Mr Chairman

Illegally traded, poorly managed and misused conventional arms and ammunition fuel both armed conflict and other forms of armed violence.

Armed violence is a serious impediment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including poverty reduction and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

The SDGs recognise the impact that an unregulated arms trade has on sustainable development. SDG Target 16.4 calls expressly for the reduction in illicit arms flows by 2030. Preventing instability, and promoting security
and economic development, especially in our Indo-Pacific region, are high priorities for Australia.

Mr Chairman,

Australia remains strongly committed to advancing the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We realise that states currently outside the Treaty have legitimate questions about what is in the Treaty for them – why should they bother joining and taking on the obligations this will entail?

This week, Australia will host the New York launch of a compendium on the broader benefits of participation in the ATT, which include how the Treaty can support efforts to promote human, national, regional and international security, facilitate the implementation of the SDGs and collaboration on other global challenges.

We hope this compendium, titled “Reinvigorating the narrative: the broader benefits of the Arms Trade Treaty”, will be a useful tool in demonstrating to all states the advantages of participation. We encourage states that have not done so already to ratify or accede to the Treaty.

Mr Chairman

Australia is also committed to strengthening the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons at its Third Review Conference in 2018.

Australia is a leading donor to the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) and the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund, which
support implementation of the ATT and UN Programme of Action as well as conventional arms regulation initiatives around the globe.

Mr Chairman

The Australian Government remains committed to mine action, and to supporting the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and Amended Protocol II and Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. This year Australia provided five million Australian Dollars in funding for demining activities in Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, Cambodia, Laos and Palau. But there is still much to be done to achieve the goals of completing clearance and stockpile destruction efforts by 2025 and 2030 under the Mine Ban Convention and Cluster Munitions Conventions respectively.

There also remain significant challenges in countering the indiscriminate use and effects of IEDs. We support continuing efforts to develop national and international measures to combat IED production and use. We have also supported the development of the IED Threat Mitigation Guidelines for peacekeeping operations and the IED Disposal Standards. We hope that Member States will support this year’s IED resolution put forward by Afghanistan, Australia and France.

We encourage states to address the needs of the victims of these munitions, which remain long after conflicts and clearance cease. Both affected States and donors should put measures in place to ensure the sustainability of victim assistance.
The annual meetings and review conferences of the Mine Ban Convention, Cluster Munitions Convention and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons provide vital opportunities for ensuring the momentum of these conventions is sustained. These conventions do not cost huge sums to run, but the work they promote make an enormous difference to the lives of people and communities affected. We thus urge all States Parties in arrears to clear their debts. As Sponsorship Coordinator for the Mine Ban Convention, we also encourage States Parties in a position to do so to contribute to sponsorship programmes, to enable all States Parties to attend relevant conferences.

Finally, we encourage states to redouble their efforts towards universalisation and implementation of international instruments in the field of conventional weapons.

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