Mr President,

Pursuant to operative paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 67/234 of 24 December 2012, it is an honour as President of the Final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty to report on the outcome of the Conference to the General Assembly. This report, which will be made available on the website of the Final Conference, should be considered in conjunction with the report of the Final Conference which was adopted on the evening of Thursday 28 March 2013 and contained in document A/CONF.217/2013/2.

Since my endorsement as President-designate of the Final Conference at the informal consultation in New York on 20 November 2012 and throughout the Final Conference itself, I articulated a single goal for the Final Conference – an open and transparent process towards a consensus outcome on an Arms Trade Treaty which, if implemented, would make a difference by reducing human suffering and saving lives.

It is unfortunate that the Final Conference could not fully achieve this goal. On Thursday 28 March, I ruled that there was not a consensus in the Final Conference for the adoption of the negotiated treaty text contained in the annex of document A/CONF.217/2013/L.3 due to the objections of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Nevertheless, this result should not diminish what was achieved at the Final Conference, nor the efforts of delegations since the final day of the July 2012 Conference in working hard to bridge differences and achieve an Arms Trade Treaty. Our open and transparent process at the Final Conference was conducive to that end.

Mr President,

From December 2012, I conducted a series of consultations – in New York and Geneva, as well as Addis Ababa, Beijing, Brussels, Cairo, Mexico City, Moscow, New Dehli, Paris, Port of Spain and Washington, – listening to the views of governments in bilateral, regional, group and open-ended meetings. Throughout my consultations, I was clear about how the process would be conducted and I offered no surprises. We set an ambitious program of work for the Final Conference and together we implemented it. At the core of that program of work were three reviews of the treaty text leading to the three draft treaty texts, introduced in accordance with the
program of work to the Final Conference respectively on 20 March, 22 March and 27 March. Meeting these deadlines would not have been possible without the commitment of all delegations to this process. Each text built on the previous draft and represented a fair expression of negotiation, compromise between many different interests in the room, and ultimately what might command consensus at the end of the Final Conference.

The process had two key elements designed to ensure first that views could be narrowed in a negotiating setting, and secondly that there would be confidence in legal quality of the final product. I am indebted to the cross-regional group of facilitators who led delegations through complex issues sometimes late into the night; they were invaluable for the negotiating process. They are set out in the report of the Final Conference, but I want to pay tribute to them here again individually:

Ambassador Mari Amano of Japan on brokering;
Ambassador Paul Beijer of Sweden on scope;
Dr. Roberto Dondisch of Mexico on diversion;
Mr. Bouchaib Eloumni of Morocco on preamble, principles, and object and purpose;
Ambassador Dell Higgie of New Zealand on general implementation and relationship with other international agreements;
Ambassador Paul van den IJssel of the Netherlands on record-keeping and reporting;
Ambassador Frederico Perazza of Uruguay on final provisions;
Mr. Zahid Rastam of Malaysia on transit or trans-shipment;
Ambassador Riitta Resch of Finland on other considerations;
Ms. Shorna Kay Richards and Ms. Michelle Walker of Jamaica on prohibitions; and
Mr. Rob Wensley of South Africa on international cooperation and international assistance.

The cross-regional drafting committee under the leadership of Vice Minister Juan Manuel Gomez Robledo of Mexico which represented all UN official languages and various legal traditions helped to standardize the text and ensure that it was of the high legal standard.

But ultimately, all delegations came together during the Final Conference, working hard and negotiating in a constructive manner and looking for success. The different interests and perspectives in this room required us to work through complex issues. The commitment of delegations across the arc of negotiation was truly impressive; they wanted a strong outcome.

In the end, the Final Conference came very close to success; the final draft text is a compromise text which represents the broadest possible input of delegations. That text would make a difference to the broadest range of stakeholders: it would establish new common international standards in the conventional arms trade; it would also establish a forum, the Conference of
States Parties, for transparency and accountability. That text would make an important difference by reducing human suffering and saving lives.

Mr President,

In looking back, I must recognize the contribution of my predecessor, Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan of Argentina, whose work and tireless efforts allowed the Final Conference to have a firm basis for its work.

I also want to recognize the role of civil society who have brought their energy, their dogged advocacy and their sheer hard work to this whole process over many years.

I thank the Bureau of the Final Conference for its strong support and wise advice. I thank the Secretary-General, High Representative Angela Kane and the Secretary-General of the Conference, Daniel Prins, for their commitment to this process. I also thank the Secretariat staff who supported the work of the Final Conference: from the political officers of the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs, to the Secretary and the conference services staff, the legal advisers, the interpreters, the document translators who did some great work in the final days of the Final Conference, the technical officers and the security staff. This was a team effort.

Finally, I thank my team who were tireless: Claire Elias, Namdi Payne, Guy Pollard, Rachel Stohl, Emily Street and Paul Wilson.

In closing, I wish to thank all participants in the Final Conference for their hard work and dedication to the Arms Trade Treaty. It has been my honour and privilege to work with them during this process. With this report, my role as President of the Final Conference ends. But as Australian Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, I look forward to working with delegations into the future as we strive together to bring into force and implement an Arms Trade Treaty.

I thank you, Mr President.