Agenda Item 8: Consideration of international cooperation and assistance, including capacity-building, and means of enhancing modalities and procedures for international cooperation and assistance

Chair

Australia welcomes this year’s focus on international cooperation and assistance in the context of the Programme of Action. We see the provision of effective international cooperation and assistance as an important pillar of the Programme and a primary mechanism via which to ensure all States are positioned to fulfill Programme of Action commitments.

Australia supports a wide range of programs aimed at promoting the implementation of commitments under the Programme of Action and related instruments. In doing so we remain mindful of the conclusions of previous meetings on the need for adequate, measurable, sustainable and timely cooperation and assistance on small arms and light weapons.

Australia is a committed donor to both the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation and the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund. Both of these funds mobilise resources to support the implementation of Programme of Action related commitments. They increase the sustainability and effectiveness of assistance through increased coordination, monitoring and matching needs with resources.

In line with the value we place on the significant contributions of civil society, we are also pleased to support the generation of policy relevant knowledge and research through the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research’s Conventional Arms Programme and the Small Arms Survey. The expertise and participation of these, and other civil society organisations, continues to be integral to supporting the achievement of Programme of Action Goals.

Chair

Australia recognises the importance of sharing expertise and capacity-building assistance. In our region, the Australian Defence Force supports military partners in the Pacific to manage small arms safely and effectively through mentoring, training and infrastructure assistance. In November 2021 the Australian Defence Force worked with the Vanuatu Mobile Force and Papua New Guinea Defence Force on essential skills including training for the appropriate handling and storage of weapons. Australia also supported several upgrades to armouries across PNG Defence Force Bases.

Australia has supported Timor-Leste’s Ministry of Defence to commence a Weapons Safety program, which includes installing firearm safes at Timor-Leste military bases and outposts based on Timor-Leste requests. Australian Advisors will continue to support Timor-Leste to maintain and where necessary, repair or upgrade these safes into the future.

Chair
Australia will continue to provide financial support and transfer knowledge, resources, equipment and technology, as appropriate, with a view towards promoting programme of action implementation.

We welcome further discussion on enhancing good practices, modalities and lessons learned in this regard.

Thank you.

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