

# Concept Note

## “Renewing Commitments on Small Arms and Light Weapons Issues”

13:15-14:15, June 2, 2021

14 May 2021

### 1. Purpose

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) have been famously called the real “weapons of mass destruction” in light of devastation they have caused in many conflicts and to communities and individuals. SALW prolong and intensify conflicts, cause deaths and injuries, hinder humanitarian aid and reconstruction after the end of conflicts and contribute to the recurrence of conflicts. Tens of millions of SALW are in the hands of terrorists, members of organized crime and others. These nefarious actors use SALW to acquire resources and power, creating a vicious cycle of violence. Moreover, in areas where the State is unable to provide security, ordinary citizens seek out weapons to defend and protect themselves.

The proliferation of SALW is a threat to the survival and dignity of human beings and must be addressed through the lens of human security. Taking into consideration this perspective, over the last twenty years, the international community has acted to collect and destroy illegally distributed and excessively accumulated SALW, prevent their illicit flow, and add global regulations to their legal trade.

The Security Council has played an important role in developing initiatives to address the SALW issue. Resolutions 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015) are independent resolutions on the illicit flows of SALW in general. Furthermore, the Security Council has mandated some peacekeeping missions to deal with the issues of SALW as part of "disarmament, demobilization and reintegration" (DDR) process and support host states in addressing the threat posed by the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation, and misuse of SALW.

Japan has been actively contributing to the international efforts against the threat of SALW in cooperation with like-minded countries and the United Nations. In 1995, Japan submitted a draft resolution requesting the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts on the issue. Since 2001, Japan, together with South Africa and Colombia, has taken the lead in cosponsoring a General Assembly resolution on the illicit trade in SALW, and the current 75<sup>th</sup> session has just seen the adoption of the most recent resolution by consensus. Japan has also provided assistance for the fight against SALW in developing countries.

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA). In light of the 7th Biennial Meeting (BMS7) on the PoA scheduled in July for which the Permanent Representative of Kenya has been nominated as a Chair-designate, Japan aims to review the current SALW issues facing the international community and provide an opportunity for preparation for BMS7, with particular focus on the role of the Security Council.

### 2. Seminar Outline

(1) Date and time: 2 June 2021, 13:15-14:15

(2) Format: online

(3) Speakers:

H.E. Kimihiro Ishikane, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Martin Kimani, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations

Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations

Mr. Glenn McDonald, Senior Researcher of Small Arms Survey

(4) Moderator: Ms. Rachel Stohl, Vice President of the Stimson Center