



Opening Remarks by Ambassador Ogasawara

Online Roundtable:

“Promoting the Arms Trade Treaty in the Asia Pacific Region”

June 17, 2021 at 0900-1000 CET

(Opening)

As a co-organizer of today’s event, first of all, let me extend my heartfelt welcome to all the participants in various parts of the world to this Roundtable. We have organized this Roundtable for the Asia-Pacific region every year for the last three years, together with Australia, New Zealand, and Control Arms.

Today, it is the second time for us to organize this event virtually, and we are very much encouraged to see a large participation from capitals of many states in different time zones.

The purpose of this Roundtable is to promote the Arms Trade Treaty in the Asia-Pacific region through discussions among government officials and civil society, both from Geneva and from state capitals, and this year we will have a special focus on the

obligations of transit states under Article 9 of the Treaty, and also on other issues related to ATT universalization and its implications for the region.

ATT is a legally binding global instrument, the objective of which is to establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating, or improving the regulations of, the international trade in conventional arms, and to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and their diversion.

The measures provided by this Treaty address correctly the current issues and concerns arising from illicit or irresponsible arms trade, which are, in my view, exactly what we need to tackle in the Asia-Pacific region.

First, the reporting obligation set forth in this Treaty is highly instrumental to enhance transparency with regard to arms trade. Since long, Japan has advocated for a greater transparency in global arms trade through diverse mechanisms including UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA). I believe ATT, as a legally binding instrument, provides the most robust scheme of reporting on arms trade.

Second, the ATT framework provides measures to regulate arms transfer and prevent diversion of conventional arms especially to unauthorized recipients. Those measures, as you can see, would certainly serve as effective counter-terrorism measures.

Wider participation of Asia-Pacific States in ATT will contribute a lot to enhance collective capability of our region in addressing the issues of common interest, especially by closing the loopholes which allow illicit or irresponsible arms trade. Japan is thus convinced that it is in your national interest as well as the shared interest of the Asia-Pacific States to expand the membership to the ATT in the region.

(Universalization efforts, Support for Treaty Implementation)

As ATT is a relatively new treaty, universalization of the treaty is one of the key agenda. We, the Member States, together with the ATT Secretariat, provide support to non-State Parties to facilitate the process of their accession to or ratification of ATT.

We welcome the recent progress in universalization in the Asia-Pacific region. I would like to welcome the three states from this region that joined ATT last year, China, Afghanistan and Niue.

Japan, on its part, worked hard to promote ATT universalization, especially during its Presidency of the Fourth Conference of States

Parties in 2018 and as co-chair of the Working Group on Treaty Universalization for two years until 2019. As the first Asian-Pacific State to hold the Presidency, Japan's efforts on universalization especially focused on this region. Through our outreach activities we could better understand the challenges that non-States Parties face when they consider joining the Treaty. In order to facilitate their efforts to join the ATT, Japan and Latvia, with the support of the Secretariat, prepared the so-called "Universalization Toolkit" and "Welcome Pack". The "Universalization Toolkit" enables Member States to convey common messages on universalization to non-member States, and the "Welcome Pack" concisely explains necessary domestic legal measures in order for a new State Party to quickly and effectively implement the Treaty obligations.

Both documents are now available on the ATT website, and have already been translated into five UN official languages, and thanks to the initiative of the Government of the Republic of Korea, they were also translated into ten Asian languages.

ATT also has a mechanism to support non-States Parties in a more concrete manner. Its Voluntary Trust Fund is one of the tools to provide assistance to facilitate the process of joining the Treaty. Today, we will be able to hear about our support through the Fund in detail from Ambassador Ms. Duncan of New Zealand.

In closing, I hope this Roundtable will be useful for all of you from future States Parties to accelerate your domestic process to join the ATT community.