Mr Chairman,

The past year has proven to be an important one in the area of conventional weapons control. Tangible outcomes have been achieved and real progress made.

Last month, here in New York, the international community reached an important milestone of 50 ratifications of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). This historic Treaty, that States and civil society worked so hard - and over so many years - to achieve, will enter into force on 24 December 2014.

The international community was successful in negotiating a strong, balanced and effective ATT text. However, we must remember that the Treaty is ultimately only an agreement to do something. It needs to be effectively implemented if it is to influence positively security, stability and economic development around the world.

Establishing functional ATT architecture, including an effective ATT Secretariat, is a key step along that road. Australia welcomes Mexico’s offer to host the First Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty next year, and appreciates its assiduous work to date in preparation for the conference. Australia will work closely with Mexico and others to ensure the First Conference of States Parties is successful.

Australia is also committed to assisting States to implement the ATT at the national level. It is for this purpose that Australia has contributed $2 million to the UN Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) to support the implementation of the ATT and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA).

As a co-sponsor of this year’s resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty, we call on all States to support this resolution, which seeks to build on the strong international momentum behind the Treaty.
Mr Chairman,

Australia and the Republic of Korea will be presenting the biennial resolution on ‘Preventing and combating illicit brokering activities’. This resolution acknowledges the threat posed by illicit brokering to international peace and security. It also recognises the importance of States implementing relevant provisions of key instruments, and the significance of recent developments – including the UNPoA, ATT and UN Security Council Resolution 2117 (2013) on small arms and light weapons – to address this threat. Australia would again welcome widespread support for and co-sponsorship of this important resolution.

Mr Chairman,

In the area of small arms and light weapons (SALW), Australia remains as committed as ever to the effective implementation of both UN Security Council Resolution 2117 (2013) on SALW, and the UNPoA. We congratulate Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan on his successful chairing of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States in June this year. We look forward to the open-ended Meeting of Government Experts in 2015, which we hope will lead to the development of a much-needed supplementary document to the International Tracing Instrument.

Mr Chairman,

We acknowledge the outcomes from the Third Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in Maputo, Mozambique in June this year. The Maputo Action Plan for 2014 to 2019 provides a solid and ambitious basis for States parties to intensify their efforts to complete their time-bound obligations under the Convention. We welcome the recent announcement by the United States that outside the Korean Peninsula, it will not use anti-personnel landmines; will not assist, encourage or induce anyone to engage in activity prohibited by the Convention and will undertake to destroy anti-personnel landmines not required for this specific geographically-limited commitment. While we continue to advocate full compliance with the Convention, we hope the US’ move will encourage others still outside the Convention to take positive and concrete steps towards accession.

In addition, Australia was pleased to have participated in the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions just last month in San Jose, Costa Rica. We welcome Costa Rica’s Presidency. We also welcome its efforts to underline the strong concerns of States parties regarding alleged recent use of cluster munitions in various parts of the world. We are very pleased to have begun our role as Co-Coordinator of the working group on victim assistance, with Mexico.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons demonstrated this year its continued relevance as a multilateral mechanism to explore emerging issues related to conventional weapons that are excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects. We welcome the informal meeting of experts held in May this year to discuss questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems, and support continuation of such discussion.
Mr Chairman,

Australia remains committed to addressing the threat posed by the proliferation of conventional arms. We must continue working together to reduce the impact of these weapons, which hamper development and seriously threaten stability and security. We must continue to demonstrate that it is indeed possible to make progress on difficult security issues. This requires the commitment of a sufficient number of States to a common goal, who are convinced that the time for change has come.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.