

**Opening for Signature of the Arms Trade Treaty
United Nations, New York, 3 June 2013**

**Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Peter Woolcott of Australia
President of the Final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty**

On 2 April this year, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Treaty that will save lives and reduce human suffering, and today we begin the process of its implementation.

This treaty, the Arms Trade Treaty, will set new international standards for the international trade in conventional arms, and in doing so will provide a new multilateral framework for transparency and accountability in that trade. It will help prevent arms from being transferred irresponsibly and illegally to commit atrocities, human rights violations and violations of humanitarian law. It will contribute to regional and international peace and security and thereby help promote economic development.

The Arms Trade Treaty is strong and it is balanced, and we did this together, multilaterally and in an environment where consensus was both our goal and the means by which significant differences were genuinely bridged.

This Treaty is of course important for the regions most affected by armed conflict and armed violence fueled by the unregulated and illicit trade in conventional arms. States from those regions spoke up and provided the impetus towards a strong outcome

But all States contributed to this historical outcome and I want to acknowledge their constructive engagement and for recognising collectively that this Treaty is good for regional and international peace and security.

Indeed, as President of the Final Conference, I was struck by the commitment of States from different regions and with different perspectives to achieving a strong treaty.

I believe this reflected the widespread recognition that this Treaty and the standards it will set was long overdue. States came to the Final Conference looking for a result and wanting to find ways to overcome the many remaining security, trade and humanitarian challenges to achieve a treaty that would be effective.

I also believe that they recognised this was important for the United Nations system. States showed that the United Nations remains a body capable of delivering arms control outcomes to improve regional and international peace and security. And I want to thank the UN Secretary General for his great commitment to this process.

States did not do this alone. It is important we recognize the enormous contribution of civil society who have been advocating for this Treaty for many years, who informed our negotiations and who have an important role in the years ahead.

This Treaty was the product of many years of advocacy and negotiation by many different people, and in this regard, I must especially recognize the contribution and

leadership of my predecessor, Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan of Argentina, and in particular for his influential draft treaty text from the July 2012 Conference.

As I noted earlier, the Arms Trade Treaty is strong and balanced. We have a good framework and we are making a strong start this morning with 62 signatures. But in the end what will count, what will make a difference, is how effective the Treaty is, and that depends on how States implement it and how States, civil society and industry help each other to implement it.

That work begins today, and as many will rightly underline throughout this historic day, there is much work to do.