Mr President,

May I start by paying tribute to you and your team for your comprehensive and inclusive efforts to advance our work in the CD and also ultimately your wisdom in managing your Presidency.

Mr President,

I welcome this opportunity to offer some brief words on the issue of transparency in armaments. In the last couple of months, the international community has taken an important step forward on one aspect of transparency through the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty on 2 April in New York by an overwhelming majority of UN Member States from all regions.

The need for a better regulated and more transparent and hence accountable international arms trade has long been recognized and the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty is the fulfilment of years of work by both governments and non-governmental organizations toward this goal.

At the same time, we should recognize that the hard work begins now. We need to implement the Treaty to ensure that it has a genuine impact where it is needed. The Treaty on paper is strong, but in the end what will count, what will make a difference, is how it is implemented.

The next step is entry into force and therefore Australia strongly encourages States to sign the Treaty on 3 June when it opens for signature in New York or as early as possible thereafter.

The Arms Trade Treaty will set new international standards as well as provide a forum for transparency and accountability in the conventional arms trade. These are all long overdue. So it is important that we maintain momentum behind the Treaty, and that we now collectively focus on its earliest entry into force.

I thank you, Mr President.