



# The Arms Trade Treaty and Japan

*3 June 2013: First Day of the Opening of the Signature*



The Arms Trade Treaty will regulate, for the first time, the international trade in conventional weapons. Often referred to as the “de facto” WMD, small arms and light weapons (SALW) alone kill over 500,000 people per year and cause the majority of violent deaths. The Arms Trade Treaty will stem the flow of arms to conflict regions and prevent human rights abusers, terrorists, warlords, pirates, and gangs from being supplied with conventional weapons.

## What will the ATT Achieve?

The ATT’s significance lies in the fact that states will now be legally bound to report arms sales and transfers. States must now assess whether their arms sales could be used to enable violations of human rights or humanitarian law, and will be prohibited from transferring conventional weapons if the transfer would violate international agreements or if they had knowledge the arms would be used to commit war crimes. Under the treaty, the seven major categories of conventional weapons (battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships and missiles, and missile launchers) will be covered, in addition to small arms and light weapons. States will be obliged to create and sustain a national control system to regulate the export of ammunition, munitions, and components used in these conventional arms.



## Japan’s Role in Creating the ATT

Japan was among the seven original co-authors initiating the ATT process in 2006, and has worked tirelessly ever since to guarantee the adoption of a robust and sound treaty with wide global participation. Japan served as Vice-President of the Asia-Pacific Group in both the July 2012 and March 2013 conferences.



ATT co-authors meeting hosted by Japan

During the negotiations, Japan made many suggestions on the text, including a proposal regarding the article prohibiting the transfer of arms in violation of international humanitarian law which bridged the gap in views among States. Together with Lithuania and Costa Rica, Japan proposed a clause on the public reporting of arms transfers which eventually garnered support from over 60 states. Ambassador Mari Amano, head of the Japanese delegation, was chosen by the President of the

Conference to facilitate negotiations on the inclusion of brokering of the arms trade in the treaty. Through his facilitation, an agreement was reached on this formerly divisive issue.

Once it became clear that the ATT would not be adopted by consensus, Japan led the process of moving the adoption of the Treaty to the General Assembly. Japan coordinated with 11 states on a letter to the Secretary-General with the draft resolution requesting a GA adoption. Before the scheduled vote, Japan worked diligently to win the votes of many States in order to ensure that a majority of states co-sponsored the ATT. The treaty was adopted by an overwhelming 154 votes and more than 100 states co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution.

## Close Ties with Civil Society

In 2006, the General Assembly passed Resolution 61/89, entitled “Towards an Arms Trade Treaty.” Since then, Japan has worked closely with many civil society members. In February 2009, to increase engagement from government officials, NGOs, and other Asian-Pacific Countries, Japan and Oxfam co-hosted “The Asia Pacific Regional Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty.” The conference proved to be mutually beneficial for all parties and the participants confirmed the importance in involving everyone impacted by conventional arms across the globe. The participants also noted that an irresponsible and unregulated arms trade can exacerbate conflict, increase violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law, aggravate poverty, and negatively affect its citizens and civil society, and stressed the necessity of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Before the UN Conferences in July 2012 and March 2013, the Japanese Delegation collaborated with the ICRC and NGOs to ensure that the treaty would be robust and effective. The Japanese Delegation convened numerous meetings between NGOs and other Member States to perpetuate the momentum built by negotiations. They cooperated especially in the areas of prohibition of transfers in violation of human rights and humanitarian law, public reporting, and transparency. The Japanese Delegation and civil society also worked together so the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly held on April 2nd, 2013 would be achieved with ample support. For more on Japan and Civil Society visit: <http://controlarms.org/en/news/japan-commits-to-be-among-the-first-to-sign-the-at/>



Ammunition given to delegates during the March conference.



## Continuous Efforts to Better Regulate Arms Trade

Japan helped the UN create an online database for the UN Register of Conventional Arms (shown left), to make publicly available report of all arms transfers made within the given year since 1992. It advocated the creation of a UN Register based on the belief that transparency in armaments builds confidence among States. Japan also supports global efforts in weapons collection, stockpile management, education and capacity-building and programs that assist former child soldiers. Its total contribution related to arms regulation since 2001 amounts to over 700 million dollars.

## Milestones of the Arms Trade Treaty Process and Japan's Involvement

1991: Conference on Disarmament discussing international arms transfers and UN Register of Conventional Arms is created.

2006: General Assembly adopts resolution: "Towards an Arms Trade Treaty."

February 2009: Japan co-hosts Asia Pacific Regional Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty in Tokyo, Japan.

December 2009: 153 UN member states vote in favor of starting a formal UN process; Japan attends five preparatory meetings leading to the Arms Trade Treaty negotiating conference in July 2012.

July 2012 and March 2013: Japan serves as Vice-President of the Asia-Pacific Group in both conferences.

2 April, 2013: Over 100 countries co-sponsor a new resolution in the UN General Assembly to adopt the Arms Trade Treaty. The resolution passes with 154 States in favor.

“The process of creating the treaty may have ended today, but the journey of perfecting the framework of regulating the global arms trade has just begun. Japan will continue to do its utmost in this endeavor.”

– Ambassador Tsueno Nishida (2 April 2013)