Arms Trade Treaty 4th Conference of States Parties
Australian Statement: Transparency and Reporting

Co-Chairs

First, we wish to thank Belgium and Mexico for their able leadership of the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting this year.

One of the aims of the ATT is to promote cooperation, transparency and responsible action by States Parties in the international trade in conventional arms so as to build confidence among States Parties.

Annual reports submitted by States Parties’ on their imports and exports of conventional arms are central to achieving this.

Regrettably, the level of compliance by States Parties with their reporting obligations remains too low. For 2017, only 48 of the 89 States Parties due to submit annual reports have done so. This, unfortunately, continues the decreasing rate of annual reporting from previous years.

Clearly the reporting process is proving a challenge for a number of states, and we welcome the extensive consideration given to this issue within the ATT Working Group on Transparency and Reporting. Fundamental to reporting is effective record-keeping that is accessible, current, and stored in such a manner so as to be able to easily distil the key elements required by the Treaty. Effective coordination between government agencies is also necessary, each of which may hold some, but not all, of the requisite data.

The working group co-chairs have put forward a number of useful recommendations to this Conference, including a focused outreach strategy on reporting. We encourage other States Parties, in a position to do so, to share their reporting experiences and offer assistance.

Enhancing information exchange among States Parties will further advance implementation of the ATT. Article 15 on International Cooperation envisages consultation among States Parties on a range of issues. But it also underpins other key aspects of the Treaty, notably preventing diversion. We are interested in exploring further the development of an information exchange portal through the ATT website, but note its success will depend on the degree
to which States Parties engage with it and volunteer information. We also think the co-chairs’ proposal of a three-tier approach to sharing information on diversion is very useful and warrants support.

Thank you Co-Chairs