



**Statement by H.E. Dell Higginson  
Ambassador for Disarmament**

**Fourth Conference of States Parties to the  
Arms Trade Treaty**

**General Debate**

**20 August 2018**

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Mr President,

At the outset please allow me to congratulate you on Japan's Presidency of the Arms Trade Treaty and on your efforts to ensure an Asia-Pacific emphasis to our Treaty's global span, in particular by hosting us here in Tokyo.

New Zealand is very pleased that support for the ATT continues to grow with the "Sprint to 100" campaign bringing us ever closer to triple figures in the number of States Parties. In this regard, we congratulate and warmly welcome Cameroon, Chile, the State of Palestine, Kazakhstan and Brazil on having joined the ATT family since the last Conference of States Parties.

For our own part, New Zealand's primary focus over the past year has been on promoting support for the ATT in our immediate region of the Pacific. Of particular note, was our hosting of 13 other Pacific countries at a Conference in Auckland earlier this year focused on the ATT. It was co-sponsored by our close neighbour Australia and attended also by the ATT Secretariat, the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society including Control Arms.

Our Pacific colleagues all acknowledged at our Auckland Conference that the ATT has the potential to be one of the most important normative developments of our time – the Treaty's requirements to strengthen transfer controls and prevent the diversion of arms have a direct contribution to make to the vision our Pacific Leaders have of our region

as one of peace, harmony, security and economic prosperity. Although few Pacific Island States *export* (and indeed few *import*) arms, the region is vulnerable to their *diversion* and there is a general determination that the region not be a hub for the illicit trade in small arms.

My Delegation will speak in more detail on our activities in the Pacific, as well as elsewhere, under the agenda item on ATT universalisation but I wish to note here our strong support for two very important tools that are available to assist States in joining and fully implementing the ATT. One is the **ATT Voluntary Trust Fund**. New Zealand was pleased to have given an additional contribution of NZ\$65,000 to the Fund this year and we are pleased, too, to have served on the Committee responsible for allocating the Fund's money (and we are certainly interested in continuing our membership of the VTF Selection Committee). New Zealand also recognises the vital role the **ATT Sponsorship Programme** plays in facilitating States' knowledge of, and engagement with, the Treaty and we are delighted that our contribution to the Fund this year has been able to support the participation of a number of Pacific Island Delegations here in Tokyo.

Mr President,

As we are all well aware, the success of a treaty cannot be measured simply by the extent of its membership, or by the number of participants in its meetings. The real success of a treaty lies in its progress toward realisation of its object and purpose. The yardstick of greatest importance, then, in assessing the value of a treaty will always be the extent and impact of its implementation.

It is clear from the many excellent sessions and reports from the various ATT Working Groups that there is considerable effort being directed at attainment of the Treaty's dual objectives of establishing the highest possible common standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms, and preventing and eradicating the illicit trade in conventional arms. States have exchanged views extensively on the establishment and operation of national authorities and on their respective legislation and control lists. Some have shared 'best practices' while

others have highlighted the very real challenges they face and the assistance they need.

There can be no doubt that these exchanges are very valuable – particularly if, in making our respective presentations to the WGETI and other Working Groups, we retain a focus also on the bigger picture underlying our Treaty and the ambitions we all hold for its outcomes ‘on the ground’. Technical discussions on national legislation, policy and infrastructure must not be ends in themselves – they must be motivated by our wish that we all make transfer decisions that contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability; that reduce human suffering; and promote responsible action in the international trade in conventional arms.

New Zealand is keen to explore with others how it is that these three drivers, set out in Article 1 of the ATT, can be given the central focus they deserve in our work. In this regard, we have particularly welcomed Sweden’s information-sharing initiative (as Coordinator on Articles 6 and 7 in the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation) and look forward to considering how their initiative might be utilised more broadly to advance Article 1. We echo the comment made earlier this morning by the representative of the ICRC that we still do have a long way to go in implementation of the ATT.

We agree also with the observation in the ATT Monitor from our valued civil society partner, Control Arms, that there is an important educational and normative effect when States Parties make clear the basis upon which they decline arms transfers. We look forward to discussing over the coming intersessional period possible avenues for advancing this useful suggestion.

Finally Mr President, I wish to touch briefly on two institutional matters. We take note of your summary of the consultations held on the Terms of Reference for the holding of any closed meetings by ATT Working Groups. We are pleased that those consultations highlighted the importance Delegations attach to promoting transparency and on facilitating the involvement of civil society in the work of the ATT. New Zealand is

comfortable with the proposal to maintain the status quo for now but to keep the Terms of Reference of the Working Groups under review.

New Zealand is also pleased to have participated in the intersessional consultations on the Management Committee's Terms of Reference, which have sought to resolve concerns relating both to the size of the Committee and also the atypical reference to UN regional groups as the basis for appointments to it. We regret that a compromise solution remains elusive. We nevertheless confirm New Zealand's ongoing commitment to resolving this issue swiftly and will certainly attend the consultations you have convened for tomorrow lunchtime.

Mr President, we look forward to working with you and all participants here on the very full agenda ahead of us this week in Tokyo.

Thank you.