

STATEMENT ON THE STATE OF PLAY ON PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S POSITION TOWARDS THE RATIFICATION OF THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

Mr Chairman

Let me at the outset that the El Salvador Legislature for playing host to the 37th Annual Parliamentary Forum here in San Salvador. I would also like to extend my sincere thank you along with my delegation to El Salvador authorities including the people for the warm hospitality accorded to us since arriving in your beautiful country.

Mr Chairman and distinguished representatives of various Parliaments gathered here today, Papua New Guinea is where I come from and for those or even many who don't know where Papua New Guinea is, is a country north of Australia with an estimated population of 8 million plus people with over 800 plus languages and over a 1000 plus cultures living in unity since our independence from Australia in 1975 despite our diversity. Papua New Guinea shares a common sea border with Solomon Islands, a brother Melanesian country to the east, Australia to the South and of course to west is Indonesia whom we share a common land border.

Rich with natural resources in oil, gas, timber, coffee, cocoa, fish and has a potential in the tourism arena, Papua New Guinea has yet to date ratified the Arms Trade Treaty.

Very briefly Chairman,

Our Acting Speaker of the National Parliament, Hon Aide Ganasi after his return from a workshop in Tonga in May this year raised the issue of ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty during one of our National Parliament sessions.

I would like to emphasise in this forum that Papua New Guinea remains committed to ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty and shares with the rest of the International community regarding concerns on proliferation of arms trade and political uprising engineered by arms trade in illicit and illegal sales, various acts of terrorism, arms smugglings across borders, genocide and ethnic cleansing including dictatorships in a number of regions around the world.

Chair, I would like to inform this forum that in 2001, Papua New Guinea through the United Nations supported the process whereby Papua New

Guinea signed the global program of action in relations to the arms trade treaty.

Distinguished representatives, PNG is lagging behind in the ratification process due to 2 very important piece of legislation that were brought before the National Parliament last year. The first is the Papua New Guinea Defence Force White Paper and the second is our National Security Policy.

These are matters which need to be assessed carefully and given their sensitivity, we have to be sensible in the context of its implications on the Arms Trade Treaty or vice versa.

However, that doesn't stop us from seeking guidance from the PGA on how best Papua New Guinea can already be party to the Arms Trade Treaty .

I thank you, Chair and distinguished representatives and to also thank the PGA for organising this forum. It is indeed a very helpful one where my delegation and I will bring back home experiences and lessons learned from this forum to take on the challenges that await myself as a member of the National Parliament and to push for ratification of this very important Treaty,

I thank you.