



AUSTRALIA



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UNITED NATIONS

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Third Review Conference of the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and its International Tracing Instrument (ITI)

Side-Event: International Tracing Instrument (ITI) and the Way Forward: Examining Options to Support Operationalisation

**Statement by H.E. Ms Gillian Bird
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Australia to the United Nations**

(Check against delivery)

I would like to join UNIDIR and France in welcoming you to this event. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise France's considerable efforts in presiding over the Third Review Conference this year and to reassure you of Australia's commitment to working with you to ensure a successful outcome.

Effective implementation of the provisions of the International Tracing Instrument or ITI has the potential to make a significant contribution to efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

There remain challenges in the implementation of the ITI and more needs to be done to realise its potential.

This Review Conference is the venue for delegations to consider what more can be done and so we are pleased to support this event which shines a light on UNIDIR's project identifying ways to improve the functioning of the ITI.

Australia is a strong supporter of the International Tracing Instrument. Australia traces illicit firearms and cooperates with other states through the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC). Our expert on tracing issues Gary Fleetwood from the ACIC is here on the panel today and will provide you with further thoughts from an Australian perspective.

Tracing supports the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It makes a significant contribution to law enforcement and subsequent prosecutions. Effective tracing relies on unique marking, firearms registration, and accurate and comprehensive firearms records. Given the transnational nature of the illicit trade in firearms, tracing relies on effective international cooperation.

We need to consider ways to strengthen international law enforcement cooperation, as well as improving the quality of electronic tracing tools and databases. We also need to give consideration to how to combat the challenges new technologies pose to the marking and tracing of weapons. In this regard, Australia

has been promoting the idea of an implementation assistance note or draft Annex to the ITI to better recognise developments in technology.

Australia supports efforts to combat unlawful transfers of small arms and light weapons, and other conventional arms, in a number of ways. In addition to our support for initiatives such as this, we are a leading contributor to the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR). In the five years since its inception, UNSCAR has provided over \$7.5 million dollars in funding for 51 projects with a further 1.5 million to be dispersed in 2018-19. One particularly effective project this year in Sierra Leone trained 60 blacksmiths on alternatives to producing illicit small arms. The project also examined challenges with tracing in that region.

As there is much to discuss and I know we are all keen to hear from our panellists, I will close here and hand over to the next speaker.