

IHLI Statement Under Item 4. Thematic discussion on “Universalization as a Priority”

Thank you Mr President,

First, we would like to express our welcome for the working paper [submitted by the Conference Presidency on “Universality as a Priority,”](#) and for the extensive and constructive discussions it held with youth, as well as its serious attention to their perspectives, and the adoption of youth perspectives through a new chapter supporting youth engagement in promoting the universality of the Treaty. We also appreciate its inclusion of the importance of incorporating youth voices in CSP discussions.

We would also like to express our full support for [the working paper submitted by Panama on “Enhancing Youth Participation in the Arms Trade Treaty,”](#) and to thank them for the extensive efforts and important discussions conducted in this regard, which are an integral part and a continuation of the current Presidency’s work at the CSP11.

In connection with this, the IHLI launched, on 12 August, a volunteer Digital campaign in collaboration with the ATT Secretariat, the Permanent Mission of Argentina, and the Permanent Mission of Panama under the hashtag #Youth4ATT. This campaign will continue until 31 August, in implementation of that working paper, emphasizing collective action in which youth are a key element and ensuring that youth voices from conflict-affected regions and areas of armed violence where participation in conference proceedings is often difficult are heard. This also aligns with the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda and UNSC Resolution 2250.

This campaign has received broad engagement and response from academic circles and youth initiatives, with young people from Nigeria, Brazil, Argentina, India, Sudan, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, and other countries sharing messages highlighting the need for:

- Provision of support, funding, and mentorship programs to enable effective youth participation in discussions.
- Inclusion of youth in working groups.
- Integration of youth into national delegations.
- Mainstreaming the youth perspective in Treaty reports, voluntary trust fund projects, and the establishment of a sustainable platform modeled on other disarmament

systems to ensure institutionalized youth participation.

We therefore call on more Member States, observers, and international organizations to join in supporting effective youth participation, [as youth make up approximately 16% of the world's population. According to UN reports in 2025, approximately 698 million young people aged 15–35 live in conflict-affected areas and are particularly affected by armed conflicts.](#) On one hand, young men constitute the majority of armed forces in conflict zones. On the other hand, young women represent the majority of sexual violence victims during conflicts. Overall, youth are the most affected group in armed conflicts, both through direct harm to their bodies and lives, and through deprivation of education and loss of opportunities for a dignified life.

Listening to youth stories and perspectives can contribute to developing a more comprehensive vision of the challenges, opportunities, and solutions regarding the field-level implementation of the Treaty. These consultations also present an important opportunity for the future of the Treaty to protect the next generations and can lead to supporting youth in official Treaty awareness efforts.

In conclusion, we invite all delegations to participate in the side event we are organizing in collaboration with the Permanent Missions of Argentina and Panama, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, graciously hosted by the Conference Presidency at its headquarters. Registration is available via the conference website.

Working together for a renewed commitment to the Arms Trade Treaty, the achievement of its humanitarian objectives cannot be complete without youth engagement, as youth represent the future and are the most affected by the proliferation of arms. We hope this momentum continues to support youth in future sessions.

Thank you.



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