



The Role of Civil Society in Supporting ATT Universalization

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Control Arms is an international coalition with members organizations across all regions, and from different fields, including human rights, poverty alleviation, conflict reduction, weapons specialists, health, youth, gender, survivors and parliamentary networks. Together, we work to support the universalization and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and focus attention on the specific contexts where arms transfers are having a negative impact. As a Coalition, we provide evidence-based research and analysis, conduct outreach to governments, industry, civil society organizations and the public, generate traditional and digital media coverage, build capacity and expertise among both governments and civil society, and facilitate policy dialogue.

The Control Arms Coalition formed and launched a campaign in 2003 that pushed states to accept the idea of and negotiate the first global treaty to regulate the conventional arms trade. This involved 10 years of intense campaigning with significant work on progressive negotiations over 7 years at the UN.

Since the adoption of the ATT in 2013, we continued this work by pushing for 50 States Parties and the early entry into force of the Treaty through the successful Race to 50 campaign, and then for 100 States Parties through the Sprint to 100 campaign which ended in December 2018 with the accession of Mozambique as the 100th State Party.

And while the role of civil society has evolved to include technical and legal support towards the Treaty's implementation, monitoring and accountability mechanisms as well as substantive engagement in the preparatory process for the Conferences of States Parties, awareness raising of the Treaty's benefits has remained a key part of our work.

Our extensive network and close working relations with many governments has informed our view that the reasons for non-ratification or accession are varied, not only between regions but also within regions. Therefore, each ATT universalization campaign was accompanied by a wide range of activities and outreach to stakeholders which take account of the different challenges facing States, and assistance needs.

I will focus on three main areas of work that have contributed to the Treaty's universalization - advocacy, capacity building and technical support - highlighting some important successes as well as plans for future work.

Advocacy/ public awareness

Control Arms members across all regions have continually and consistently engaged in work to raise the profile of the ATT in their national agendas through **public awareness** campaigns, roundtables with parliamentarians, workshops and other events.

In Lebanon, sustained engagement and outreach from the Permanent Peace Movement was instrumental in supporting the Treaty's ratification on 09 May 2019. PPM worked at all levels to plant seeds of change: at the grassroots through Lebanese schools, raising awareness about the consequences of arms proliferation. At the national level, bringing together representatives from government and political parties, the security sector, media, education and civil society in order to discuss how the illicit arms flows and illicit possession of weapons are detrimental to a country's stability and security. At the regional level,

through the Arab League, bringing together officials and civil society from different Arab countries to discuss how illicit arms flows allow non-state actors to threaten the safety and security of Arab countries. The Permanent Peace Movement is continuing this engagement in other Middle East and North African countries. They recently organized a workshop on international mechanisms for arms control, focusing in particular on the UN Programme of Action on SALW and the ATT for civil society representatives from 16 Arab League member states.

Efforts to support the Treaty's ratification are also being renewed in the Democratic Republic of Congo where in March this year, Femmes des Médias pour la Justice au Congo in collaboration with others Kinshasa-based NGO, will initiate a campaign focused on raising awareness about the ATT in the National Assembly, where the ATT legislation is currently being considered. These efforts will build on the success of a similar campaign carried out in 2016 which resulted in the Senate voting in favor of the ATT legislation. Similarly, in 2018, the Women's International League for Peace and Justice DRC brought together civil society organizations, national authorities and media representatives to discuss the issue of the treaty under the topic: " *The role of Congolese civil society in the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty* " to encourage different stakeholders to actively engage in the universalization of the ATT.

In CARICOM universalization is almost complete. This subregion stands as an illustrative example of how civil society can support universalization, with the Caribbean Coalition for Development and Reduction of Armed Violence widely advocating for accession and promoting quick adoption of model legislation in the region. Currently the Caribbean Coalition for Development and Reduction of Armed Violence is focusing its universalization efforts on Haiti, the only non-state party in the region and is working with States Parties to encourage and support reporting under the Treaty.

During the fourth Conference of States Parties we heard from a representative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union about how parliamentarians play a crucial role in the ATT's domestication. Control Arms member, Parliamentarians for Global Action, an international network of committed legislators which work to mobilize parliamentarians in all regions of the world to advocate for human rights and the rule of law, democracy, human security, non-discrimination, and gender equality. Between 2015 and 2019, through sustained advocacy and outreach efforts PGA has contributed to the Treaty's ratification or accession in multiple UN member states. Notable examples include: [Brazil](#), where PGA Members contributed to the ATT's parliamentary ratification in 2018; [Guinea Bissau](#), where the central efforts of former Member of Parliament and now the current Foreign Minister of Guinea Bissau, paved the way for ratification of the ATT by the National Assembly in July 2018; and the [Maldives](#), where the instrumental efforts of a long-term [PGA Member](#) enabled the Government to accede to the ATT in August 2019. Going forward, PGA will concentrate its efforts in Colombia as well as Ecuador.

A number of Control Arms members and partners around the world have developed **resources** to facilitate awareness raising and capacity building. For instance, in Sri Lanka, the Forum on Disarmament and Development (FDD) translated the Treaty text into two local languages and presented copies to key stakeholders including the President, Government Ministers, the Speaker of Parliament, officials and the media.

In 2016, Control Arms published a well received paper on "Achieving ATT universalization in Africa" which examined the obstacles faced by countries in Africa who were seeking to join the ATT. The paper which provided an overview of the Treaty's status across the continent at the time, features six case studies that investigate specific barriers that have hindered Treaty membership; This resource enabled Control Arms

members in these countries to develop bespoke advocacy strategies to address specific national challenges and needs.

Research reports analysing how the ATT can complement regional and national security and development agendas and how the Treaty can address specific challenges such as armed violence and insecurity, proliferation of armed groups, gender-based violence, arms diversion or terrorism are used by Control Arms members to influence national policies. In this regard, Control Arms also published a case study on “Goals not Guns: How the Sustainable Development Goals and the Arms Trade Treaty are Interlinked” and has since worked to develop a database that tracks and analyzes how priorities set by UN member states to achieve the SDGs relate to and benefit from ATT implementation. This database aims to broaden the discussion and increase awareness of how the effective implementation of the ATT can contribute to the achievement of a number of the SDGs, and we look forward to sharing this resource in the future.

Treaty universalization efforts also benefit from a comprehensive understanding of how the ATT must be implemented and how states can meet their obligations. For instance, the ATT Monitor produces qualitative and quantitative research and analysis, explores emerging trends and practices that have an impact on the effectiveness of the Treaty and its provisions guidance to States Parties on how to improve their reporting obligations.

Social media has also played a crucial role in ensuring the early entry into force of the Treaty and then to maintain momentum on its universalizations. Global social media campaigns such as the Race to 50 and the Sprint to 100 as well as thematic campaigns such as Arms Free Africa or Stop GBV reached millions of people around the world on twitter, facebook and instagram, raising awareness of the Treaty's provisions and their applicability to regional and national issues.

Technical support

Working closely with the government, Control Arms members provide technical expertise to facilitate the Treaty's accession or ratification including through roadmaps, gap analysis, technical manuals and workshops tailored to overcome specific regional and national obstacles and accelerate the pace of domestic procedures for ratification.

For instance, in 2017 and 2018 the Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP) worked closely with the government of Cameroon to identify obstacles to the Treaty's universalization, engaged with parliamentarians, governmental officials, journalists and other stakeholders to support the Treaty's ratification. While this work was successfully concluded on 18 June 2018, when Cameroon deposited its ATT ratification instrument, the Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace is continuing these efforts, presently working in Cameroon and Chad to elaborate a roadmap for the effective implementation of the ATT.

Similarly, Saferworld partnered with Sierra Leone and Liberia to conduct detailed, comprehensive assessments of national laws, regulations, structures, policies and practices in order to identify the extent of, and gaps in, these countries current compliance with the Treaty's obligations. In the case of Sierra Leone, this extended to developing a detailed National Action Plan for getting the country to the point where it is fully ATT-compliant. Both countries have since gone on to develop follow-on projects for funding by the VTF.

Building Capacity

Control Arms and its members have also partnered with governments to support capacity building in states seeking to join the ATT. Access to information, long-term support and sustainable projects are effective in meeting this challenge. One example of a sustainable capacity building project is Control Arms' ATT Academy which provides in-depth and tailored learning opportunities to government and civil society participants to support their on-the-ground engagement with ATT implementation. The ATT Academy also explores linkages with other international and regional instruments and addresses region-specific challenges related to security, human rights and development. For example, the ATT Academy which is currently taking place in Southern Africa explores regional challenges concerning gender-based violence and wildlife poaching as they relate to the arms trade.

Similar efforts are undertaken by Control Arms members in other regions. The Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal organized an interactive roundtable meeting on "Promoting Universalization and Strengthening Implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty in South Asia", which brought together government representatives, parliamentarians and civil society from seven South Asian states. Seeking to advance the universalization and strengthen the implementation of the ATT in the region, this meeting encouraged information sharing and best practices to deepen the knowledge of the ATT among government representatives and civil society, creating a platform where different stakeholders could discuss the ATT. The participants adopted a roadmap towards strengthening ratification, accession, and implementation efforts, identified key areas where capacity building is necessary.

The low rate of ATT ratification among states of the Asian region is alarming. It includes a number of significant or growing arms manufacturers and exporters, and yet of 48 Asian states, only eight are ATT States Parties. The strengthening of cooperation with the civil society in this region will be essential the effectiveness of universalization efforts in the medium term.

Control Arms members are also directly involved in government security sector reform efforts in various ways including capacity building and training of security personnel on stockpile management, arms marking, border security or gender-based violence. For instance in Latin America, the Arias Foundation has organized a series of seminars and workshops border police, intelligence, customs officials seeking to encourage the exchange of information and good practices on arms control, strengthening governments' ability to overcome similar challenges.

These examples that I've outlined here today are intended to illustrate how varied and extensive a role civil society plays in the Treaty's universalization. They all contributed to the success the Treaty has had to date: the early entry into force, reaching 105 States Parties in 2019 and a number of countries expected to join the ATT before very long, including Angola, China, Malaysia, and Thailand all of which used their UNGA First Committee statements to announce their readiness to accede or ratify the ATT.

However, as we continue this work, we should also remember that while further universalisation is important, it is universal compliance that is the critical objective. Robust implementation of the Treaty and strict observation of all its legal obligations are vital. It is unacceptable for a State to become Treaty member and to continue with arms transfer policies and practices as if it had not.

Universal adherence depends on robust Treaty implementation.



Looking forward to the sixth CSP, the Argentinian Presidency offers an opportunity to focus on the Latin America and the Caribbean region. The Control Arms Coalition already works in the region – and plans to do much more – on both implementation and universalization.

We believe there is potential for the ATT Secretariat, States Parties and civil society to work together to improve the dissemination of accurate, timely information, translated into multiple languages in order to increase the visibility of the benefits of the ATT.

We also wish to remind donor States in particular, that for States with less capacity to implement the Treaty at a national level, legal, financial and technical assistance through bi- and multi- lateral channels remains key to increased universalisation. Capacity building for prospective States Parties is critical to encouraging their accession to the ATT. While States' donations to bodies including the ATT VTF have been generous, we remind States that the use of Official development assistance already allocated for Security Sector Reform can be channelled into ATT capacity building as part of increasing incentives to membership.

We look forward to working with all of you to make this happen