

MEDIA RELEASE

30 October, 2009

World Unites To Tackle Global Arms Trade

- **Timetable For Arms Trade Treaty Adopted at UN**
- **Treaty To Be Concluded by July 2012**

NEW YORK: Today, after years of discussions and debates, the United Nations agreed a timetable to establish a “strong and robust” Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) with the “highest common standards” to control international transfers of conventional arms.

There is currently no global regulation of the arms trade. In a major reversal of policy, the US - the world's biggest arms trader – voted in favour of the resolution. Russia and China abstained; Zimbabwe was the only vote against. As a result of the vote, the conference to finalise the Treaty is now scheduled for July 2012.

“This is great news,” said Rebecca Peters, Director of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). “For too long, the world has been complacent about the devastating effect of the unregulated flow of arms.

“All countries participate in the conventional arms trade and share responsibility for the ‘collateral damage’ it produces – widespread death, injuries and human rights abuses,” said Ms Peters. “Finally, governments have agreed to negotiate legal controls on this deadly trade.

“This is a tribute to the hard work done by campaigners around the world. Now we must build on this breakthrough and make sure a strong and effective treaty is agreed in 2012.”

Today's agreement means that the ATT will be negotiated in a series of meetings concluding at a UN Conference in 2012. The resulting treaty is expected to require States to strictly regulate international transfers according to principles based on international law, significantly reducing the human cost associated with the proliferation of conventional arms.

The resolution on the ATT recognizes that international arms transfers contribute to armed conflict, displacement of people, organised crime and terrorism, thereby undermining peace, safety, security and sustainable development.

Campaigners expressed reservations about the procedure planned for the UN Conference which could give every State the right of veto. “It is vital that governments keep up the pressure for a strong treaty, and do not allow a minority of states to block the process,” said Tatiana Moura, from the Observatory on Gender and Armed Violence (OGAV, University of Coimbra, Portugal). “Portugal, as one of the sponsors of the ATT from the early stages, has to maintain its commitment to the process.”

153 countries voted in favour of the resolution, 19 abstained, 1 voted against. A list showing how each country voted at the UN is available at <http://www.iansa.org/un/1com09-results.htm>

Contacts:

- For more information about local activities, contact: Tatiana Moura, tatiana@ces.uc.pt or 351 965241037
- To contact IANSA, call Alastair McKay on +44 20 7065 0875, or +44 79 0024 2869 or email alastair.mckay@iansa.org