



## STMO partners with **SAS** and **NISEA** to conduct Workshop on Strengthening Philippine Arms Embargo Implementation

The Department of Trade and Industry-Strategic Trade Management Office (DTI-STMO), together with the Small Arms Survey (SAS) and the Nonviolence International Southeast Asia (NISEA), recently conducted the National Workshop on Strengthening Implementation and Enforcement of UN Security Council Imposed the Arms Embargoes last 16-18 November through the Zoom Platform.

Propelled by a strong mission to prevent and detect illicit shipments and trafficking of arms and other prohibited items, the workshop aimed to:

- a. Introduce UN sanctions and other arms embargoes;
- b. Identify challenges in the implementation and enforcement of arms embargoes in the Philippines; and
- c. Build consensus around good practices for arms embargo implementation.

The discussion on the framework of the UN sanctions and other arms embargoes imposed currently at the regional and national levels and the main actors involved underpinned the fundamentals of the event.

Mr. Gian Giezendanner and Mr. David Atwood from SAS, and Mr. Fred Lubang from NISEA provided a background on the UN sanctions, the Security Council, and the DPRK sanctions regime. Also presented were the items currently covered by the sanctions, other prohibitions on the arms-related transfers, and the guidelines to prevent arms embargo violations.

Experts from partner countries also shared their experiences and best practices in implementing arms embargoes. Ms. Mega Marissa Malek of MITI Malaysia provided an overview of the country's obligations and commitments and the relevant administering agencies. On the other hand, Mr. Casper Volger of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands presented a case study on their intercepted export of luxury goods bound for DPRK.

Engr. Lorenz Fernando of the STMO presented the office's response on the Arms Embargo Self-Assessment Tool (AE-SAT). The AE-SAT is a questionnaire that helps facilitate gap-analysis of the country's current frameworks and identify the necessary assistance in the areas of concern. Engr. Fernando highlighted the need for the Philippines to have a unified sanctions implementation mechanism. He urged the government to adopt a single framework and continuously build capacity.

The Anti-Money Laundering Council, represented by Atty. Allan Julius B. Azcueta, presented the agency's laws, specific regulations, and various penalties imposed on the violators in relation to the implementation of the arms embargo.

Representatives from different agencies namely the Department of Foreign Affairs (Atty. Kristine Margret Malang), STMO (Ms. Domina Pia Salazar), Philippine National Police – Firearms Explosives Office (PMaj Chester Noel Borlongan), and the Bureau of Customs (Atty. Teddy Sandy S. Raval) relayed the challenges they face in implementing arms embargoes. In addressing such, they identified the following ways forwards:

- Strengthen institutional linkages;
- Adopt a national policy;
- Enhance implementation operations; and
- Conduct capacity building.

The government agencies further reiterated their commitment to fulfilling the national obligations on UN Security Council-related sanctions. END