



# AUSTRALIA



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**UNITED NATIONS**

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## **Third Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RevCon3)**

**Statement by James Nachipo, Director, Conventional Weapons  
and Defence, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

*(Check against delivery)*

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Mr President,

Like speakers before me, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment and offer Australia's appreciation for the excellent preparatory work that you have undertaken in advance of this meeting.

Mr President, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons remains one of the most insidious challenges to security, safety and stability resulting in a wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic consequences at the local, national, regional and international levels.

Australia regards the PoA as a critical component of the international architecture to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We remain unwavering in our commitment to its effective implementation.

Mr President, delegates will recall that at the 2016 Biennial Meeting of States, we spoke about Australia's comprehensive gun control policy and our lower rates of gun violence compared to many other areas of the world. Allow me to reiterate: this was not due to good fortune or luck. It is a matter of public policy. Australia recognises that effective firearm policy is an ongoing, iterative process which must continue to adapt and evolve to keep pace with emerging technologies and changing environments – both domestic and international.

Last year, Australia conducted a highly successful National Firearms Amnesty. The Amnesty sought to improve public safety by allowing people to hand-in unregistered firearms without fear of prosecution. People were also able to hand in registered firearms they no longer needed. The successful Amnesty saw fifty-seven thousand, three hundred and twenty four (57,324) firearms handed in.

The success of the Amnesty was testament to the resolve of the broader Australian community to ensure effective regulation of acquisition, possession and use of firearms by civilians.

Mr President, Australia acknowledges that many Member States implement their commitments to the Programme of Action through legally-binding obligations in relevant international instruments to which they are State Parties. In this regard, Australia implements key elements of the POA through its legally-binding obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). In this sense, we cannot simply separate the ATT from discussions about how Member States implement the POA.

Mr President, Australia is a strong supporter of Sustainable Development Goal 16, Target 16.4 which seeks to reduce illicit arms flows. Both the ATT and the PoA have a critical role to play in achieving that objective.

Australia also welcomes the references to gender specific issues in the President's most recent draft outcome document and see these as essential elements in any final outcome of this RevCon.

Mr President, Australia supports the creative initiative taken by the Centre for Armed Violence Reduction to develop national arms transfer database. The database will assist the capacity of States to manage information on the import and export of firearms, the management of stockpiles and records of disposal. We encourage delegations to approach representatives of the Centre for further details during this RevCon.

Mr President, Australia sees great merit in exploring constructive measures to strengthen the PoA, specifically to ensure that weapons tracing remains timely and reliable in light of current technological trends in manufacturing, technology and design.

The use of ubiquitous materials, including polymer has consequences for the durability and traceability of markings. The International Tracing Instrument encourages member states to develop measures to counter the removal or alteration of markings.

Australia is supportive of addressing this challenge through an Annex to the ITI taking into account modular designs and the use of polymers in small arms and light weapons.

Mr President, the Australian delegation looks forward to working closely with you and member states over the coming two weeks to share ideas and suggestions to strengthen the effective implementation of the PoA.