



**Statement by H.E. Dell Higgle
Ambassador for Disarmament**

**Third Conference of States Parties to
the Arms Trade Treaty**

**General Debate
11 September 2017**

Thank you Mr President,

May I begin by congratulating you on your Presidency of the Arms Trade Treaty over the past year and for the commitment Finland has shown in its preparation for this, the Third Conference of States Parties to our Treaty.

New Zealand is pleased that membership of the Arms Trade Treaty has continued to grow over the past year: we welcome Monaco, Guatemala, Madagascar, Cabo Verde, Benin, Republic of Korea and Honduras as new States Parties since our last Conference.

Expanding the reach of the Arms Trade Treaty and promoting its global implementation remains of fundamental importance to New Zealand. In promoting this, our primary focus will continue to be on our own part of the world - the Pacific. In this regard, we were pleased to sponsor the Pacific Capacity-Building Workshop for Implementation of the ATT which took place in September 2016 in Apia, Samoa, and which we supported in conjunction with Australia and the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD). The three-day workshop focused on issues relating to implementation of the ATT; the steps, benefits and challenges of joining the ATT; and the broader relevance of the Treaty for the Pacific Region.

Following on from this Workshop, New Zealand has continued to work with our partners in the region to take forward the priorities which were identified at the meeting. Earlier this year, we were very pleased to launch the Model ATT Control List, the development of which was done

with the assistance of our valued civil society partner, Control Arms. The Control List is intended to simplify, for small States, the task of developing the control system required by Article 5(2) of the Treaty. In conjunction with the ATT Model Law which was developed by New Zealand and the Small Arms Survey together in 2013, we hope that we have been able to develop and make available the fundamental elements of an ATT toolkit which advances the prospects of its implementation whilst responding to the particular challenges and priorities of the Pacific.

Similarly to that end, New Zealand has been pleased to be able to provide funding this year to the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF). We targeted this primarily for use in the Pacific (whilst also making some funds available for VTF projects in other regions). As a member of the Selection Committee of the VTF, and under the excellent chairmanship of Germany, New Zealand has been impressed with the range and quality of the projects submitted to the Fund in this first year of its operation. We very much look forward to seeing the results of the implementation of these various projects, and to receiving the next tranche of projects which will be submitted for funding next year.

At this point, could I place on record, Mr President, New Zealand's gratitude for the exceptional way in which the ATT Secretariat has supported the work of the VTF over the past year. We are very conscious that its provision of outstanding administrative and analytical support to the Selection Committee, as well as its willingness to provide additional assistance to States preparing their applications, has ensured the effective operation of the Fund but has put considerable strain on the Secretariat's human resources. We hope to be able to secure a sustainable solution to this resourcing issue when all our delegations consider matters pertaining to the Secretariat later this week.

Looking forward, Mr President, New Zealand can commit to remaining an active advocate of the Arms Trade Treaty. We take seriously our pledge, given at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul last year, to champion the Treaty in the Pacific. With this in mind, and with the support of our friend and neighbour Australia, we intend to host a Pacific Conference in February next year in Auckland, New Zealand. This Conference will bring together representatives from all our neighbouring

Pacific Islands with a view to improving universalisation and implementation of a number of conventional weapon-related treaties in our region - and, in particular, of the Arms Trade Treaty. We look forward to updating colleagues as our plans develop and we will welcome the involvement of any here who might like to support our efforts.

New Zealand will also continue its work to ensure Pacific representation at ATT meetings in Geneva and in this regard were pleased to provide a contribution to the Sponsorship Programme this year to enable the attendance of Pacific delegates here. We have also sought to ensure that the Terms of Reference for the various ATT Working Groups facilitate involvement by delegations not able to be physically present in Geneva.

Against that backdrop, Mr President, New Zealand hopes that this Conference will be able to rectify what we see as an anomaly with regard to one aspect of the ATT's governance regime: the geographical basis for appointments to the ATT Management Committee.

It has come recently to our attention that, according to one possible interpretation of the Terms of Reference of the Management Committee, New Zealand (and also Australia) are considered to be part of the Western European and Other Group. In contrast, for the purposes of geographical representation on the Bureau, both our countries are viewed as part of the Asia/Pacific group (and each of our countries has indeed served, in turn, as the Vice-President for Asia-Pacific). As an active advocate for the ATT in the Pacific, and aware that UN voting groups have no relevance for the work of our Treaty, we would expect a *consistent* geographical approach to be taken to our participation in ATT institutions.

Institutional and governance structures have to be correct, Mr President, and they need to be right. But it is New Zealand's hope that future CSPs, now that we have so much of the initial and necessary framing of ATT institutions and processes in place, will be able to turn increasing attention to ways in which we can promote full implementation of the Treaty and reap its humanitarian and security dividend.

Thank you, Mr President.