

NEW ZEALAND

Agenda Item 5: Treaty Universalisation

Aotearoa New Zealand welcomes you, Ambassador Gberie, to the Presidency of this Conference. We thank you for ensuring that it is able to proceed in a hybrid format, which we see as the most inclusive option available to us in the current circumstances. Despite the devastating and wide-ranging consequences of Covid-19, it is crucial that the ATT community continues to meet regularly to take stock of our Treaty's progress in achieving its aims of establishing a gold standard for regulating the international trade in conventional arms, as well as preventing and eradicating their illicit trade and diversion.

Although I did not take the floor under the previous agenda item, please be assured that New Zealand fully supports your Working Paper and the sharing of best practices to prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, strengthening stockpile management and security in order to prevent diversion.

New Zealand welcomes that, in seven short years, our Treaty has 110 States Parties and 31 signatories. We extend a special welcome to the Treaty's newest State Party, our Pacific neighbour Niue. Yet it is concerning that the rate of universalization appears to be tapering off. This is, in part, to be expected and we appreciate the challenging environment for outreach, and some states' limited capacity to engage on the ATT at present given their competing priorities. But we must continue to champion the Treaty's universalization, by thinking of creative ways to promote the ATT's benefits, to understand the challenges to universalization, by responding to the concerns of states outside the Treaty, and providing support where it is required – including through the Voluntary Trust Fund.

For our part, New Zealand has continued our close and regular bilateral engagements with our partners in the Pacific in a virtual format over the past year. There is broad recognition that universalisation of the ATT, including realising its important security and developmental benefits, is strongly in the interests of States in our region. One concern we often hear about joining the ATT is the burden of annual reporting. To this end, we welcome the efforts of the co-chairs of the working group on transparency and reporting, Mexico and Romania, to improve the voluntary reporting templates and make them more user-friendly. We also gratefully acknowledge the support provided by the European Union for the publication of the Universalization Toolkit in all official UN languages. Finally, we wish to remind states and observers that the model legislation produced by New Zealand and the Small Arms Survey to assist prospective States Parties in preparing for their membership is available both online and in hard copy.