



Samoa's Statement:
Delivered by,
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Mr. President,

Samoa would like to join others in congratulating you on your leadership over the past year and to the Bureau and Secretariat for their dedication and hard work in support of the ATT as well as the preparations for this meeting. We also thank the Government of Japan for being generous hosts of this first meeting of the Conference of the State Parties to be held in our Asia Pacific region.

Mr. President,

Samoa is a party to the ATT because we are convinced of its important contribution to maintaining peace and security and upholding the rule of law. Our Pacific Forum Leaders have noted with extreme concern the availability throughout the Pacific of guns and small arms and light weapons, which have been used to fuel and exacerbate violence and conflict and to inflict harm upon the vulnerable, in particular women. The rise in the number of reported cases on the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in our region, indicates the threat is real. Given our extensive but vulnerable borders, small populations and limited human and financial resources, we continue to face challenges in countering the illicit trade of these weapons, and in controlling its negative consequences to our people. Therefore, the implementation of the ATT is more critical now given the threats illicit arm flows can have on our stability and its negative impacts on our sustainable development efforts.

Mr President,

As one of the first Pacific Small Island Developing States to sign and ratify the ATT, Samoa remains fully committed to the implementation of the treaty. Last year the Samoan Parliament passed the Conventional Arms Act 2017 which is critical to regulating trade in the weapons and our implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. We also acknowledge the link of addressing the illicit trade of these weapons to the local, regional, and international implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG16 on promoting peace and security. This connection was highlighted in a meeting organised this year by the Parliamentarians for Global Action in Apia. The Regional Parliamentary Workshop focused on Improving Compliance with the UN Programme of Action in Addressing The Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and the meeting adopted a plan of action where the parliamentarians also encouraged support for ratification and implementation of international treaties such as the ATT.

The Samoan Police have called a gun amnesty in October, three years after a 2015 amnesty. This will encourage civilians to register firearms and to also destroy all illegal small arms and light weapons collected by police. A regional approach with the cooperation of other Pacific countries remains the most effective and efficient way for us to combat the problem. The importance of enhanced regional security cooperation was highlighted at the recent regional meeting held in Apia this month of the Forum Foreign Ministers.

Despite progress made, challenges remain for Samoa as a small island state in the implementation of the ATT in terms of human, technical and financial resources. Capacity building is very much needed to fulfil reporting and treaty implementation obligations. Therefore we identified the importance of streamlining arms data collection and reporting to effectively implement the ATT, and submitted a project proposal to the Voluntary Trust Fund.

Samoa takes this opportunity to acknowledge the financial assistance and the voluntary contributions that have enabled the establishment of the Voluntary Trust Fund by state parties for the purpose of assisting states to implement the ATT. We commend the work of the VTF selection committee and the Secretariat. We look forward to the implementation of our approved project, in partnership with the CAVR, which will aim to improve the capacity of Samoan officials on information and database management and reporting on the import/export of arms under the scope of the ATT; Implement an automated and centralised data collection and reporting system; and improve interagency coordination on reporting.

Mr. President,

Samoa understands that the universalization of the ATT will continue to strengthen its applicability and would continue to use all opportunities possible to encourage countries especially from the Pacific that have yet to sign up and ratify the Treaty to do so. Samoa was pleased to participate at the Pacific Conference on Conventional Weapons Treaties held in Auckland which was sponsored by Australia and New Zealand and supported by the Conventional Weapons based Secretariats– the ATT, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Convention on Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). This was an important opportunity to share and exchange experiences with other countries and partners on ATT implementation and highlight some of our challenges. The meeting also recognized that the ATT's requirements to strengthen transfer controls and prevent the diversion of arms have a direct contribution to our Forum Leaders' vision of the Pacific, as a region of peace, harmony, security and economic prosperity.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by acknowledging the support rendered through the sponsorship program managed by the UNDP which has enabled Samoa's continuous

participation at the important meetings of the Conference of the Parties including this one. We look forward to contributing to the important proceedings in the next couple of days.

I thank you.