

Fourth Conference of State Parties (CSP4)
20 – 24 August 2018
Tokyo, Japan

Your Excellency Ambassador Nobushige Takamizawa; Distinguished Heads of Delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

[Greetings!]

The Philippines recognizes the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty, an instrument that establishes common international standards for the global trade in conventional arms. In fact, the Philippines has actively supported and participated in all the discussions surrounding the treaty since the time it was proposed at the UN General Assembly back in 2006. On September 25, 2013, the Philippines signed the ATT, the first Southeast Asian country to do so.

Every year, millions of people around the world suffer from the direct and indirect effects of poorly regulated arms trade and the illicit trafficking of firearms. The Philippines is no stranger to this. Proliferation of conventional arms has contributed to violence and instability in many parts of the world. With the alarming rise of instances of armed violence occurring throughout the world, the Philippines believes that strong regulations as embodied in the ATT, covering conventional weapons intended for military use and small arms, their ammunition, parts and components, should be supported and implemented.

The Philippines signed the ATT to fulfil our country's commitment to uphold international peace, security, and the rule of law. With this in mind, and through the coordinated action of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government, along with all relevant stakeholders, we have national regulations in place to implement the ATT even though the Philippines has yet to ratify it. We have (1) the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act (CFARA), which regulates the ownership, possession, carrying, manufacture, dealing in and importation of firearms, ammunition, or parts thereof; (2) the Customs Management and Tariff Act (CMTA), which has provisions on export or import sensitive items, including firearms and explosives; and (3) the Strategic Trade Management Act (STMA) or an Act Preventing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction by Managing the Trade in Strategic Goods, the Provision of Related Services, and for Other Purposes, which prevents the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and to maintain international peace and security.

The ATT is bolstered by the three Republic Acts of the Philippines mentioned earlier. ATT provisions covered in Article 6 and 7 of the Treaty, which pertains to

regulating and monitoring all activities concerning the transfer of conventional arms, ammunition, and parts and components, are adequately addressed by said laws. The covered activities include licensing authority, importing, exporting and re-exporting, and brokering of all items under the Treaty's scope.

Currently, 13 out of 14 required signatures have been gathered for the approval of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the STMA, a lengthy but necessary requirement for the effective formulation of the implementing document. Implementation will take place after all the agencies involved have signed, followed by its publication before the said law can take effect.

We are fully aware that there are challenges that need to be addressed for the effective implementation of the ATT in the Philippines. One major challenge right now is the ratification of the said Treaty by the Philippine Senate, which may prove to be a daunting task indeed. Questions on how it will be prioritized by the legislature, among the many other legislative issues the country is facing as well as questions on support from various stakeholders, including civil society groups, will realistically come into play.

In line with the Philippines' commitment to curb the proliferation of conventional arms transfers, the country prioritizes its participation in regional and international engagements on the issue as well as conducts meetings, seminars, and trainings to harmonize the functions of agencies relevant to the job, while addressing the challenges of said agencies in the implementation of relevant laws as well as the implementation of plans and programs, such as the General Firearms Amnesty, the One-Stop Shop for licensing of firearms, and the online processing.

We are looking at recommendations made during the well-attended 15-day Training Course on Licensing, Investigation, and Enforcement Policies and Procedures in Relation to the Arms Trade Treaty in February 2018 in coordination with Nonviolence International and supported by the Arms Trade Treaty - Voluntary Trust Fund. Among others, the National Defense College of the Philippines is exploring the possibility of incorporating parts of the training course in its own courses. Moreover, the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, together with other involved agencies, are now exploring the possibility of crafting a legal document in dealing with seized, confiscated and surrendered firearms to have a centralized repository of firearms and records, which is intended to cover the entire life of the firearms until their actual destruction.

Further, the Philippines is planning to initiate and host an outreach program that aims to encourage member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to share their best practices, expertise, and experiences towards implementing

the Arms Trade Treaty and their domestic efforts at controlling the proliferation of illegal firearms.

At present, the Philippines and the European Union through Expertise France (EF) and the Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA) are also collaborating on the second activity of the European Union Arms Trade Treaty Outreach Project Phase II, which is scheduled to be held in October 2018. This is the second activity intended to harmonize Philippine laws with a focus on the national strategic goods list, risk assessment criteria on strategic trade licensing and brokering.

It must be remembered that the Philippines was the first ASEAN country to sign the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013. It should also be noted that our President, His Excellency Rodrigo Roa Duterte, has already endorsed the ATT to the Philippine Senate for concurrence and the Philippine Government is exerting all for us to eventually ratify the Treaty.

We are quite aware that the ATT is not a perfect and fool-proof solution to world peace nor to ending human suffering – but we believe the ATT is our generation's contribution towards these ideals and we are proud to be a part of its effective implementation.

Thank you very much.