

Tokyo Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons: “SALW Issues from the Perspective of the Protection and Empowerment of the Peaceful Community”

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Keynote Speech

Toward a New Multilateralism: Eradicating Illicit SALWs

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Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, and friends,

(Introduction)

It is my great honor and pleasure, as Chair of the United Nations First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held from 7 to 11 July last year in New York, to address the Tokyo workshop on SALW today. I served as Japan’s ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament at that time, and I am especially happy to deliver a keynote statement under the chairmanship of Ambassador Mine, my successor in Geneva. I am indeed delighted to see many familiar faces, and also look forward to meeting new colleagues, who are experts of disarmament affairs. Allow me, first of all, to congratulate the organizer of this workshop, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, for the tireless efforts to make sustained commitment to enhance processes to combat illicit SALW and its devastating direct and indirect impacts. This workshop is yet another constructive initiative to gather, share, and disseminate local and regional knowledge in coping with the problems of small arms.

Also allow me to share with you some of the professional achievements I have made after my chairmanship at the UN. Upon my return from Geneva in spring 2004, I went back to a career as a university professor, and at the same time served

as a core member in launching a small arms NGO network, namely, JANSAs, Japan Action Network on Small Arms. In May 2005, I served as the co-chair of the first major international NGO conference on small arms in Japan, entitled “Farwell to Small Arms.” I also continued to serve as a member of the UN Advisory Board on Disarmament Affairs for the Secretary General, formerly Mr. Kofi Annan, and wrote extensively on the participatory approach in rebuilding weapon-free communities and on gender and disarmament. In summer 2005, I decided to run for the General Election to serve the cause of democracy, and was successfully elected as a Member of the House of Representatives. I was soon appointed by then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi as Japan’s first Minister of State for Gender Equality and Social Affairs. I currently serve as Foreign Policy advisor to the Secretary General of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the ruling party. I will certainly continue to make efforts as law maker and foreign policy advisor to invigorate Japan’s commitment to disarmament affairs including SALW.

(Follow-up Conference and Biennial Meetings)

More than five years have passed since the adoption of the Programme of Action which was a landmark consensus of states against the illicit trafficking of small arms. As we are aware, the PoA requires steps to be undertaken for the effective follow-up of the 2001 Conference. These include a Conference to review progress made in the implementations of the PoA, and meeting of states on a biennial basis to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the PoA. Despite difficulties, the Review Conference and the biennial meetings offered important opportunities for all States to recount their experiences and to gather the momentum to invigorate both political will and professional competence, and to identify appropriate strategies and share understanding of how best to address the many and complex challenges ahead. They have also served as a forum to strengthen the partnerships for action among states and with civil society.

Above all they were instrumental in fostering the collective sense of ownership for the process that the States initiated in July 2001. For example, I remember with pride that the convening of the first Biennial Meeting in 2003 served as a kind of catalyst to facilitate voluntary submission of national

reports by more than 100 Member States, a dramatic rise from the previous year. I was happy to hear that last year nearly 140 countries had reported on its implementation, and an overwhelming majority now have laws to restrict the flow of illicit SALW, and more than half of them have established national coordinating bodies to check their spread. I also hear that a third of all States have made efforts for weapons collection and destruction programs, and a majority have implemented standards and procedures to secure and manage weapon stockpiles. These issues were all crucial pillars of what we called a thematic discussion following the general debate at the First Biennial Meeting in 2003.

(Thematic clusters)

Since the thematic clusters around which thematic discussions were organized in the first Biennial Meeting seem to be relevant as we organize our thinking concerning collective action against illicit small arms, I shall take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of each cluster.

The first cluster deals with weapons collection and destruction, stockpile management, and DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants). The second cluster focuses on capacity-building, resource mobilization, institution-building. This is one of the themes of our workshop today. The third cluster is on marking and tracing. This is listed in the Follow-up chapter of the PoA. The most significant result of the negotiations among States is the adoption of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We must urge all Member States to discharge a political responsibility to implement the Instrument and submit national reports on their implementation status of the PoA including information on their implementation of the Instrument.

The fourth cluster is related to linkages, namely, linkages of illicit SALW with terrorism, organized crimes, trafficking in drugs and precious minerals. The fifth cluster is on import/export control and illicit brokering. I am encouraged to hear about the establishment and a good start of the Group of

Governmental Experts on Brokering. The last cluster is on human development, public awareness and culture of peace, and children, women and elderly, namely vulnerable groups. It is my hope that this Tokyo workshop provides special attention to the last cluster. It is expected that States make significant progress in all of these thematic priorities and translate wordings of the PoA into concrete, effective and robust actions on the ground.

(Regional achievements)

Regional and sub-regional cooperation to stem the flow of illicit SALW is essential in combating small arms problems. I particularly welcome the entry into force of the Southern African Development Community and Nairobi Protocols. As former UN Chair, I participated in the 2nd Ministerial Review Conference of the Nairobi Declaration on SALW in 2004, at which ministers successfully came to substantive agreement. It was encouraging to observe that proactive regional efforts are being made in response to and as an integral part of the UN process at the global level.

(Roles of the Security Council roles)

Despite the progress made so far, there are a number of recommendations which come to my mind as I revisit the issues of small arms. First, it is my hope that the Security Council would address the problems of illicit small arms and hold public debate to highlight the importance of the issue, and also interact with the General Assembly with a view to developing long-term strategies to reduce the demand and excess accumulation of weapons. Second, more studies need to be done on the links between the illicit trade in small arms and the illicit exploitation of natural resources, precious minerals and drugs, and put in place effective strategies to stop harmful linkages. Third, the international community must reach agreement on a realistic and effective approach to end-user certification. The list can go on but, I would like to focus today more on a broader issue and discuss people-centered approach.

(People-centered approach and reconciliation)

SALWs and their ammunition still kill more than 500,000 people annually or approximately 1400 per day. Vast majority of the victims are civilians, and 300,000 people are killed by SALW in armed conflicts every year. This leads us to think

that there is a need for an enhanced recognition of the people-centered aspect of the SALW issue. There is also a need to focus upon the central role that reconciliation plays in the disarmament processes at the local level.

(Deep-rooted conflicts)

After the Cold War period, the characteristics of violent conflicts have changed from a traditional inter-state conflict to a deep-rooted intra-state conflict involving grass-roots communities. Although the likelihood of large-scale international armed conflicts seems to be receding, regional ethnic confrontations and civil war have a horrendous and increasing impact on people's security. Almost all such conflicts are fought by small arms and very often by illicit weapons. Amongst the multi-dimensional sources of human insecurity, the most direct threat is the presence of illicit and excessive accumulation of small arms and their continued proliferation in post-conflict zones.

The shift in the characteristics of violent conflicts from a traditional inter-state conflict to a deep rooted intra-state conflict requires not only political arrangements for peace, but also social reconciliation at a community level. Reconciliation at all politico-social levels, including at the grass-roots level within different communities, is the key to ending a violent conflict and reconstructing war-torn societies. Reconciliation is both a goal and a process to find a way to coexist with former adversaries by sharing a future.

Designing of a comprehensive reconciliation based process requires the multiple and mutually-complementary commitment of resources of political, economic and diplomatic dynamics, in order to move from a divided past to a shared future.

In societies emerging from deep-rooted conflicts, it is important to design disarmament programmes with a view to facilitating reconciliation. Since disarmament is an indispensable element in the early stage of post-conflict reconstruction, careful designing of an appropriate small arms disarmament programme, with the concept of “reconciliation” at its core, is of crucial importance.

(Community-based, participatory approach)

The views and needs of the “real” people who are directly and indirectly affected by SALW proliferation need be put at the centre of SALW programs. Wider participation of local community members creates a sense of ownership and thus helps to build a "critical mass" of positive stakeholders for reconciliation, including women and children and young adults. It also increases the likelihood of the program’s success. By engaging ex-combatants to work together, confidence and reconciliation among former fighting parties can be generated. A broad community-based participatory approach in post-conflict disarmament programs serves to build confidence among community members in the sustainability of peace.

(Economic and social incentives on a collective basis)

Disarmament is at the core of the reconstruction and development of war-affected communities. Small arms disarmament programs need to be designed in such a way that community-based collective socio-economic benefits and incentives are provided, such as hospitals, schools, vocational training and entrepreneurial opportunities. Peace education to bridge the ethnic divide and to enhance human security values is also necessary. Such community-based approach is essential in curtailing demands to hold weapons.

In post-conflict situations, it is important for the international community to help prevent resurgence of conflicts, not only through disarmament and demobilization, but also by promoting reconciliation. It is particularly important to consider how disarmament programs can be designed with a view to enhancing reconciliation. I would like to add an extra R to DDR, namely, DDRR, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and reconciliation.

(Power of Knowledge)

Before I conclude, I would like to express my expectation for the community of experts and the role they can play in what I would call new multilateralism. One of the increasingly important features of the international relations today can be found in the rise of power of knowledge that influence the decision making process of states. Particularly in multilateral diplomacy where international norms and

rules are negotiated, the power of knowledge and knowledge-based interactions have become key elements in exercising leadership and fostering consensus. This is because governments today have come under increasing pressure to address and respond to a wide-range of complex global issues that cannot be solved simply by raw power or even by raw economic power.

This is why the civil society, including scholars, researchers, think tanks, non-profit organizations and/or NGOs, and all interested citizens are important partners in the international decision making process. The military power rests with states. The economic power belongs to states and economic sectors. But knowledge can belong only to each human existence. Thus governments, in order to be effective and powerful, would find greater incentive to reach out to the civil society to make use of knowledge including local knowledge that belongs to people. In this context, it is important to invigorate the knowledge-base of the civil society, and encourage the accumulation of professional expertise and local knowledge, including the voice of the affected.

(Towards New Multilateralism)

These dynamics could serve as the basis of a new paradigm in international decision making, namely New Multilateralism. It could even become a theoretical alternative to New Conservatism. The hallmark of New Multilateralism is the power of knowledge. Partnership with the civil society and a sense of ownership on multilateral issues by a wide range of stakeholders including local communities is another characteristics. Putting a priorities on humanitarian progress and affected/ survivors is essential. As expressed in the structure of the PoA on SALW, coordinated and streamlined processes among global, regional, national, and local levels also constitute integral parts of New Multilateralism. Also New Multilateralism is implemented with result-oriented mindset. It is my hope that our fight against illicit small arms benefit from some first signs of New Multilateralism in the 21st century international community.

(Conclusion)

I am convinced that with wealth of experiences and expertise each one of you

brings to our discussions, with our collective commitment to the task at hand, we will all emerge at the end of the workshop, individually and collectively, with renewed dedication to pursue innovative actions to reduce illicit small arms and light weapons in all our countries and around the world. As I used to state as the Chair of the UN first Biennial Meeting, no State alone can prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and no State is alone. As a law maker of the ruling party, I will make sure that Japan stands by the states and societies that are striving to make a profound difference for the generations to come by creating a safer and less tragic world. I thank you.