Statement by H.E. Mr. Kazuo Kodama
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At the Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Second Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

19 March 2012

Madam Chair,

The Second Review Conference of the Programme of Action (PoA), to be held at the end of August this year, will be an excellent opportunity to review the progress made on the implementation of the PoA. Japan greatly appreciates the various initiatives taken by the Chair-Designate of the Review Conference, Ambassador Ogwu, to ensure the success of the meeting of the Preparatory Committee and the Review Conference. For its part, Japan intends to participate actively in both meetings and to assist the work of the Chair as a member of the bureau.

Japan has been keenly interested in issues associated with small arms and light weapons, and has engaged itself in the process of rule-making on small arms as well as in providing assistance for projects in this field. Almost every year since 1995, Japan has co-authored the UN General Assembly resolution on small arms and light weapons and has contributed financially to various projects around the world in areas such as arms collection and destruction, stockpile-management and capacity-building. Japan will continue to engage in such endeavors.
Madam Chair,

In order to bring about a successful Second Review Conference, we not only need to address procedural matters at this Preparatory Committee meeting, but also to begin consultations on an outcome document. Additionally, necessity also requires us to make the most of the intersessional period leading up to the Review Conference in order to prepare the ground for the adoption of an outcome document in an inclusive and transparent manner.

Madam Chair,

With regard to Japan’s own efforts for national implementation, I would like to draw the attention of Member States to the national report which we have submitted online. It explains in detail the control measures taken by the relevant Ministries and other authorities on small arms and light weapons. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight Japan’s priorities in two areas related to promoting the implementation of the PoA: the importance of ownership among Member States, especially in the area of international and regional cooperation, and the need to have a clear vision for the follow-up mechanism for the next six-year cycle of the PoA.

First, in order to ensure effective international cooperation, it is essential for countries and regions receiving such cooperation to play a leading role in addressing the problem of small arms. In this regard, Japan welcomes the active discussions in Asia such as the Asian Regional Meeting held in Bali in early March as well as the ASEAN Workshop and Study Visit on Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons and Unexploded Ordnance to be held at the end of March in Phnom Penh. These meetings demonstrate the spirit of ownership among Asian countries in implementing the PoA at the national and regional level.

In our view, there are a number of important lessons that can be learned from the successful implementation of the PoA in Asian countries. The measures for implementing the PoA at the national level must be
comprehensive, simultaneous and inclusive. Such measures should include (i) collecting and taking measures against illicit arms possessed by civilians, (ii) putting in place appropriate stockpile management for arms possessed by security agencies and (iii) destroying collected illicit arms and excess arms. Such a holistic approach will have a synergy effect. It is also important to enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies. This point is especially relevant in order to build confidence between civilians and law enforcement agencies and to mitigate the sense of insecurity among elements of the civilian population which may tend to rely on possessing small arms.

Furthermore, projects for implementing the PoA should be elaborated with due consideration to the specific situation and needs of the recipient countries and regions. It is worth noting the various existing methods for arms collection initiatives, such as goods in exchange for weapons programs, education campaigns and increasing law enforcement capacity. In order to achieve these objectives, the knowledge and expertise of experts in the field of peacebuilding can be utilized. The expertise of regional institutions should also serve as a platform in promoting intra-regional cooperation. In this regard, Japan attaches importance to the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in the Asia-Pacific Region and intends to continue to support it.

Sharing of experiences between regional institutions can also be an effective and efficient way to implement the PoA. Japan will convene the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, TICAD V, in 2013, and intends to make use of this forum to promote assistance to African States to support their national implementation measures. Keenly aware of the role that the increase in illicit transactions in small arms has played in prolonging conflicts and destabilizing political situations in the region, Japan will continue to provide assistance in such fields as arms collection and destruction and stockpile management. It is Japan's wish to support the self-help efforts of the people of Africa, while drawing some useful lessons from the experiences in this area in the Asian region.
Second, I would like to explain our view on the need to elaborate the follow-up mechanism to the Second Review Conference in order to enhance international efforts to address the issue of small arms and light weapons for the next six-year cycle.

The Review Conference must agree on the programme for the next intersessional meeting for the period leading up to the 2018 Review Conference. It is therefore essential for Member States to discuss areas of priority for the next six-year cycle. After arriving at a common view, we will be able to discuss how and at which fora such prioritized issues can be addressed.

Based on our experience on the ground as well as the recent discussions at the Regional Meeting in Bali, Japan would like to suggest stockpile management and destruction as one of the urgent issues to be tackled in the next six-year cycle. We are ready to discuss further, along with other interested parties, the priorities for the next six-year cycle as well as an effective follow-up mechanism, and to contribute to achieving an outcome for these topics. In order to facilitate the discussion for the follow-up mechanism, Japan will be submitting a working paper for consideration among the Member States.

Madam Chair,

We will extend our full support and make our utmost efforts towards the success of the Second Review Conference, beginning with this Preparatory Committee.

Thank you.