



## SUMMARY REPORT

### Second Asia Regional Meeting to Facilitate Dialogue on the ATT

26-27 November 2013, Manila, Republic of the Philippines

Organised by UNRCPD and hosted by the Government of the Philippines in Manila, the Second Regional Meeting brought together 35 senior-level participants from 19 Asia-Pacific states to recognise priority areas, discuss common challenges, and identify tools for assistance in their efforts to move towards signing and ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The meeting was supported by generous contributions from the Governments of New Zealand and Switzerland.

Following the First Asia Regional Meeting<sup>1</sup>, main areas of discussion included legislative challenges to treaty implementation, other possible implementation challenges and capacity-building assistance. States present were at various stages of ATT engagement, including those intending to sign or ratify the treaty in the near future and those still assessing the treaty text to determine how to proceed at the national level.



#### Overview of Treaty and ATT-Related Activities

The ATT was adopted on 2 April 2013 and opened for signature on 3 June 2013. At the time of the Regional Meeting, 115 states had signed the treaty (15 were from Asia-Pacific<sup>2</sup>), and eight had ratified it<sup>3</sup> (none from Asia-Pacific). The treaty will enter into force 90 days after the deposit of the 50th instrument of ratification, which many expect to happen in 2014. The Asia-Pacific represents an important region for the ATT, with presenters noting that states in the region have been major transit and destination points for trafficked arms. An effectively implemented ATT potentially contributes to regional and international peace and security by decreasing the misuse of conventional weapons and reducing their diversion into the illicit market. Importantly, presenters underscored that the ATT is not a treaty that: bans civilian possession of firearms, prohibits states from acquiring weapons for self-defence or national security needs, limits domestic transfers, holdings or manufacturing, or interferes in any way with the internal affairs of states.



Participants discussed other international instruments dealing with conventional arms (e.g. UN Programme of Action<sup>4</sup>), the potential for synergies in the implementation of those instruments with the ATT, and proposed effective ways of ensuring ATT implementation remains consistent with commitments in the other instruments. It was agreed that small states, in particular,

could benefit from the further unpacking of ATT commitments, the mapping of commitments across instruments, national assessments of existing controls, and an evaluation of existing models and guidelines.

<sup>1</sup> The First Asia Regional Meeting to Facilitate Dialogue on the Arms Trade Treaty was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 26-27 February 2013 in advance of the Final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. See [report](#) here.

<sup>2</sup> Of the 43 countries covered by UNRCPD, 15 had signed at the time of the meeting: Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Japan, Kiribati, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

<sup>3</sup> For the most up to date numbers, please visit the [UNODA website](#).

<sup>4</sup> Programme of Action to Prevent, Eradicate and Combat the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. (See [www.poa-iss.org](http://www.poa-iss.org))



### Exchange of Views on National Activities and Plans

The levels of national ATT engagement and domestic processes were compared by the participants in breakout groups. A number of states had yet to hold consultations with concerned domestic agencies or with the private sector. The conversations included the potential domestic impact of implementation, role of competing domestic priorities, existing legislation and national control systems, and the myriad of ministerial departments involved with ATT implementation.

### Looking Forward: Strategies and Mechanisms for Assistance

The second day of the meeting revolved around discussions concerning future ATT implementation challenges for the region, varying needs of states, concerns over future obligations and how best to ensure compliance with the treaty once ratified. As the ATT nears its entry into force, it was noted that it is important for states to become an early State Party in order to ensure their participation in the decision-making process at the first Conference of States Party.

The establishment and maintenance of a national control system was highlighted as a potential pre-ratification challenge, with participants examining strategies to enhance such a system's effectiveness and sustainability.

Also discussed was the preliminary need to develop a clear understanding of the treaty text, and to conduct a review of existing national control systems and laws, and their compliance with the ATT. Potential synergies with existing efforts to strengthen export controls (e.g. UNSCR 1540 activities) were also considered.

The concern over controlling transit and transshipment of weapons was shared by many. There were also requests for increased technical assistance, model legislation and greater sharing of best practices in order to best interpret ambiguities in the text. Participants discussed the possible development of a compendium of resources and best practices and how such a resource could be used to facilitate implementation of the ATT. States also discussed the frequent need for equipment and training at the operational level of treaty implementation, particularly as regards recordkeeping, reporting and monitoring.

Participants explored ways to achieve regional co-operation on ATT implementation, encouraging the organisation of further seminars, workshops and meetings to identify areas for co-operation, including border control, information sharing on national systems, model legislation and rehabilitation for those involved in illegal trafficking. UNRCPD and UNODA were identified as having key roles in facilitating future efforts to promote regional co-operation on the ATT.

### Conclusion

An encouraging level of general support for the ATT exists amongst Asia-Pacific states. The meeting was attended by participants from 19 Asia-Pacific states, and achieved its aims of generating discussion on ATT implementation, challenges, and on finding ways of moving forward. Synergies between the ATT and existing control regimes were identified, as were practical legislative and administrative steps that states could take to prepare for implementation. During the meeting, a need for ongoing regional dialogue was identified as a means to facilitate further progress on ATT implementation goals. UNRCPD was called upon to continue facilitating regional activities.

