Submission from the Campaign Against Arms Trade to the Environmental Audit Committee’s inquiry into the Government’s approach to sustainable development

1. The Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) in the UK is working to end the international arms trade. CAAT believes that large scale military procurement and arms exports only reinforce a militaristic approach to international problems.

2. Peace and security are essential for sustainable development. Conversely, this latter is undermined by conflict which is, in turn, exacerbated by the products of the arms industry. UK-made weapons have frequently been used in combat and for repression across the world. The wars in which the UK has been engaged, such as those in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan, have caused devastation and fuelled further conflict. The world today is a more dangerous place because of them.

3. Climate change is another major challenge to sustainable development and security. In its Global Strategic Trends - Out to 2040 report, February 2010 (bit.ly/1gRZIQS) the Ministry of Defence (MoD) discusses the impact of climate change on security. It says: “Climate change will amplify existing social, political and resource stresses…. The effects of climate change are likely to dominate the global political agenda, especially in the developed world where it will represent an increasingly important single issue.” Its later Out to 2045 report, April 2014 (http://bit.ly/1Hu0y3O) contains many examples of the detrimental effects of climate change on particular regions. Tackling climate change must be a top priority.

4. UK governments have consistently chosen to support the arms industry, with national security as its main official justification. However, using such an argument reinforces the equation of national security with military solutions, marginalising other major security threats including climate change and energy insecurity. This thinking needs to change.

5. Protecting skilled manufacturing jobs is the other main reason cited for supporting military industry. However, UK governments could choose to transfer the support to the growing renewables and low carbon sectors, thus making a commitment to tackling climate change. Such a move would not only make the world a safer place by addressing a real cause of insecurity, it would also support sustainable jobs in growing sectors.

The past and present: support for the arms industry

6. Military production is the antithesis of sustainable development. Even if the equipment is not used, it is a waste of resources and skills.

7. Despite this, the arms industry enjoys great official support, both for UK procurement and military exports. Looking solely at the latter in this submission, UK Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and David Cameron have all led delegations to promote arms sales, including to some of the world’s most repressive regimes. When finalising a deal becomes difficult the help of the Royal Family is enlisted. For example, Prince Charles famously did a sword dance in Saudi Arabia in 2014 to secure a fighter jet contract for BAE.
8. Complementing the high profile visits, the UK government has had an arms sales agency since 1966, currently the UK Trade & Investment Defence and Security Organisation (UKTI DSO). With around 130 civil servants, it works behind the scenes, arranging contacts and smaller scale visits. UKTI DSO also manages the UK presence at international arms fairs as well as the official invitations to those in the UK, such as London's DSEI. This support for military sales is completely disproportionate. While arms account for less than 1.4% of UK exports, the sectors which cover the remaining 98.6% have a total of just 107 civil servants promoting their specific exports.

9. Since 2012, arms companies have also received assistance from the Defence Export Support Group within the MoD. Additionally, about 240 UK MoD civil servants and military personnel work in the UK and Saudi Arabia to support contracts covered by the Ministry of Defence Saudi Armed Forces Programme and the Saudi Arabia National Guard Communications Project. They are paid for by the Saudi Arabian government.

10. Corruption undermines democratic accountability and diverts resources away from health care or education into projects which are amenable to bribery. Military purchases are one such as the decisions are made by very few people. UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia and Tanzania are just two examples where deals have been mired in corruption and undermined the credibility of the UK's advocacy of democracy.

11. Arms exports are subsidised by the UK tax-payer. Analysis carried out for CAAT by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in May 2011 calculated this subsidy at about £700 million a year. (SIPRI paper [http://bit.ly/1ttzGja](http://bit.ly/1ttzGja) This includes the costs of UKTI DSO, export credits (Government-backed export insurance) and the work of military attachés in promoting arms sales, as well as weaponry development costs.

The future: support for renewables

12. The UK government could choose to move its support from the arms industry to support the low carbon economy. The Financial Times' international economy editor wrote: "You can have as many arms export jobs as you are prepared to waste public money subsidising." (10 August 2010) If the financial and political support were to move so, too, could the jobs.

13. The likely futures for the two industries were set out in the introductory paragraph of the advertising for a Jane’s conference on Energy, Environment, Defence and Security that took place in May 2011: "The defense market worldwide is worth a trillion dollars annually. The energy and environmental market is worth at least eight times this amount. The former is set to contract as governments address the economic realities of the coming decade; the latter is set to expand exponentially, especially in the renewables arena."

14. The UK is in a geographically powerful position to take advantage of the renewables market. Offshore wind power has huge potential as the UK has the largest wind resources in Europe and already as much capacity installed as the rest of the world combined. The UK also has substantial wave and tidal resources. What is in short supply, along with political will, is skilled engineers.

15. CAAT's Arms to Renewables briefing, October 2014, ([http://bit.ly/1u53Eoc](http://bit.ly/1u53Eoc)) shows that a move towards offshore wind and marine energy could produce more jobs than the entire arms industry. These jobs could provide alternative employment for arms industry workers. At the moment, the bulk of offshore wind jobs, including those in the supply chain, are overseas. However, like arms, the renewable energy sector is highly skilled. It employs many of the same branches of engineering and has a similar breakdown across broad categories of skill levels. There would also be appropriate work available in most areas where arms workers are located, including tens of thousands of supply chain jobs that could be located anywhere in the country.

16. Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond told an audience in Boston on 9th October 2014, renewables would be "critical to reducing our vulnerability to energy supply shocks" and meeting the climate change challenge. Other benefits would also arise, such as cleaner air, more efficient transport
and cities, and better health. He continued: "50 years ago, the US showed how a strategic challenge, putting a man on the moon, could guarantee innovation through economy-transforming investments. Today, we have an opportunity to do that again in response to the challenge of climate change". The potential is immense. And by seizing the initiative, we can take first mover advantage."

(http://bit.ly/1qvwJqP)

17. The Foreign Secretary's words need to be translated into action. In 2013, the government spent 25 times more on arms Research & Development (R&D) than it did on renewable energy R&D. UK R&D spending on arms was £1,460million in 2012/13 (MoD, Finance Bulletin 1.03, 2014, Table 1.03.05) while R&D for renewable energy was £58.61million in 2013 (International Energy Agency, R&D statistics). This needs to change.

18. The UK government should show its commitment to sustainable development by moving its focus from looking for military solutions to tackling climate change. In practice this means transferring its support for the arms industry to promoting renewable energy and low-carbon technologies. This requires investment and a concerted UK government effort of the magnitude currently devoted to the arms industry. A top priority should be a binding renewable energy target for 2030 to provide the stability required for investment. There should also be increased public funding, in particular for R&D and investment in infrastructure such as ports, as well as a commitment to building the domestic supply chain for renewable energy. If the UK invests now it would be in a leading position in technologies that will be in high demand, have major export potential, and could assist other countries in cutting their carbon emissions.

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