

STATEMENT BY JOSEPH DUBE TO THE ARMS TRADE TREATY CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES,  
TOKYO, 23 AUGUST 2018

Thank you Chair.

I am Joseph Dube from South Africa, a member of IANSA - the International Action Network on Small Arms - whose members have been closely involved in supporting the establishment of the Arms Trade Treaty since 2003, and who continue to support the implementation of the Treaty. Unfortunately not many of our members, especially from the global South, were able to participate in this Conference but they follow proceedings and hope in the future they will be able to contribute more.

The reform of the sponsorship program for NGO representatives is crucial. My Organisation bases its approach on the principles of fairness, diversity, commitment and impartiality. We support the ATT Management Committee's rationale for transferring the administration of the sponsorship program to the ATT Secretariat. We believe that the ATT Secretariat will now have capacity to administer the sponsorship program and to manage the correspondence, logistics and database of States Parties, Signatories, Observer States, International or Regional Organisations, Civil Society and Industry.

Nevertheless, we think that the criteria used for the selection of NGO applicants should be clarified to ensure maximum support from a diverse range of relevant civil society organisations. This aspect is not mentioned in the latest memo from the Management Committee. The selection criteria need to be published and publicized. As far as I can recall there is a general commitment amongst the States Parties to sponsor participation from developing countries, which probably means countries on the OECD DAC country list. We support this.

There is also a need to develop other selection criteria beyond the ones in place. One suggestion that might bring more diversity to the Conference would be considering NGOs annual revenue, so that priority is given to those in greatest need. Coupled with this consideration, there needs to be a selection criterion that takes into account the candidate's prior commitment and work on the ATT, and their experience of working impartially on conventional arms control. Overall, NGO candidates should be selected on the basis that they will make a demonstrable contribution to the meeting and its outcomes.

To ensure there is no abuse or unfair criticism in the running of the sponsorship system for NGOs there is also the need to make the system of selection transparent. At least the list of applicants names and organisations should be published as well as the list of those selected for sponsorship. That would enable a degree of public oversight and confidence that the criteria for selection were being implemented. Such transparency is important as the system changes from being run by two bureaux to only one bureau.

Your Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates, the reality is that at the moment there are quite a few NGO experts with long-standing experience and substantial research and legal knowledge of ATT issues who are excluded from the meetings because they cannot afford the costs of travel and accommodation. Moreover, there are quite a few countries which have no NGO persons participating in ATT meetings, countries which are strategically important to achieve universal coverage of the ATT and full participation in the Treaty regime. The exclusion of such NGO persons undermines effective work to promote and establish the ATT.

My Organisation would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Dladla and his team for the wonderful work and support they have provided to members of Civil society. We will continue to

support and assist him and the team, as well as the States Parties, in advancing the goals of the Treaty.

I thank you.

ENDS