

NEWSLETTER

Workshop for Pacific Island States on Gun Violence and Illicit Small-Arms Trafficking from a Gender Perspective

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) with support of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and the government of Fiji, conducted a workshop on Gun Violence and Illicit Small-Arms Trafficking from a Gender Perspective



as part of an EU funded project on Gender and Small Arms. The event that was held from 12 to 15 November 2019 in Suva, welcomed 25 Members of Parliament (MPs) and representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea (including Bougainville), Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, as well as representatives from regional CSOs and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. The event aimed at providing knowledge and enhancing capacities of the participants to facilitate the development of joint initiatives between MPs and CSOs to address armed violence in their communities. The workshop helped to raise awareness and increase participants' understanding of the UN Programme of Action (UN PoA) on small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and their application for an effective SALW control and measures countering their illicit proliferation at the national level. Furthermore, the workshop focused on the complementary nature of these international agreements with the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Experts and facilitators from the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), IANSA, the Centre for Armed Violence Reduction (CAVR) and the Parliamentary Forum on SALW explained the gendered nature of armed violence, provided insight

on the dynamics of illicit small arms trafficking, and their driving factors and trends in different countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Participants shared their experience on addressing armed violence in their communities, the work undertaken in this regard and the challenges they face. Amongst the major challenges, participants discussed: the lack of women's participation in decision making processes, the need to address violence against women and girls which is extremely high in the region; and the need to engage men in these conversations.



Technical and Legal Assistance Project to Support Timor-Leste in the Implementation of the UN PoA and ATT

At the request of and in cooperation with the Government of Timor-Leste, UNRCPD provided technical and legal assistance to enhance the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) and to support the accession to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). These two global instruments provide mutually complementing and reinforcing mechanisms for countering illegal trade and illicit trafficking of SALW, and other conventional arms. In November 2019, UNRCPD representatives, along with international legal and technical experts, travelled to Dili, Timor-Leste, to conduct an initial baseline assessment of SALW control practices. The mission met with representatives of relevant ministries and state entities involved in conventional arms control to assess and identify the Government's legal and technical needs. Over the course of the visit, in response to the request of the Government of Timor Leste, UNRCPD conducted a one-day workshop



on the ATT and delivered presentations and briefings on its provisions, the process for accession, the supporting resources available, as well as synergies with the PoA and related instruments. The mission conducted four on-site visits to SALW and ammunition storage facilities of the Sea and Airport Custom Department, the Police Units and the Defense Force Units. On the basis of the findings made during the initial assessment visit, UNRCPD will conduct a final briefing in February 2020 and will work with the Government to identify routes for implementation of the recommendations provided.

Expert Meeting to facilitate the participation of African and Asian States in the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty Consultative Process, Bangkok, 17-18 December 2018



Fissile material is a key component in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Therefore, a non-discriminatory, multilateral, internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices would represent a significant contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Against this background, UNRCPD, in cooperation with the Geneva Branch of UNODA and its Regional Centre in Africa, organized a

cross-regional workshop to engage representatives from African and Asian States to deliberate on the outcome of the High-Level Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) Expert Preparatory Group. The workshop facilitated a roundtable discussion among scientists, academia experts and representatives of regional organizations about the outcomes of the High-Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group as well as implications of a future treaty and its relation with already existing global and regional instruments on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.



Baseline Assessment for Disarmament Education in Asia and the Pacific



UNRCPD finalized the Baseline Assessment of Disarmament Education needs for 9 countries (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan). Seven focus group discussions and 146 one-on-one semi-structured interviews were complemented through offering a quantitative survey. A total of 302 individuals (133 female/ 169 male) representing 214 offices/organizations participated in the qualitative portion of the Assessment and 154 individuals (69 female/ 84 male) completed the quantitative survey. Participants included Government offices/Ministry representatives, various United Nation agency

representatives, various United Nation agency representatives, international non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations. The following programme priorities were identified: (1) Programmes and content developed specifically for youth; (2) Programmes looking at the gendered dimension of arms and violence; (3) Programmes for academics as well as peace and security practitioners; (4) Programmes for political groups to promote cultures of accountability and non-violence; (5) Mainstreaming disarmament education into broader conflict prevention programmes, especially within the scope of preventing violent extremism and counter terrorism; (6) Educational awareness raising campaigns produced in various languages, merging activities with training for media personnel. It was agreed, Disarmament Education would support the reduction and elimination of violent conflicts, contribute to reducing and eliminating armaments and warfare. Importantly, Disarmament Education is considered a key element to prevent the mobilization to arms, particularly amongst youth, as well as a mechanism to transform mindsets towards violence.



Disarmament Education on Responsible Innovation

In collaboration with the Robotics Association of Nepal, the UNRCPD conducted a workshop for young engineers during the Yantra 8.0 Science, Tech and Entrepreneurship Festival which brings together programmers, engineers and designers from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia and Nepal working on machine learning and robotics. UNRCPD presented and carried out educational exercises with 36 young entrepreneurs focusing on issues related to computer vision and robotics. Participants were able to reflect on the diversity of applications of each technology and their possible repercussions for individual, national and international security. Participants expressed how important the workshop was to them as they have never discussed or considered responsible innovation in relation to their work. They all agreed it is critical to include young innovators in discussions and decision making on these issues.

RESOURCES

- ✿ *Gender and Disarmament Database*, Reaching Critical Will
- ✿ *Gender & Disarmament Resource Pack*, International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group
- ✿ *The 2020 NPT Review Conference: Prepare for Plan B*, Robert Einhorn - UNIDIR 2020
- ✿ *Compliance and Enforcement: Lessons from WMD-Related Regimes* - UNIDIR 2020
- ✿ *The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention: 20 Years of Saving Lives and Preventing Indiscriminate Harm*, UNODA Occasional Papers – No. 34, November 2019



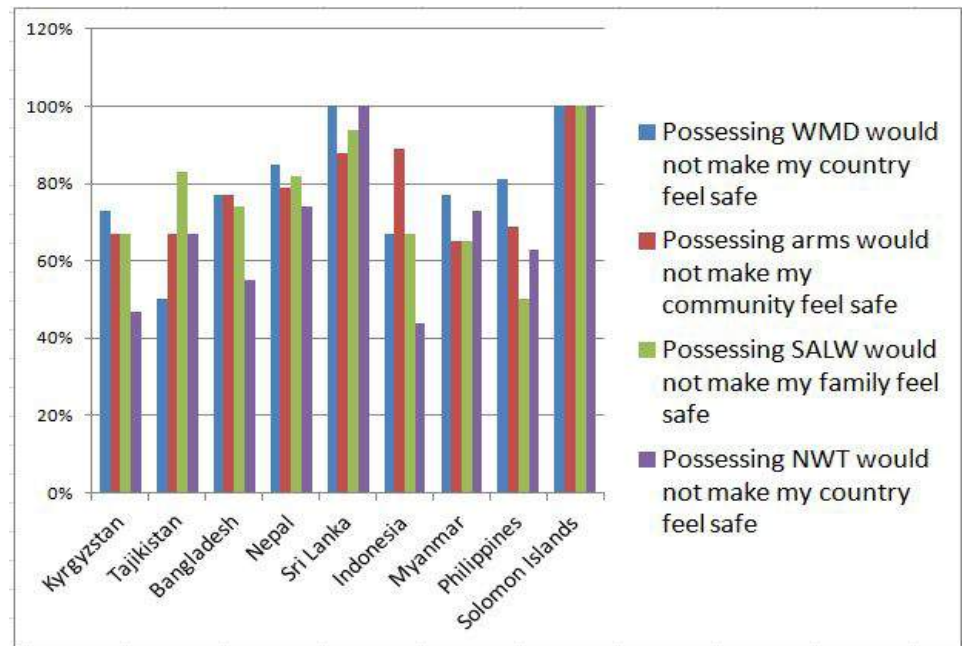
QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

“Disarmament and arms control play a critical role in preventing and ending crises and armed conflict and protect people from arms. As the UN turns 75, the task of creating a safer and more secure world is increasingly difficult. We need global cooperation more than ever.”

Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

DID YOU KNOW... ?

The results of the Disarmament Education Baseline Assessment showed that perceptions on arms are interconnected with the importance of a responsible and trustworthy state security apparatus. In every country surveyed a majority of respondents indicated possessing would not make their communities or country feel safe.



UPCOMING EVENTS

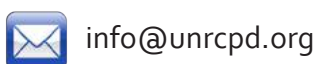
- ◇ Conclusive regional seminar on Gun violence and Illicit Small-Arms Trafficking from a Gender Perspective, 4-6 March Kathmandu.
- ◇ In-country training programme for national authorities and other key stakeholders on integrating gender-relevant considerations into small arms control programming and policy making.
- ◇ Regional Seminar to Support the Implementation of UNSCR 1540 (2004) in South Asia, 19-21 May, Kathmandu.
- ◇ Technical and Legal Assistance to support the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in the Implementation of the UN PoA on SALW and Related Instruments, 18-19 February, Colombo.
- ◇ Contribution to the UNITAR training on nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation for Asian States.

UNRCPD extends its appreciation to the following countries, organizations and funds for their generous contributions within the last year:



ABOUT UNRCPD

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) assists countries in the Asia-Pacific region in achieving their peace, security and disarmament goals, through provision of substantive support, coordination of activities at the subregional, regional and international levels, and information sharing on global and regional activities. The Regional Centre is part of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.



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