

Arms Trade Treaty First Conference of State Parties

High-level Segment

Monday 24 August 2015

Opening Statement of Australia

To be delivered by Ambassador John Quinn, Australian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Geneva and Ambassador for Disarmament.

Mr President, Ministers, Excellencies and other distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

Let me first join others in expressing Australia's deep appreciation for the generous hospitality and excellent arrangements Mexico has extended as host of this First Conference of States Parties. Let me also pay tribute to Mexico, especially Ambassador Lomonaco for its diligence and tireless effort over the last 12 months in chairing the preparatory process and providing the provisional secretariat for the Treaty.

Australia is proud of our sustained contribution, over many years, and in collaboration with so many others, including civil society, to achieve this historic milestone of the ATT. As you have noted Mr President, my predecessor, Peter Woolcott, chaired the final negotiating conference which gave us the Treaty – a strong, balanced and effective text.

We have continued to work hard in preparatory meetings, including as co-facilitator with Ghana on financial rules, to establish a prudent and effective functional architecture for the ATT.

With regard to the establishment of the Secretariat, Australia considers that the fundamental guiding principle should be effective implementation of the Treaty. In accordance with Article 18.3 of the ATT, which calls for a “minimised structure” for the Secretariat, we envisage a small, lean Secretariat, operating as cost-effectively as possible. We recognise the possible cost advantages in having the Secretariat housed

within an existing UN or other multilateral structure while remaining an independent body, responsible to States Parties.

Mr President, preventing instability, and promoting security and economic development, especially in our regional neighbourhood, are high priorities for Australia. Preventing the diversion and misuse of conventional arms is crucial to achieving stability and enabling development. Effective national regulation, as required by the Arms Trade Treaty, will help stop illicit trafficking and safeguard legitimate trade.

States Parties from the Asia Pacific still comprise a small group, as UN Under Secretary-General Kim Won-soo has highlighted this morning. Australia is thus keen to promote a dialogue on the benefits of the ATT amongst our near neighbours, and its application in their specific national jurisdictions. We are heartened to see delegations from signatory states in our region: *The Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Bangladesh* and *Kiribati, Tuvalu*, as well as observers from *Vietnam, Fiji, Papua New Guinea* here in Cancun.

Australia is committed to assisting States to implement the ATT as part of an effective national trade control framework. We have so far contributed \$2.2 million to the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) to support implementation of the ATT and UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We have provided significant sponsorship to enable developing countries to attend preparatory meetings, regional workshops, and indeed this First Conference. Australia has also provided funding to civil society collaborators on the ATT to: Control Arms' ATT Monitor Project; the Stimson Centre's Baseline Assessment Project; and the Small Arms Survey. We are determined to sustain this commitment to assist other with ATT implementation.

In conclusion, Mr President, Australia has been a significant player in the ATT story so far. Today I can assure you that we will continue our sustained practical diplomacy, including at this historic conference, as well as providing targeted concrete assistance to enable this historic Treaty to achieve its full human and security potential