Thank you Mr Chair,

I am with the Surviving Gun Violence Project, a member of IANSA. I would like to add to the remarks made earlier in the week by the delegate of my country, Australia.

As he said, 2016 marks twenty years since the massacre at Port Arthur and the reform of our country’s gun laws. The Port Arthur tragedy tipped the balance, after a decade of campaigning for the reforms by our civil society coalition.

Australia’s gun buyback, amnesty, surrender and destruction program is the world’s largest, and most successful reduction ever achieved in the firearm stockpile of any nation.

In total, we have destroyed over one million guns. This was probably one-quarter to one-third of the entire civilian arsenal. No other nation has ever attempted anything on this scale.

The buyback was accompanied by comprehensive reform to the gun laws. These laws made it more difficult to qualify to possess guns, banned semi-automatic rifles and shotguns, and imposed conditions on storage. Domestic violence perpetrators were banned from having guns for at least five years.

As a result, we have never had another one of those public mass shootings. And deaths by firearms have dropped by around half.

Nowadays the risk of dying by gunshot in Australia – whether by homicide, suicide or unintentional shooting – is one-tenth of the rate in the USA. Considering gun homicide specifically, the rate in Australia is 25 times lower than in the USA.

Mr Chair, Australia’s experience over the past 20 years shows what can be achieved by carefully conceived, properly executed gun law reform. The key is to be comprehensive – not simply to tweak one or two aspects of the regulatory scheme.

We hope Australia’s experience can also serve to inform and support other countries’ efforts to reduce the devastating health, social and economic damage caused by gun violence.

Thank you.