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# LAUNCH OF OXFAM INTERNATIONAL REPORT:

## “Dying for Action: Why We Need An Arms Trade Treaty Now”

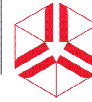
**Attendees:** Approximately 200

**Webcast Participants:** 27

“A globalised trade needs global controls”. This statement could represent the umbrella of the UNU Midday Forum’s event which took place on Wednesday, October 7, in collaboration with Oxfam International and the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The three panelists, addressing three complementary angles of looking at the same issue, have equally tackled the importance and urgent need of an “**Arms Trade Treaty**”.

After an introductory speech by Dr. Coicaud, Director of the United Nations University Office at the UN, New York, the floor was given to H.E. Mr. Paul van den Ijssel, Netherlands Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The panelist said, “Disarmament is back”. The event’s atmosphere has assumed the connotations of a strong advocacy for international control of weapons trade, which should gain political momentum after the September debate at the General Assembly which dealt thoroughly with the disarmament and arms trade issue, so as the US Presidency has recently done too.

The starting point has been the GA resolution 61/89, which started the work towards an ATT. Both H.E. Mr. van den Ijssel and Ms. Debbie Hillier, policy advisor of Oxfam International and the second panelist of the event, have advocated a comprehensive, legally binding instrument that establishes common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. Oxfam report, as Ms. Hillier stated, should commit all the parties of the agreement to the highest standards, clearly setting responsibilities based on two main principles, **negotiation** and **mobilization**.



A shared point of view coming up from the panelists concerned the different attitude that regulators should exhibit towards responsible arms transfers and irresponsible arms transfers. While the first ones can be perceived as a legitimate part of international trade, the second ones contribute negatively fuelling all kinds of conflict and by setting back development. Especially in fragile states, large and uncontrolled quantities of arms may cause slumbering social tensions to spiral out of control.

This point in particular has been approached by the third panelist, Mr. F. Mutuku Nguli, CEO of PeaceNet Kenya, who talked about the impact of weapons trade in Kenya. He pointed out that in specific areas of the country, traditional weapons have been replaced with automatic weapons, which have caused more ferocity and shaped the new scenario, devastating life, destroying families left without breadwinners with children not respecting hierarchies and authority and fighting in tribal and civil wars.

We need normative principles leading the capacity building for peace. Nairobi is becoming a hub for illegal arms and the prices of sophisticated arms vary. But it has been going down in the last years, leading to the reiterated scenario of destroyed families, as in the case of the memory of a person from Kenya brought as a story by Mr. F. Mutuku Nguli.

Millions of dollars are spent in illegal arms, international agencies are searching to prevent it, even though neighboring countries remain the first partners of this illicit trade, moved by the fear that citizens feel when they buy arms in case of a political debacle or coup d'état. These problems have no passports: for example, uncontrolled quantities of arms often lead to uncontrolled transfers of arms to neighboring countries and thereby to an export of insecurity, instability and crime.



We start from a clear and gloom reality, there is **no international regulation on Arm Trade** at the moment, and it is high time to move from discussion to action. We have to take into account two sides of the arms trade, the supply side and the demand side.

We need an urgent and effective Arms Trade Treaty to avoid specifically an abuse of Human Rights and to establish clear common standards for national controls of the international trade in conventional arms. These should be derived from the highest standards contained in already existing agreements, not the lowest. According to the Oxfam report, even though a universal treaty would address the issue of arms trade for all countries worldwide, it would be easily ineffective. We should consider a continuum between universality and effectiveness, taking into account international laws and high standards in a comprehensive treaty, since a universal treaty not affected by internal weakness.

A weak treaty would be worthless and the states should commit themselves to the adoption and implementation of national legislation preventing arms transfers that provoke and exacerbate those conflicts, we have mentioned before, detrimental to human rights, security, stability or development.

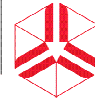
H.E. Mr. van den Ijssel stated that the Netherlands has already moved forward regional agreements at the EU level, but this is not enough. Such original arrangements together form a patchwork with many gaps covering different regions and different aspects. As the President and Founder of the “[Women beyond survival](#)” NGO argued, the vast majority of member states are still guilty of illegal arms trade and the police often cooperate in spreading the violence.

The scope of the ATT is not to avoid but rather control conventional weapons trade and their humanitarian impact on the people. Even though states can still buy and sell weapons for legitimate defense, we still need an effective international Arms Trade Treaty to straighten all of that out, by clearly setting out the full scope of responsibilities that States have under international law and international standards.



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EU has a strict code of conduct, which had success in shaping regionally the trade of arms. There are states with different political and economical interests, but Oxfam is working with the majority of states which cooperate.



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Diplomats have to subscribe for the civil society of both developing and developed countries. The financial aspects have to be taken into account.

UN Headquarters word turtle bay is linked to the Dutch word.

Oxfam

- Security
- Development

ATT are under discussion at the UN, humanitarian imperatives have to be at the heart, based on international standards and laws

- UN warning about weapons in Chad and still arms were brogth in from neighbours countries

We need a strong will, as governments have shown saving and bailing out their financial institutions. Decision time is now, President Obama has shifted the landscape on nuclear weapons and other states are seizing the opportunity. It needs to be done, 2000 die every day due to armed violence.

The UN resolution has to

- Agree to start negotiating in 2010
- Agree to conclude negotiating in 2012
- Agree enough time to negotiate an effective treaty, more time is required.\

We need an army trade treaty to avoid the way things are going now.\



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## Video message

Agreement:

Growing movement of like-minded civil organizations and some countries.

Hope for future

## Q&A

UK delegate: need of detailed negotiations

Indonesia delegate: treaty has to be universal, but time urges and it makes it difficult.

````who should be in charged of the risk assesement?

Comprehensiveness and universality are both important criteria, and have to be balanced.

US has arm agreements with Nato allies, Egypt and other countries, and this should be taken into account by a ATT, even though legitimate trade will not be touched by the ATT.

Arms do not have to be diverted according to the `ATT, which would prevent diversion, the export should be very short avoiding illicit fair.

ATT addresses irresponsible trade, so it should covers both national and international regulation, according to Oxfam (Human Rights Convention etc...)

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A conclusive framework should give a comprehensive treaty by 2012. There still questions on the table, that s why 2012 seems to be a crdibile date for the finalization but we need support.



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