



Committee on UN Affairs  
Item 4

UNC/2013/4-Inf.1  
26 September 2013

**IMPLICATIONS OF AND ACTION ON THE RECENTLY  
ADOPTED ARMS TRADE TREATY**

7 October 2013 (2:30 - 4:30 p.m.)  
Rooms 3 & 4, level O, CICG

Concept note

As documented by the United Nations and partner organizations, millions of people suffer every day from the direct and indirect consequences of a poorly regulated arms trade: thousands are killed, others are injured, many are raped, and/or forced to flee from their homes, while many others have to live under the constant threat of weapons. This fuels conflict, poverty and human rights abuses, which are compounded by the increasing globalization of the arms trade where components are sourced from across the world and production and assembly take place in different countries, sometimes with very few controls.

On 2 April 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted a landmark Arms Trade Treaty, a legally binding international instrument that seeks to regulate the international trade in conventional weapons and establish common standards to assess international weapons transfers. In practice, the Treaty will help prevent weapons transfers in situations where there is evidence that these will lead to grave violations of international human rights, humanitarian law, or will adversely affect sustainable development. In so doing, the Treaty aims to provide a new multilateral framework for transparency and accountability in the arms trade.

Over 75 countries signed the Treaty in the first month since it was opened for signature in early June, with a first ratification registered by Iceland on 2 July. The Treaty will only come into force 90 days after ratification by the 50<sup>th</sup> signatory Member State, which is estimated to occur sometime in the latter part of 2014. Parliaments are called upon to play a pivotal role in both ratification and implementation, adapting national legislation as required, allocating necessary resources and monitoring progress in meeting the commitments undertaken.

The potential impact of the Arms Trade Treaty is far-reaching: fostering peace and security by regulating arms flows to conflict regions, preventing human rights and international law abusers from being supplied with arms, and keeping warlords, pirates, and gangs from acquiring arms. The Treaty will therefore significantly boost efforts to protect women and children in situations of conflict or widespread armed violence. Monitoring mechanisms will also be put in place, as well as assistance programmes to help develop new policy and legislation. As noted by the UN Secretary-General at the signing ceremony in New York, the Arms Trade Treaty will end the "free for all" nature of weapons transfers now that all eyes are on traders, producers and governments in actually observing the rule of law in the area of disarmament.

The panel discussion will review the main provisions of the UN Arms Trade Treaty, examine good practices in better regulating arms flows and identify avenues for parliamentary action aimed at curbing the devastating effects of illegal and irresponsible arms transfers.

Panellists will include:

- Senator María de los Angeles Higonet, National Congress of Argentina;
- Ambassador Peter Woolcott, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations Office at Geneva;
- Mr. Jarmo Sareva, Deputy Secretary General, UN Conference on Disarmament;
- Ms. Nathalie Weizmann, Legal Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross.