



Arms Trade Treaty 5th Conference of States Parties

Geneva 26-30 August 2019

Australia – General Debate Statement

Mr President

May I extend my sincere appreciation to you and your staff for the making the arrangements for this meeting and extend my best wishes for the success of this meeting. My delegation and I stand ready to assist you.

The Arms Trade Treaty has already made a significant difference to the pursuit of peace, security, development and human rights.

The Arms Trade Treaty envisioned a global network of States Parties enforcing the highest possible common international standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms. The effect of which would be the prevention and eradication of the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevention of their diversion.

It is this vision that motivates us. And it is this potential that underpins Australia's commitment to the Arms Trade Treaty.

We welcome all new States Parties since the last Conference of States Parties – Botswana, Canada, Guinea Bissau, Lebanon, Mozambique, Palau and Suriname.

It is only through universalisation that the Arms Trade Treaty will reach its full potential. And we call on all States Parties to take opportunities as they present themselves to explain the value of the treaty to other countries – particularly those countries with large arms export industries. Participation of these countries would bolster the Arms Trade Treaty, significantly increasing its impact.

Australia funded the Centre for Armed Violence Reduction to produce the “Reinvigorating the Narrative: the Broader Benefits of the Arms Trade Treaty”.

I commend it to you as a tool for promoting the Arms Trade Treaty. You can find it on the Centre for Armed Violence Reduction website.

Australia continued to promote the Arms Trade Treaty throughout the year. We conducted an outreach campaign in the Indo-Pacific, which included providing material to countries about the broader benefits of the Arms Trade Treaty and co-hosting, with New Zealand, a conference in Brisbane. It was pleasing that Palau from our region has ratified the treaty.

Australia supports the work of the Arms Trade Treaty both directly and indirectly

- We made a financial contribution to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation – UNSCAR - by making a financial contribution and by our membership of the Strategic Planning Group
- We also support the work of the Arms Trade Treaty itself
 - We make a financial contribution to the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund and sit on its selection committee
 - We also make a financial contribution to the Sponsorship Programme
- We partnered with New Zealand to host a Arms Trade Treaty Conference in Brisbane for South East Asian and South Pacific countries in late February - early March 2019, and
- We conducted an outreach campaign in the Indo-Pacific, which included providing material to countries about the broader benefits of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Australia has been working hard to implement the Arms Trade Treaty. We have reviewed some of our internal processes to ensure our arms transfer assessments are consistently of a high standard. We are also considering ways to harness artificial intelligence and information sharing so that our assessments are based on the most current and high quality information available, including incorporating gender considerations.

Mr President, we are very much looking forward to engaging with our colleagues during this conference and learning about their experiences of implementing this treaty.

Thank you.