

**[AUSTRALIA] 68/33 - "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control"**

Australia strongly supports and promotes the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and the broader women, peace and security agenda will continue to be a priority for Australia during its term on the UNSC.

Australia recognises that the misuse of small arms and light weapons exacerbates gender-based violence, including sexual violence. For this reason, Australia has ratified the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The ATT, when entered into force, will, for the first time, establish an agreed global system for regulation of the international conventional arms trade on the basis of agreed common humanitarian and other standards. We reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the ATT.

Over the past several years, Australia has actively supported women's participation in regional and international discussions to ensure that the voices of women are heard on disarmament and arms control. Australia made its second contribution of AUD\$1 million to the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR). UNSCAR, launched in 2013, is designed to fund projects to support the implementation and ratification of the ATT and the complementarity of implementation activities of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (PoA).

Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security focuses on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 and related resolutions to protect and empower women and girls in fragile, conflict and post-conflict situations. A progress report will be delivered to parliament in 2014 that tracks Government action in this field.

Australia has appointed former Senator Natasha Stott Despoja as its Ambassador for Women and Girls. The Ambassador is responsible for high-level international advocacy to advance the political, economic and social empowerment of women and girls. Her focus is to promote women's economic empowerment as well as their participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding; ending violence against women and girls; and improving access to health and education services.