



**Arms Trade Treaty
Working Group on Universalisation**

**Statement by Katy Donnelly
Deputy Permanent Representative to the
Conference on Disarmament, Geneva**

7 March 2018

Thank you Mr President.

At the outset please allow me to congratulate you on Japan's outreach activities in support of universalisation, following in the footsteps of the very active Finnish presidency.

We would like to share some information about the Pacific Conference on Conventional Weapons Treaties, which New Zealand was pleased to host in Auckland from 12 to 14 February 2018. Co-sponsored by our dear friend and neighbour, Australia, the Conference aimed to take stock and advance the implementation of three conventional weapons treaties including the Arms Trade Treaty. At its conclusion, the Conference adopted the Auckland Declaration on Conventional Weapons Treaties, which we have made available at the back of the room for interested delegations. We also hope to circulate it as a document for CSP4.

Turn out at the Conference was high, evidencing our region's clear recognition of the humanitarian, security and development-related advantages of membership of the ATT and other conventional weapons treaties. We were pleased to have representatives from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – in addition, of course, to representatives of Australia and New Zealand. It is not possible to overstate the significance of attendance at the Conference by representatives of the Secretariats or Implementation Support Units of all

three treaties, including Sarah Parker from the ATT Secretariat. For many Pacific Island States, the Auckland Conference was the first opportunity they have had to deal directly and in person with the Secretariats and it was great to see how quickly reporting issues, for example, could be ironed out when face to face.

We were also grateful to have in attendance a representative from Japan, on behalf of the Japanese Presidency of CSP4, as well as a representative from Germany, on behalf of the German Chair of the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund Selection Committee.

Although there are only four States Parties to the ATT in the Pacific, the Conference confirmed considerable interest in the Treaty. Few Pacific Island states export arms but the region is vulnerable to the diversion of arms and there is a general determination that the region not be a hub for the illicit trade in small arms. The Pacific Islands expressed a desire to lend weight to international efforts to universalise the ATT, while recognising that a range of priorities including climate change compete for scarce resources in the region. Conference Participants also recognised that implementation of the ATT would contribute significantly to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Importantly, Conference participants accepted the merits of a region-wide approach to ATT adoption and implementation and suggested that the enhanced Pacific security declaration – the comprehensive “Biketawa Plus” – currently under discussion in the region, should be used to promote take-up of the Treaty. It was acknowledged that such an approach could assist in building political will to support increased participation by Pacific states.

The Conference provided an opportunity for participating States to provide updates on the challenges they are facing with respect to the ATT, as well as on the ratification or accession processes under way. Many Pacific states highlighted that they do not have national control systems and transfer processes in place in their jurisdictions, with the consequence that membership of the ATT comes with resource implications. Other impediments to wider participation include capacity constraints; challenges in the context of border security; limitations to data collection

and maintenance of records; and, in some jurisdictions, the need for legislation. There was a lot of interest among Pacific participants in the very concrete offers of assistance that were given by the ATT Secretariat, Japan (as President of CSP4), Germany (as Chair of the VTF Selection Committee), the Regional Legal Adviser of the ICRC, as well as by a number of our valued civil society partners who we were very pleased were able to come to Auckland for the Conference – Control Arms, the Centre for Armed Violence Reduction and Saferworld.

Specific commitments made by participants in the Conference can be found in the annex to the Auckland Declaration. Some of these express an interest to pursue awareness-raising activities at various levels, including Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and Tonga. Other participants made specific comments relating to ratification:

- Fiji proposed to advance necessary consultations leading to the final ratification of the ATT;
- Papua New Guinea reported that it has already submitted a paper to its National Executive Council with the hope that it will be considered by the end of 2018;
- Vanuatu reported that it has prepared a draft Cabinet paper to be finalised and submitted to Cabinet following completion of consultations, and expects ratification by the end of 2018; and
- Palau reported that it is in the process of drafting its Cabinet paper and legislative policy, and that it intends to ratify the ATT by the end of 2018.

We are very grateful to Australia, and to all the participants in the Conference, for ensuring such a successful event. New Zealand is committed to following up on the issues raised at the Conference, as well as the requests made and undertakings given on assistance, and we look forward to continuing to work with our Pacific and other partners in this regard.

Thank you Mr President.