



(Please check against delivery)

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. TOSHIO SANO
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 68th SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THEMATIC DEBATE: CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

29 OCTOBER 2013, NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by addressing the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which was undoubtedly an epoch-making achievement in the history of conventional arms control. Japan, along with other States and civil society, tirelessly worked throughout the last seven years for this conclusion. Therefore, we are delighted that the Treaty became a reality due to our collective and unwavering efforts. Moreover, it is remarkable that 114 states have already signed and eight States have ratified the Treaty within the last six months. This demonstrates the resolute and expansive support from the international community towards the Treaty we have adopted.

Now, since we have a strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty, the global arms trade is no longer unrestricted or hidden, and we are committed to prevent these arms from being transferred into the wrong hands. To ensure our dedication, the arms trade must operate in a transparent manner which will be subject to scrutiny. To this end, the Treaty needs to enter into force as soon as possible and Japan will do its best to conclude the Treaty as early as possible.

Japan will continue its role towards an early entry into force of the Treaty, the establishment of an effective Secretariat, and, above all, promoting international efforts to better regulate the global arms trade and combat the illicit transfer of conventional weapons. We also call on all States to extend their support to the draft-resolution L.4 on the ATT, which was submitted to this Committee by the seven co-authors, namely, Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Japan, Kenya and the United Kingdom.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan views the adoption of the ATT provides a positive impetus to the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Although the political commitments in the PoA regarding small arms transfer has now evolved to a legal commitment, the PoA remains an important tool to address their illicit trade, because the PoA, together with the International Tracing Instrument, covers a wider range of issues, including marking, tracing and stockpile management. They require our continued attention and it is crucial for the UN to remain fully engaged on these issues.

The Second Review Conference ended successfully with a strong outcome document. While there was no meeting last year, we need to start preparing for the next step according to the roadmap agreed to at the Review Conference. Taking into account that twelve years have passed since the adoption of the PoA, we need to extend our focus not only to thorough review of the activities during the past years to identify issues to be addressed, but also to further developing concrete measures to curb small arms-related problems. Japan is keen to discharge its responsibility in the future PoA process, including the forthcoming Biennial Meeting of States to be held in June 2014. We welcome the designation of Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan as the Chair of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States and look forward to working closely with him as well as other States and civil society for the success of the meeting. We call on all Member States to extend their support to the annual resolution on small arms and light weapons drafted by Colombia, Japan and South Africa, so that it will be adopted again by consensus.

Mr. Chairman,

Anti-personnel landmines as well as cluster munitions are major causes of serious humanitarian harm, and it is integral we persist in our efforts to tackle the problems associated with these weapons. The use of these weapons by any actor is entirely unacceptable since they not only pose grave dangers and harm to civilians during and after conflicts, but can also leave a lasting socio-economic impact for many years or even decades. We are deeply concerned by the recent reports that anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions were used. This leads us to the belief that it is essential that these two conventions become universal. Through the implementation of treaty obligations such as stockpile destruction, it can be assured that anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions will never be used in the future. I would like to reiterate Japan's call to all those States that are not parties to these two conventions to accede to them as soon as possible and join our collective efforts to end the suffering caused by these weapons.

Japan welcomes the recent decision on the establishment of an Implementation Support Unit for the Convention on Cluster Munitions at the Fourth Meeting of States Parties in Lusaka. We hope that the transition from the interim to the formal ISU will take place smoothly, and the ISU will efficiently function as a home for the Convention and to assist States Parties where support is needed. Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank Switzerland for its generous offer to provide in-kind and financial contributions to the ISU.

Japan also welcomes Mozambique's decision to host the 3rd Review Conference of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) in Maputo next year. Japan will actively participate in the discussions and assures Mozambique its full support and cooperation for a successful Conference.

Since 1998, Japan has provided assistance of approximately 530 million US dollars for mine action to 49 countries and regions. These include clearance activities of landmines, cluster munitions and Unexploded Explosive Ordnance, risk education and victim assistance projects. Japan renews its commitment to continue its support for affected countries in need. We encourage other states in a position to do so to join in the global effort to eliminate the threat and socio-economic impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

Japan recognizes growing interests, in the international community, in the issues regarding fully autonomous weapons. We think it useful to start discussion about basic elements related to those weapons, including their definition. CCW, where military, legal and other arms control experts are involved, could provide an appropriate venue to address these issues. Japan looks forward to discussing these issues with other interested States and civil society.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
