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Statement by H.E. Mr. Sumio TARUI
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Head of the Delegation of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament

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Thematic Discussion: Conventional Weapons
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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

It is estimated that every year more than five hundred thousand people are killed world wide as a result of the use of small arms and light weapons (SALW). It is patently clear in this light that the United Nations needs to continue to actively address this issue. At this year’s Biennial Meeting of States (BMS), the UN Member States adopted the first report since the adoption of the Programme of Action (PoA) in 2001 to contain guidance on several key issues. Each country that participated in this meeting committed themselves to undertaking concrete measures for promoting the full and effective implementation of the PoA. Furthermore, an attempt was made to ensure more productive debates in this BMS through the introduction of focused topics, expert presentations and the appointment of facilitators. We believe that these innovations contributed to the successful conclusion of the meeting. The PoA Implementation Support System (PoA-ISS), which the UN Secretariat launched at this year’s BMS, will be extremely beneficial for matching needs to resources. In this connection, the Government of Japan has contributed 480,000 US dollars to the CASA Database, which is the foundation of the PoA-ISS.

Mr. Chairman,

Last week, Japan as the coordinator for this year's draft resolution on small arms and light weapons, submitted the draft resolution to this
Committee on behalf of Colombia and South Africa. The draft resolution encourages the implementation of "The way forward" contained in this year's BMS report. Additionally, while taking sufficiently into account each country's views, we have attempted to sketch out a long-term vision for the work related to SALW. For instance, the draft resolution proposes commencing preparations for the next BMS well in advance, convening an experts meeting and holding of the next Review Conference. In order to further strengthen the implementation of the PoA, we would like to receive the strong support of all UN Member States on this resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

Regulating the arms trade is also effective for preventing conflict and terrorism. Attempts to create common international standards for the arms trade have been occurring well before the establishment of the United Nations, and that significance has long been recognized. Against this backdrop, the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) meetings on an arms trade treaty were held this year. Japan participated actively in the work of the GGE since we maintain a long-standing national policy of prohibiting in principle the export of weapons to any country. The GGE discussed common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons and concluded that "further consideration" was required. Japan amongst others believes that we should maintain the momentum of discussions on the creation of an ATT. It was from this perspective, the United Kingdom and the co-author countries, which include Japan, introduced a draft resolution this year, which proposes further deliberations between all UN members in 2009 on this subject. Japan calls on all UN Member States to lend their support to this draft resolution. For our part, we will make every effort to intensify the momentum towards an ATT.

Mr. Chairman,

To respond to the humanitarian concerns caused by cluster munitions, Japan has been contributing to the clearance of unexploded ordnance in Lebanon, Laos and other areas. In this vein, Japan welcomes the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference in May. The Government of Japan is seriously considering concrete steps towards the signing of the treaty.
In parallel with this work, Japan continues to contribute to the efforts to create an effective international instrument within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which engages the major producers and possessors of cluster munitions.

Mr. Chairman,

It should be noted that next year marks the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention, and consequently a second Review Conference is being planned. The Ottawa Convention has been making steady progress, but issues such as the further universalization of the Convention and the adherence to mine clearance and stockpile destruction obligations still remain. To date, Japan has been working actively to universalize the Convention, especially in the Asia Pacific region. As for our efforts in mine action projects, in the area of victim assistance, Japan has provided support to a vocational training project for landmine survivors in Cambodia and an orthotics and prostheses project in Colombia. In the area of mine clearance, last year Japan extended 51 million US dollars in assistance to projects in 14 countries. Since Japan, along with Chile, plans to take up the position of Co-chair of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention next year, we are determined to contribute proactively to the intersessional meetings with a view to ensuring the success of the upcoming Review Conference. What’s more, Japan intends to continue its support to projects in landmine-affected counties.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.