



**Statement by Charlotte Skerten
Deputy Permanent Representative to
the Conference on Disarmament**

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

**Treaty Universalisation
28 August 2019**

Thank you, Mr President.

New Zealand is delighted that work on the universalisation of the Treaty has continued to pick up, and we welcome all seven States that have joined the Treaty over the past 12 months. We would wish to extend an especially warm welcome to our regional partner, Palau, as the Pacific's newest State Party.

We have now reached 104 members - an admirable achievement in what is, after all, a relatively short period of time in the life of an international treaty.

We applaud your efforts, Mr President, as well as those of your co-chair on Universalisation, Japan, to engage with countries outside of the regime. As was identified during preparatory meetings earlier in the year, there remains a strong need for regional and international cooperation to overcome the various challenges faced by prospective member countries in signing and ratifying this Treaty; and we thank Chile and Cameroon for their presentations which helpfully outlined their experience, as relatively new States Parties, with ratification and implementation.

For New Zealand, our immediate neighbourhood is the Pacific. And we are delighted that a relatively high number of our Pacific neighbours are represented at this week's CSP. For a region as susceptible as ours to the harms of diversion, the ATT has a real potential to contribute meaningfully to peace, security and economic prosperity in our neighbourhood. And in

response, Pacific leaders have been determined that our region not become a hub for the illicit trade in small arms. Pacific Island Countries' commitment to regional security was endorsed in the Boe Declaration on Regional Security, which is an effort for collective action to address a shared security challenge - including transnational crime - through greater regional and international cooperation. Regional security was also a key feature of the Pacific Islands Forum in Tuvalu earlier this month.

Where the political desire exists to join a treaty such as the Arms Trade Treaty, we should ensure that the practical support also exists, so that - no matter the capacity constraints faced by a smaller government - support is available to assist that country to join. This underscores the critical importance of the Voluntary Trust Fund in fostering the universalisation of this Treaty.

In respect of the fact that there are legitimate capacity differences that exist between States Parties to this Treaty, we must maintain a strong focus on simplifying reporting requirements on States. In particular, the format and substance required by initial reports pursuant to this Treaty should fully reflect the arms export profile of smaller states (which is often of a miniscule nature), and synergies should be identified across instruments. This would have the advantage, we hope, of improving reporting rates, and therefore of fostering transparency which is such a central requirement of our Treaty.

New Zealand is very grateful to Australia for having hosted a Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty for Asia-Pacific countries in Brisbane this February. We co-funded this conference which usefully built on the outcomes of the Auckland Conference one year prior and was a useful opportunity to discuss the diverse range of challenges faced by Pacific Island Countries with respect to ratification and membership of the ATT.

In order to support further engagement with the ATT, and other conventional weapons treaties, New Zealand has sponsored a multi-year programme of bilateral engagement - led by its former Ambassador for Disarmament - to a range of Pacific Island Countries. To assist in this programme we - New Zealand - have recently run a re-print of our model legislation publication, which assists prospective member States, as they

consider the process of signature or ratification. Please allow us to express our sincere thanks to the Small Arms Survey for their assistance with this reprint, and please don't hesitate to ask us for a brand new copy of the Model Law.

Thank you, Mr. President.

NZ disarmament statements online, www.converge.org.nz/pma/nzdist.htm