Australia continues to see the reliable tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons as key to combatting the highly destabilising effect of these arms.

We maintain strong regulations on the marking of firearms and comprehensive firearm management systems. Australia’s National Firearm Trace Program and National Firearms Identification Database have contributed to the identification of diverted firearms and assisted in securing convictions for illicit firearms in Australia. Trace data collected over several years has provided clear insights into firearm diversion methods within Australia. This has resulted in the implementation of legislative amendments, including around standardising marking requirements and serialisation formats at import.

Australia strongly supports transparency and public availability of firearms data in contributing to improved firearm identification, registration and
record-keeping outcomes. To that end Australia’s National Firearms Identification Database is publicly available in a searchable online format. This allows others to make use of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission’s firearms data set to assist in ensuring firearms are identified accurately and described consistently during registration, importation or transfer.

Chair,

The ITI has a vital role to play in eradicating illicit firearms and preventing diversion. Australia sees great value in maintaining an effective international instrument to enable states to identify and trace small arms and light weapons. To this end, the ITI must remain relevant and capable of effective implementation, notwithstanding developments in firearms technologies. Australia supports the establishment of a technical expert group to ensure the effectiveness of the ITI including in relation to modular and polymer firearms.

The BMS7 outcomes document called for consideration of the mandate, funding, time frame and modalities for action oriented next steps towards such a group. Australia would welcome further discussion in relation to this with a view towards the establishment of a group or the provision of clear recommendations to 2024’s Review Conference.

Thank you.

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