

General Statement by the Government of Japan
The Sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
August 17-21, 2020

Mr. President,

At the outset, Japan would like to express sincere appreciation for your robust leadership as well as for the flexibility of the ATT Secretariat in the midst of unprecedented circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. You have successfully collected and compiled views on conference documents by written format despite the cancellation of the second working group meetings and informal consultation in April. You have also successfully convened the Sixth Conference of States Parties in an unprecedented written format at a time when traditional face-to-face meeting is not feasible.

Mr. President,

The ATT community welcomed its 110th State Party this month, with the submission of instruments by six States since CSP5. We appreciate the universalization initiatives led by Argentina and Latvia as co-chairs of the Working Group on Treaty Universalization and recognize the important role played by international and regional organizations, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and industry. Japan is determined to continuously work on treaty universalization, especially in Asia, building on our experiences as CSP4 President as well as our two-year term as a co-chair of the Working Group until CSP5.

Mr. President,

In February this year, the United States returned to participate in the ATT meetings and is currently attending CSP6, and last month, China deposited its instrument of accession to the ATT. Engagement of an increasing number of countries and regions, and especially of the major arms trade States, with the Treaty is paramount for enhanced control of conventional weapons.

Mr. President,

Ever since the establishment of the Voluntary Trust Fund, a mechanism supporting treaty implementation, Japan has served as a member of the Selection Committee of the Fund. Following Japan's re-election as a member of the Committee, by adoption of Decision 5, Japan would like to share ideas on model projects based on its experience. Japan will continue to support the establishment of national control systems in order to promote treaty implementation.

Mr. President,

Like many others, Japan looks forward to the early establishment of the Diversion Information Exchange Forum. We attach importance to the Forum and appreciate the efforts of Mexico and Belgium, co-chairs of the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting, to promote discussion toward the establishment of the Forum. We are confident that constructive exchange of information on specific cases will promote our joint efforts to prevent diversion.

Mr. President,

Japan values the work of the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation as it can promote treaty implementation, especially among those States that are new to the community and still in the early stages of trade regulation. We thank the Chair and the facilitators of the Working Group for their efforts in this regard.

Japan would like to express its concern, however, that the multi-year plans again include discussion on unpacking key concepts and texts which are not defined in the Treaty. The interpretation of these key concepts is not something that can be easily agreed on by consensus. Furthermore, a written interpretation of such key concepts would have serious legal implications.

Japan would like to emphasize that States Parties are necessarily bound by their treaty obligations and that difficulties in agreeing on a unified interpretation could in no way signify waiver of treaty obligations. Creating room for such a misunderstanding should be avoided at all cost.

Moreover, the exercise of unpacking key concepts should not be perceived as attempting to establish new norms.

Mr. President,

As a Management Committee member, Japan has contributed to the formulation of the Management Committee Draft Report on the ATT Secretariat's performance on the administration of the Sponsorship Programme, which we hope to be welcomed by the adoption of Decision 14. We are committed to continue our service as Management Committee member under the leadership of the CSP7 President and to work diligently on all aspects of treaty management including financial matters, with our sincere hope that the financial obligations of the States under the Treaty are fulfilled in a timely manner in order to ensure the sustainable management and promotion of the Treaty.

Thank you, Mr. President.