



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

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

**Thematic Discussion on Gender and  
Gender-Based Violence  
26 September 2019**

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Mr President,

New Zealand joins in congratulating you on your Presidency of the Arms Trade Treaty and thanks you for the commitment and focus you have brought to your term in office and, in particular, to your thematic work on gender-based violence. We welcome your draft decision paper and the concrete outcomes it puts forward across all aspects of the gender-based violence issue, including with respect to the key Treaty provisions of Articles 6 and 7.

The gendered impact of armed violence and conflict will continue to be an issue of great importance to New Zealand. We are very grateful for the presentations from the high-level speakers this morning and for the insights they have provided on the gender-based impact of the arms trade in so many turbulent parts of the world.

These presentations highlight only too well the need to ensure that States Parties give appropriate expression in their decision-making on arms transfers to the assessment of risk of gender-based violence pursuant to Article 7.4. In this regard, we strongly endorse the value of a better understanding of the practicalities of this assessment in order to better position all States Parties to meet their obligations under this provision and believe it may prove very helpful to have a voluntary manual on the issues of gender-based violence - including best practices for risk assessment.

States Parties to the Treaty need to be assessing – as part of their standard export control decision-making process – any risks of gender-based violence. Should there be a real indication of a prospect of the weapon under review being used to perpetrate gender-based violence, it would seem very surprising to us that the particular transfer should be approved.

More generally as States Parties, Mr President, we should all be alert to promoting, in the particular context of the ATT, processes that facilitate the role which women can play in advancing peace and security. Women's role in promoting peaceful societies is something which is recognised also in the Sustainable Development Goals.

I note that last week, in pursuit of this important objective, New Zealand and our ATT neighbour, Samoa, co-hosted a Women, Peace and Security Summit in Apia. This Summit built upon the key UN Security Council Resolutions on the topic (1325 and 1889) in the spirit of our region's Boe Declaration on Regional Security.

Consistent, with our broader 'women, peace and security' goals, New Zealand remains interested in mainstreaming gender issues and looks forward to further work within the ATT on the theme you have highlighted during your Presidency of gender-based violence.