Chair

Australia is a steadfast contributor to efforts to safeguard international security through the United Nations and beyond – effective arms control arrangements sit at the very core of these efforts.

That is why Australia is party to all major arms control treaties, including those prohibiting inhumane conventional weapons, and is committed to realising the vision they set out.

Australia was a leader in the drive towards the landmark Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). We maintain that widely endorsed and implemented ATT has the potential to evolve into one of the most important normative initiatives supporting global efforts to prevent the illicit trade in conventional arms.

Importantly, the effective implementation of the ATT also supports our commitment to the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Australia is also a strong supporter of the UN Programme of Action on the Illicit Transfer of Small Arms and Light Weapons.
We make good on this commitment through contributing to initiatives including the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund and the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR).

Australia also prioritises mine action and supports international agencies working across all areas of mine action globally, including in mine clearance, standards maintenance, risk education and victim assistance.

Australia is actively participating in the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) in Geneva. We consider the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons the most appropriate forum for taking discussions on this issue forward.

The Geneva Conventions remain as relevant today as they were at their adoption 70 years ago. Contemporary conflict poses new challenges, but this anniversary is timely reminder that we must urge all parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

We note in particular the requirements of distinction, precautions in attack and proportionality. Compliance with international humanitarian law will go a long way to address concerns raised by the international community about the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA).

Australia recognises that the accumulation and misuse of conventional weapons violently intersects with gender and disability issues at many levels. This includes conflict and post-conflict situations, criminal activity, interpersonal violence and homicide, and socio-political violence. We ensure that initiatives are progressed in an age-sensitive, gender-sensitive, and disability inclusive manner in all aspects of our efforts on arms control.

Australia looks forward to continuing this important arms control work in the interests of global security and will upload the full version of this statement to PaperSmart.

Thank you

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