

<http://www.ippnw.org/afp/un-att-2011.html>

**Aiming for**



**Prevention**

## **Conference Report**

**Second Preparatory Meeting of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) New York City February 28- March 4, 2011**

As a member of the Steering Board of the newly reorganized Control Arms Campaign (CAC), IPPNW co-president Dr. Robert Mtonga from Zambia led the delegation that included from the US Cathey Falvo MD, Donald L. Mellman MD, Victor S. Sidel MD, Shannon Gearhart MD, Ashish Sinha, (PSR staff) and Maria Valenti (IPPNW Aiming for Prevention director); Shreedhar Paudel MD, Nepal; Omolade Oladejo Dorcas MD, Chukwuemeka A. Okolo MD, and Ogebe Onazi MD, from Nigeria; Michael Schober MD, Austria; and Eline van Schaik, Netherlands.

The team participated with other members of the CAC to develop momentum for a global and legally-binding, human-rights-centered Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). IPPNW members engaged in a range of activities to bring a health message to the ATT week-long proceedings. They met with members of various delegations including the US, Austria and Nigeria; participated in a range of Control Arms and NGO side meetings; participated in Control Arms strategy sessions; and contributed public health points to NGO presentations. By week's end, according to Baffour Aboa, spokesperson for the CAC, "This week, governments took a big step towards the establishment of a robust treaty to regulate the international arms trade. Despite serious efforts by some states to derail or weaken the process, we are now beginning to see a principled treaty take shape."

IPPNW presented the side panel *Control the Arms Trade: Improve Human and Environmental Health*, co-sponsored by the country of Zambia. The panelists addressed how a robust ATT can help promote health and reduce environmental contamination.

The session was moderated by Dr. Victor Sidel. Panelist Dr. Michael Schober discussed the need for North/South cooperation to reduce gun violence and presented examples of how IPPNW works globally to mobilize health professionals to engage in peacebuilding and citizen diplomacy. Dr. Donald Mellman addressed the crisis of leadership that has led to a health crisis in armed violence. Dr. Cathey Falvo focused on a lesser known dimension of

the arms trade — how competition for environmental resources can foster conflict, and how conflict can have devastating effects on environmental health. The panel concluded with testimony from Dr. Mtonga who related three “one bullet stories” about the human consequences and suffering arising from arms use. Dr. Mtonga’s experiences with the victims of armed violence led him to remark that he was “fed up with mopping the floors while the taps are running.” His work in Zambia and elsewhere have helped to quantify economic and social costs to countries struggling with competing needs for health care and development dollars.

IPPNW Nigeria’s Dr. Ogebe Onazi provided a passionate account of physician’s perspective on armed violence and development as part of a panel sponsored by IANSA, Amnesty International, and the Mission of Norway, Saving Lives: Preventing Gun Violence Through the Arms Trade Treaty. He was later approached by a documentary filmmaker who is interested in developing a film inspired by his presentation.