

The People's Republic of China

Positions for the General Assembly First

I. Preventing the Illicit Trade and Circulation of Small Arms to Deter Violence

As an integral part of the global security order, China has an important role in safeguarding world peace and stability. The first decade of the 21st century has witnessed complex and profound changes in the international security landscape with new challenges that require cooperative and multilateral solutions.

China supports international efforts in combating illicit trade in small arms and earnestly implements the United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects¹ and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.²

However, there is still much progress to be made in multilateral arms control. China is not in favor with the recent Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) being forced through voting procedures at the General Assembly. Such actions that avoid consensus may lead to wider differences and even confrontation.³ Neither is it helpful for the effectiveness and universality of the treaty.

China believes the ATT is too complex in scope at this time. As China has stated before, the treaty should be simple, focused, feasible, and should not affect the security of States and their sovereign and legitimate defense needs.⁴ The ATT is currently attempting to be a non-proliferation treaty and an arms trade treaty, while promoting itself as strictly a trade treaty. With regards to the ATT acting as a trade treaty, China believes that the seven categories of conventional weapons, as listed and categorized in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, should be used as the basis in which small arms sold are classified.⁵ China has noted the register of the names and definitions of weapons categories in the ATT are not consistent. China believes that to expand or modify the Register's definitions is irresponsible and ill-advised. The Register is crucial in evaluating the political, security, and defense needs of States, and is broadly recognized by the international community.

As an arms proliferation and control treaty, China is concerned that there are no provisions which regulate the sale and circulation of small arms to non-state actors. China seeks to address these issues cooperatively so a wide consensus can be reached.

The implementation of the ATT should proceed step by step and in an open, transparent and consensual manner. China was an active participant in the process to develop the ATT, most notably through its role in the UN Group of Governmental Experts on an ATT and the Open Ended Working Group. China will remain engaged with all parties on the follow-up work of this Treaty and make joint efforts to build a regulated and reasonable international arms trade order. China supports an ATT that is acceptable to all parties by consensus and favors the treaty's purpose to regulate the arms trade and prevent illicit trade of small arms.

¹ Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, <http://www.un.org/events/smallarms2006/pdf/PoA.pdf>

² International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/Firearms/ITI.pdf>

³ The Arms Trade Treaty, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/2013/04/20130410%2012-01%20PM/Ch_XXVI_08.pdf

⁴ Remarks of Kang Yong, Chairman of the Chinese delegation to the United Nations, http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/att/prepcom2/statements/28Feb_China.pdf

⁵ UN Register of Conventional Arms, <http://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/Register/>

II. Modernizing Disarmament towards Social Development

In the 21st century, a variety of uncertain and unstable factors are on the rise, and international politics and security are undergoing complex and profound changes. The increasing common interests and interdependence in the field of security have bonded all countries to a common destiny.

Every country has the responsibility to make joint efforts to maintain security through cooperation, promote development through stability, and advance international security. China calls upon all countries to embrace a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination, fully respect the legitimate security concerns of other countries and carry out related dialogue and cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual trust.⁶

China is supportive of practical confidence-building measures (CBM) in the field of conventional weapons. China has proactively promoted and participated in international and regional CBMs and disarmament processes. At bilateral level, as well as in multilateral frameworks such as Shanghai Cooperation Organization, ASEAN Regional Forum, and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, China has been working with relevant countries to vigorously explore and practice CBMs aiming at enhancing mutual trust and promoting security.⁷⁸⁹

President Roosevelt of the United States once said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Pertaining to fostering disarmament towards social development, participation in CBMs and disarmament regimes bear very much on the national security of countries. A sense of historical responsibility is thus called for.

This past decade, and most recently, certain states have engaged in unprovoked military endeavors in order to further their respective foreign policy agendas, violating the sovereignty of countries and creating an international atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. The multilateral mechanisms the international community utilizes to promote disarmament and social development have been undermined, and states' confidence in the international community's ability to assure peaceful development has created an attitude of indifference towards disarmament.

China encourages the international community to build mutual trust through political solutions within the framework of the United Nations and has made unremitting efforts to this end. As such, China calls for the international community to reinvigorate and substantiate the United Nations Conference on Disarmament (CD/UNODA). For the past seventeen years the CD has been locked in a stalemate and is in danger of losing its credibility as the decisive, multilateral body which allows States to work in unison towards disarmament.

China always supports the authority and role of the CD as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. The CD successfully concluded various multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. Its membership is highly representative, which reflects the current overall situation in the field of international security and arms control and disarmament. The CD's Rules of Procedure with the consensus principle at the core can protect the legitimate security concerns of the member states. Therefore, the authority and advantages of the CD are irreplaceable.¹⁰

⁶ Statement by the Chinese Delegation at the General Debate of the 2012 Substantive Session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/disarmament_armscontrol/cjhy/t922198.htm

⁷ Shanghai Cooperation Organization, <http://www.sectso.org/EN123/>

⁸ ASEAN Regional Forum, <http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/>

⁹ The Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), <http://www.s-cica.org/page.php?lang=1>

¹⁰ Statement by H.E. Ambassador Wu Haitao at the Plenary of the Conference on Disarmament, 2013/02/05, <http://www.china-un.ch/eng/cjkk/cjthsm/t1011496.htm>