

For immediate release
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Victory for Control Arms Campaign **Overwhelming majority votes at UN to start work on international Arms Trade Treaty**

On Thursday, the majority of the world's governments took the first step towards preventing international arms transfers that fuel conflict, poverty and serious human rights violations. A UN vote to begin work on a comprehensive legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the export, import and transfer of conventional arms saw 139 countries voting yes, with only the United States voting against. Support was particularly strong in Africa, Latin America and Europe.

"This massive vote to develop a global Arms Trade Treaty is an historic opportunity for governments to tackle the scourge of irresponsible and immoral arms transfers. Any credible Treaty must outlaw those transfers which fuel the systematic murder, rape, torture and expulsion of thousands of people," said Kate Gilmore, Amnesty International's Executive Deputy Secretary General.

John Siebert, executive director of Project Ploughshares, said: "the international community has taken an important step towards dealing with the irresponsible trade in arms that feeds war, blocks development and suppresses human rights. We are pleased that Canada was a co-sponsor of this resolution and has shown its commitment to ensuring that future steps will be taken to stop weapons ending up in countries in conflict or where they will be used against innocent civilians."

"This is a victory for the over one million people from 170 countries who joined the Control Arms Campaign," said Robert Fox, executive director of Oxfam Canada. "Because thousands of Canadians spoke up, Canada co-sponsored the resolution. Now we must urge Canada to convert this victory into strong and effective regulation of the deadly trade in weapons."

Since the Control Arms campaign began three years ago, an estimated one million people have been killed by conventional weapons.

Work on the Treaty will begin in early 2007 when the new UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, seeks the view of all UN Member States on the feasibility, scope and draft parameters of the Treaty. He will then submit a report to the General Assembly in late 2007. This will be followed by the establishment by the Secretary General in 2008 of a group of governmental experts from around the world which will examine the issue in detail and report back to the UN General Assembly.

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The Control Arms Campaign is a joint initiative by Amnesty International, Oxfam International and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). It aims to reduce arms proliferation and misuse and to convince governments to introduce global principles to regulate the transfers of weapons and a binding Arms Trade Treaty.