



Nonviolence International Southeast Asia
Statement: General Debate
6th Conference of State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
17-21 August 2020

Nonviolence International Southeast Asia wishes to commend the tireless efforts of Ambassador Carlos Foradori and President-designate, Ambassador Federico Villegas, to ensure that the 6th Conference of States Parties can proceed smoothly in these unprecedented times. We also congratulate the heads and members of the working groups and the ATT Secretariat for their hard work and dedication to support the goals of the Conference.

We wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the new States Parties to the ATT, namely Afghanistan, China, Maldives, Namibia, Niue and Sao Tome and Principe.

Mr. President,

Faced with the widespread challenges brought by the coronavirus pandemic, we, as a global community of states, civil society organizations and individuals, are compelled to reflect on our work on the Arms Trade Treaty and on preventing arms proliferation in general. We now see the futility of weapons against a global health crisis and how, in some countries, military spending has cornered precious resources that could have been devoted to public health and welfare. The pandemic has exposed how little some governments have devoted to the essential needs of their people and the protection of healthcare workers.

The effects of the pandemic are not just limited to health crises. The more sinister side of a public health emergency that has compelled populations to remain isolated in their homes is its impact on victims of armed violence. Domestic violence victims have found themselves trapped during lockdowns, with nowhere to turn to. Countries suffering from armed conflicts have become even more vulnerable as scarce resources are strained and the risk of civil unrest increases.

Going forward, we must remember that security is inextricably linked to public welfare and socio-political and economic stability. Our mission in this Conference and in future Conferences is to remember the purpose and spirit of the Arms Trade Treaty. We are not merely concerned with regulating the proliferation of arms. We should devote our time and resources to the impact of arms on global security and stability, on progress and development, on basic human rights and humanitarian needs.

Thank you, Mr. President.