



**Statement by H.E. Dell Higgin
Ambassador for Disarmament**

**Second Conference of States Parties
to the Arms Trade Treaty**

Voluntary Trust Fund

23 August 2016

Thank you Mr President.

At the outset please allow me to put on record New Zealand's appreciation for the work of Ambassador Biontino and his team in leading the informal working group on the Voluntary Trust Fund. It has been a challenging and time-consuming process but one, we hope, that will reach a satisfactory conclusion at this meeting.

New Zealand's engagement in the informal working group was guided by three overarching objectives: to set up a Trust Fund that responds to the needs of States Parties and Signatories in their efforts to join and implement the Treaty; to ensure that the infrastructure set up around the Fund is simple, transparent and fit for purpose; and to provide for participation in the work of the Fund by as diverse a range of States as possible – how else can we be confident that the Fund will be able to bring to bear regionally-appropriate insights in its important task of promoting universal implementation of the Treaty? At the same time we cannot permit the Fund's decision-making processes to become unbalanced or unwieldy.

We are pleased that many of the comments we conveyed during the informal working group meetings have been reflected in the final draft Terms of Reference of the Voluntary Trust Fund and in the General Principles for Implementation Assistance Projects to be funded by it. Of particular importance for New Zealand is that the option has been left

open for the Voluntary Trust Fund to be used in support of projects in non-States Parties. From our perspective this option represents an important opportunity for the Trust Fund to promote both implementation *and universalisation* of the Treaty.

New Zealand also places great importance on ensuring that the infrastructure established around the Voluntary Trust Fund, in particular the Selection Committee, is effective, efficient, representative and transparent. Getting this right is essential as it will affect both the willingness of donors to support the Fund as well as the willingness of potential recipient States to accept it as a tool to assist them overcome their implementation challenges. New Zealand is of the view that, ideally, the Selection Committee should consist of no more than 15 States. In our view this should be sufficient to ensure representativeness, both of donors and non-donors and among regional groups, without impeding the ability of the group to schedule meetings and conduct its work in a timely manner.

In suggesting a limited number of seats on the Selection Committee we recognise that this may mean that not all donors in any given year are able to be represented on the Committee. Indeed this is just what we hope for, namely that the Voluntary Trust Fund is very widely supported and therefore by a much larger number of States Parties than can workably be appointed to the Selection Committee. In our view this should not prevent potential donors from supporting the Fund, given of course that the Conference of States Parties will receive full annual reporting on the funding and implementation of all projects. And donors are also able to direct or tag their funding in any particular way they wish.

As was noted in our general debate statement, New Zealand is very pleased to be providing two contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund in the coming year – together totalling NZ\$95,000 for projects in Africa and Pacific. We would welcome the opportunity to serve on the inaugural Selection Committee as a representative of the Asia-Pacific region.

Thank you Mr President.