



**Samoa's Statement:**

**Delivered by**

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**Fifth Conference of the State Parties for Arms Trade Treaty**

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Mr. President,

Please allow me, on behalf of my country Samoa, to congratulate you on your leadership over the past year and to the Bureau and the Secretariat for their hard work in preparing for this meeting.

Mr. President,

Samoa is a party to the Arms Trade Treaty because we are convinced of its important contribution to maintaining peace and security and upholding the rule of law. Although we are a small island developing country with no military force and an unarmed police force, we recognise that having arms in the wrong hands can easily lead to instability and more violence. We have and continue to experience this in the Pacific whereby arms have fueled violence, supported illegal activities, disrupted peace in our communities, and inflicted harm upon the vulnerable, in particular women. We therefore see the ATT as a mechanism to address these issues.

Although Samoa and the Pacific region as a whole suffers minimally from large-scale arms trafficking compared to other regions; because of our limited human and financial resources, and vulnerable borders, we still face challenges in countering the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, and in controlling its negative consequences to our people.

Capacity building and international assistance is therefore necessary for SIDS like Samoa to fulfil treaty implementation and reporting obligations. To this end, Samoa would like to acknowledge the financial assistance and the voluntary contributions by state parties to the Voluntary Trust Fund. The importance of data collection as part of Samoa's efforts in the implementation of the Treaty is one of the reasons why we chose to focus our VTF project on streamlining data collection and the reporting of arms. The project, in partnership with the Centre of Armed Violence Reduction and currently in its final phase, also aims to improve the capacity of Samoan officials as well as interagency coordination in the work of implementing the ATT. We also acknowledge the contribution of training courses such as the Geneva Centre for Security Policy Course on Implementation of the ATT held in April, in building the capacities of our government agencies.

Samoa understands that the universalization of the ATT will continue to strengthen its applicability and contribute to strengthening national, regional and global security. This is why we have taken up opportunities whenever possible to encourage countries, particularly from the Pacific, that have yet to sign up to and ratify the Treaty to do so. We continue to ensure we meet our reporting obligations and we have since submitted our ATT annual report for 2018.

While Samoa continues to invest in strengthening its border control measures, individually there can only be limited success. 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 is highlighted in the Boe Declaration on Regional Security that was endorsed by Pacific Forum Leaders in 2018. The Boe Declaration recognizes an expanded concept of security which also looks at climate change and environmental security and human security which is linked to Gender based violence.

Mr. President,

Samoa recognises the important link between addressing the illicit trade of

weapons and the realization of the SDGs, in particular SDG16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. This connection was highlighted last week during the Women, Peace and Security Summit held in Apia, Samoa which was co-hosted by the Governments of Samoa and New Zealand. The advancement of the UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security Agenda relies on the achievement of SDGs on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls and having a peaceful and inclusive society. Samoa therefore welcomes the focus on the theme of Gender and Gender based Violence during this Conference. Gender based violence is seen as one of the key security threats in our national security policy and all efforts including through our national implementation of the ATT help to address this issue. We recognize the threat of the increase in number of illegal firearms and our efforts on this include the Gun Amnesty Programme 2018-2019 that the Ministry of Police undertook.

Mr. President,

I conclude by acknowledging the support of the sponsorship program which has enabled Samoa's continuous participation at important meetings of the ATT including its Conference of the Parties. We look forward to playing our part in the successful conclusion of the Conference in the coming days.

I thank you.

