STATEMENT BY MR ALISTAIR BURT MP, PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE AT THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AT THE SPECIAL EVENT TO MARK THE OPENING FOR SIGNATURE OF THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

MONDAY 3 JUNE 2013

[Check against delivery]

BEGINS

Thank you…,

Today is a great success for the United Nations. After 10 years of campaigning and 7 years of negotiation the Arms Trade Treaty has opened for signature and the international community has queued up to sign it. That is because we recognise how important this Treaty is, the potential it has to make the world a safer place.

I am very proud to be here to sign on behalf of the United Kingdom. The UK is one of the original Co-Authors who introduced the initial Resolution in December 2006 calling for work towards an ATT. In the UK the ATT has been a real joint effort with government, industry and of civil society all working together for the delivery of a Treaty that is strong, responsible and implementable.

The fact that governments from every region of the world have joined together to support and champion the Treaty is a reflection of the truly global commitment to addressing this important issue.

The Arms Trade Treaty matters because, as soon as it is brought into force;

- It will save lives
- It will promote sustainable development by enabling resources to reach schools, healthcare services, and critical infrastructure rather than being wasted on conflict
• It will reduce human suffering by preventing arms being used in serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law
• And it will help to combat terrorism and crime by steadily reducing the unfettered proliferation of weapons which threaten the security of not only the countries where terrorists base themselves, but also their neighbours and the rest of the world.

At the same time, the Treaty will protect the legitimate arms trade, allowing states to access and acquire weaponry to lawfully defend themselves, but it will also ensure that this process is not circumvented, abused or exploited by the unscrupulous who care little for the pain and suffering they inflict.

Having signed we must look forwards to ratification, entry into force and implementation. Our work does not stop here, for the Treaty to make the difference that we all desire global implementation is crucial. The UK will do our part to encourage and support implementation.

The Treaty is now the international blueprint for the regulation of conventional arms exports and imports and it is a fresh starting point for international cooperation. We will encourage States to rigorously implement the Treaty, to be transparent in their implementation and to go further than the minimum standards of regulation required by the Treaty.

We must recognise that these changes will take time and that parliamentary and consultative processes need to take place before States can ratify the Treaty. But we urge all States to make this a priority. The world has already waited too long and we should not and will not lose the momentum gained. Our goal is early Entry into Force and universal application.

The United Kingdom will play its part. We will aim to ratify within the year and we will spare no effort to ensure this Treaty makes a real difference to the people that need it most.

ENDS