

MAG Statement

Agenda Item 6 - Universalisation

Check against delivery.

Thank you, Madam President.

As a humanitarian disarmament organisation currently working in partnership with more than 30 states globally, we strongly believe that our engagement at the policy level is essential to ensure meaningful and effective implementation at the programme level. In that light we would like to offer some brief reflections on the proposal of the Working Group on Treaty Universalisation to enhance its work.

We welcome the proposal of the Working Group for deeper, more cooperative, and long-term efforts toward the universalisation of the Arms Trade Treaty. Today, international rules and norms are more critical than ever to prevent and address the humanitarian impact of conventional weapons and their ammunition on people and communities. The effectiveness of those rules and norms is significantly increased when the ATT is properly ratified and implemented in every state and region of the international community.

We would like to stress the importance of a tailored and sustained approach to the specific needs of each state with regards to joining the ATT. In our experience, in many cases, the political will to join international treaties and framework is not absent; but progress is impeded by various factors including competing priorities within the legislature, gaps in technical expertise, and general capacity and resource constraints. It is essential to develop a nuanced understanding of these obstacles through regular dialogue so that appropriate support can be provided to overcome them.

Madam President,

Regional organisations and civil society, including implementing organisations like MAG, are critical in promotion of universalisation and in contributing to the tailored approach just mentioned. Working closely on a day-to-day basis with states, these entities are well positioned to promote and facilitate dialogue, and develop the necessary contextual understanding. To not draw on these stakeholders is an opportunity missed in furthering universalisation.

We strongly encourage the Working Group, the Secretariat, and all other States Parties, to draw on previous experiences, not only in the universalisation of the ATT, but also the promotion of humanitarian disarmament norms. Furthermore, we must acknowledge the close connection between universalisation and international assistance, recognising that concerns about the ability to meet new obligations are a source of hesitance to accede to new frameworks.

Finally, as we have heard from several experts and stakeholders, the ATT offers several important links to other frameworks, including International Humanitarian Law, and International Human Rights Law. The development of these synergies should be seen as part of comprehensive universalisation efforts, with the potential to reduce the burden on state capacity and increase overall effectiveness.

I thank you, Madam President