



# AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## **UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS – EIGHTH BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES**

### **Statement by Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations**

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Distinguished Chair,

Australia congratulates you on your election and thanks you for the thorough and inclusive way you have conducted the preparatory process.

We reaffirm our commitment to the UN Programme of Action.

Notwithstanding significant progress, the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons continues to undermine peace and security globally. These weapons remain the primary cause of civilian deaths in armed conflict and exacerbate violence outside of conflict settings including violence against women and children.

Australia comprehensively regulates firearms including through our 'National Firearms Agreement', which sets out national minimum standards for firearms regulation. This document was reviewed and updated in 2017 following Sydney's 'Martin Place Siege' when a gunman used an unregistered firearm to hold 18 people hostage, ultimately resulting in three deaths and many injuries. National firearms amnesties

that followed have resulted in over 51,000 unregistered firearms being collected across Australia. This number is expected to increase under an ongoing amnesty, announced in July 2021.

Chair,

Preventing the illicit diversion and use of small arms and light weapons is vital for the promotion of stability, security, and economic prosperity and has a critical role to play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, particularly Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

We recognise the differentiated impact of the illicit trade in SALW based on gender and age and underline the need for collection of disaggregated data based on these characteristics. We welcome the inclusion of gender mainstreaming and UNSC resolution 1325 in the current draft outcomes document. These are not 'secondary' issues but are crucial to the successful implementation of the PoA.

We welcome the return to in-person format with the formal participation of civil society. We are committed to ensuring civil society participation in line with established practice.

Australia underlines the synergies between the Programme of Action and related international instruments. In particular, the Arms Trade Treaty reinforces Programme objectives through: the establishment of effective national control systems, prevention of diversion, strong record keeping

and reporting practices, and information exchange between States. We should not miss the opportunity to highlight these complementarities.

Finally, Australia also acknowledges the commencement of the Open Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition. Australia recognises the imperative of ensuring that conventional ammunition is adequately managed throughout its lifespan. We welcome discussion towards political commitments which would address ammunition management at a global level.

Thank you.

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