armed violence. Subregional firearms roadmaps in the Caribbean, Central America and the Dominican Republic, as well as the ongoing development of a similar framework among Andean States, reflect efforts to strengthen national control systems, enhance regional cooperation and advance prevention-oriented approaches.

With the support of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), these initiatives are helping translate political commitments into practical measures and contributing to stronger implementation of global instruments, including the ATT.

Madam President,

Progress towards universalization is neither automatic nor a given. It is the result of sustained political will, partnership and practical support. The encouraging developments we have seen across regions show that momentum is growing. Our collective task now is to maintain and even increase that momentum and translate it into concrete results. UNODA stands ready to

continue supporting States every step of the way as we work towards the shared goal of a truly universal and effectively implemented Arms Trade Treaty.

Thank you.