

IV General Assembly of the PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Hosted by the
CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

22-23 November 2010, Bogotá, Colombia

FINAL REPORT



On the 22nd-23rd of November 2010 the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arm and Light Weapons held its IV General Assembly in the Congress of Colombia in Bogotá. Host of the event was Senator Roy Barreras from Colombia.

More than sixty participants attended the two-day forum for parliamentary exchange, including thirty members of parliament and senators from Africa, Europe and Latin America. Other participants were the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, representatives from the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation as well as representatives from Embassies, Non-Governmental Organisations and the media.

The main objective of the General Assembly was to elect a new board for the Forum as well as to provide a space for parliamentarians to meet and join forces in search for peaceful and secure communities. Effectively a new board of the Forum was elected and will be led by Hon. Benito Lara, Member of Parliament from El Salvador as President and Hon. Ibrahim Sorie, Member of Parliament of Sierra Leone as Vice President. Other board members elected are Hon. MP Rose Abunaw, Cameroon, Hon. Senator Roy Barreras, Colombia, Hon. MP Raphael Chegeni, Tanzania, Hon. MP Celestino Suarez, Spain, Hon. MP Daisy Tourné, Uruguay, Hon. MP Christer Winbäck, Sweden as well as Ana Yancy Espinoza from the Arias Foundation in Costa Rica, representing civil society.

During the seminar there was a common understanding among the participants that the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is a major threat to development, democracy and security in many parts of the world, and hence a serious concern for parliamentarians world-wide. The consequences in society with insecurity, firearms and crime are of prime concern to citizens. The main topic of discussion was the link between the illicit trade on arms and drugs and a policy statement was adopted on the issue. The participants also gave an update on national SALW processes in their home parliaments and regions as well as on the various multilateral processes on SALW. In relation to the Model Law on Firearms, Ammunition and Related Materials of the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino), a presentation on how to continue working with legislation reform and how to achieve results was held by Hon. Daisy Tourné from Uruguay and specific regional experiences were presented by members of parliament from Central America, South America and Africa.

Monday 22 November

Opening session



Senator Roy Barreras, Colombia

Hon. Roy Barreras, Senator of the Republic of Colombia, Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, President of the Peace Commission in the Congress of Colombia. In his opening address he welcomed all participants and said it was a great honour and responsibility to have such a large and important group of participants in Bogotá. Furthermore he recalled that the previous inter-parliamentary seminar that was organised by the Parliamentary Forum on SALW in the Congress of the USA earlier this year with the title “Parliamentary Action on Small Arms—the Illicit Transfer of Small Arms to Latin America” was very useful and productive.

Many citizens in the world are of the perspective that weapons should be in the hands of the government. It is clear that the law in democratic countries with democratic institutions state that the state should have the monopoly of weapons. Moreover, he insisted that the international community should get involved. Colombia has a great responsibility in this matter as well as a painful history of illegal transfer made by large networks. In his view, in relation to international traffic there is a lack of knowledge on how to stop the producers. There is a lot of pressure put on developing states to solve this problem and he stressed the need to establish better control systems.

The constitutional right to use firearms teaches the world the notion of self defence. However, self defence will always end badly. During the last few years, people have been agreeing with this statement. However, when people do not believe that the state is able protect them; the remedy is worse than the decease. International meetings, such as this one, are useful to foster model laws and to develop strategies. Drawing upon on his own commitment in this matter, Hon. Barreras shared his own experience in trying to promote a new law a few months ago. He had the support from both mayors and civilians but the initiative was not successful since many other actors claimed that people have the right to carry weapons.

In Colombia, about 50% of the illegal weapons originate from other countries. The borders between Mexico and the USA are porous and few countries have put in an effort to collect illegal weapons, mostly due to the fact that they lack knowledge of where these weapons are. This is an important factor for criminals. He concluded his speech by emphasising that less weapons in the hands of a country's citizens leads to less number of deaths.

Dr. Manuel de Araujo, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW (Mozambique), addressed all participants at the seminar and on behalf of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons and he expressed his strong appreciation for the possibility to have the IV General Assembly of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW in Bogotá. Special thanks were given to the Congress of the Republic of Colombia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Colombia and the Hon. Senator Barreras and his staff for hosting this event and making this gathering of parliamentarians possible.

The Parliamentary Forum is still a young, but growing organization of parliamentarians worldwide concerned with the un-controlled proliferation of small arms and the effects these weapons have on building and sustaining prosper and secure societies.

The work of the Parliamentary Forum originates from the aftermath of the Hurricane Mitch in Central America in the nineties. At that time, it became clear to many actors in the international community that the proliferation of small arms was a major obstacle to re-building societies; a reality that had been clear to parliamentarians in these countries for many years. Spanish and Swedish members of parliaments took the initiative to form a network to offer political, legal and financial support to their colleagues in Central America, how to deal with the problem. This concrete act of solidarity was strongly appreciated, and based on that experience, the need to have a more permanent network of parliamentarians was identified.

Gradually the whole of Latin America was covered and a growing interest from African parliamentarians to participate emerged. At present, the Forum has approximately 200 members in 60 countries. The Forum's ambition is to further expand to Asia as well as to the Middle East, and ultimately engage more members from all the regions of the globe.

The method of bringing parliamentarians from different countries and continents together to share perspectives and learning from each other is crucial when dealing with issues of peace and international security. Parliaments have a key role in peace making, promoting and informing public debates, collaborating in policy development and implementation, monitoring and criticising government initiatives, and controlling the budget allocations of the public security sector.

Parliaments are the only bodies with authority to create and reform legislation and to ratify international treaties. As democratically elected representatives, parliamentarians have unique access to the public space and as such a possibility to create debate and to stimulate public opinion. Parliaments also serve as links between civil society and governments, thus assuring both the legality and legitimacy of policy initiatives.

Furthermore, Dr. Araujo said that since these weapons easily cross borders it immediately becomes a problem of international concern and, as such, requires commitments at a national, regional and international level. Therefore the Forum emphasizes the necessity of controlling international trade arms trade, both legal and illicit. The Forum is a strong advocate for a comprehensive international Arms Trade Treaty and part of our current work is to encourage parliamentarians worldwide in support for the upcoming ATT process.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Araujo stressed that armed violence is a complex issue, which makes it necessary for parliamentarians to work with all their available tools. That is also, in his believes, the main reason for a growing interest among parliamentarians to work with small arms. At last, he hoped for a most fruitful exchange during the event. His full presentation is available on the Forum's website www.parlforum.org.



L-r Minister Holguín Cuéllar, Mr. Luis Gómez Nogueira, Spanish MFA, MP Tomas Burgos, Spain

H.E. Mrs. María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Colombia, stated that trafficking in SALW is a plague whose cost to society is not only visible in the number of people who are victims of indiscriminate use of these weapons but also in the pain it causes for people. She said the adoption of an Arms Trade Treaty, which is under negotiation, will constitute a legal framework to prevent actions of armed violence and should include Small Arms and Light Weapons as a category.

Highlights since last assembly

Hon. Christer Winbäck, Board Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW (Sweden), moderated this session.

The aim of this session was to give the members of the Forum a chance to describe the situation in their home countries as well as to state what has been done in their home parliaments since the last General Assembly.

Hon. Winbäck started his presentation by expressing that he was indeed very grateful to be a member of the Board of the Forum and that he had learned a lot over the years which he has brought back to his home parliament. He started by mentioning a conversation he had with an observer from NATO, who had told him that he concurred with the work of the Forum and that he believed that decreasing the number of arms was the right thing to do. He pleaded however, not to take all firearms away. He was American.

He continued by saying that as parliamentarians we need to examine not only what we can do internationally but in our own countries. Sweden is the ninth largest arms producer in the world and by capita it is the largest. In the Swedish Parliament they have a parliamentary group specifically for SALW issues. The members come from all parties represented in parliament which means that although they have a common goal they sometimes differ in how to do things. As a member of the governing coalition he and his colleagues have greater power but cannot be as critical as the opposition. Next week they have a meeting scheduled and he will report back from the General Assembly. The group work in close cooperation with the Forum Secretariat who often attends the meetings. He highlighted a fruitful meeting held with representatives from a major Swedish private security company which had focused on ethical values.

Reports from members

Hon. Sorie (Sierra Leone) described the situation in the sub-region of West Africa, mentioning the two recent parliamentary conferences held by the Forum in cooperation with United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) and the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) small arms programme ECOSAP. The outcome of these two meetings had been to organise the parliamentarians of in sub-region and they have prepared a plan of action.

The main problems in West African are bad governance, bad handling of natural resources as well as the use of young men and women in armed conflict. The largest country Nigeria has problems of violence in the delta area where kidnappings and other criminal activities take place. The 15 countries in the sub-region have adopted a document on SALW control within the framework of ECOWAS and they have established National Commissions on SALW. These programmes are up and running and receive international assistance. Two weeks ago the USA had started up a project to help destroy stockpiles. But there is still a need for further international assistance.

He expressed his gratitude towards the Forum and highlighted its commitment to work with the West African Action Network on SALW (WAANSA), which will soon function as an umbrella organisation for national parliamentary groups on SALW. He mentioned the Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum on Peace (Amani Forum) and highlighted that West Africa would benefit from a similar network.

Hon. Senator Mendoza de Acha (Paraguay) referred to Senator Barreras' earlier statement regarding that people use government's lack of control. Paraguay is currently experiencing the beginnings of the situation of Colombia. A terrorist group is emerging and kidnappings etc take place. Insecurity in Paraguay has doubled and the government may appear uninterested. This is not true but the situation is overwhelming. As a member of the opposition party in the parliament they are doing their best to control the situation. They try to give citizens a chance to respond. Parliamentarians should not live their lives differently from its citizens.

Hon. Winbäck (Sweden) mentioned how he and his colleagues try to raise awareness and urge the government not to be such an important exporter of arms.

Hon. Tourné (Uruguay) continued by saying that there is a macro level and local level to this problem. She also stressed that improper use of arms affect everyone in society, especially women and children and the Forum must address this issue properly. She urged her fellow parliamentarians not to forget these vulnerable groups. Regardless of country or region, gender-based violence is brutal and exists in all countries. Her own country, Uruguay, has one of the highest rates of reported cases of this type of violence. She also highlighted mistreat of children and lethal accidents which occur when adults are irresponsible and leave arms within reach for children. Also, there are still child soldiers in many parts of the world. The Forum should have a specific paragraph in relation to civilians and she asked how many of the parliamentarians present knew the costs of armed violence.

Hon. Figueroa (Nicaragua) highlighted Nicaragua's recent ratification of the Convention of Cluster Munition, CCM, and the remarkable efforts made by his colleague Hon. Palacios, in this regard.

Hon. Palacios (Nicaragua) described the recent arms reform in Nicaragua and how the country has destroyed large quantities of arms, conducted extensive follow up and tracking of arms, and found the last landmines still in their territory. She was pleased to announce that Nicaragua is now practically free from landmines. Nicaragua has also given advice to other countries on this issue.

The police have also initiated collaboration with the citizens and incorporated them into their work as well as provided training. Nicaragua is moving forward and aims to be the safest country in Central America and ideally a weapon free country.

Hon. Baldata (Argentina) mentioned that this was her first meeting as a member of the Forum. In Argentina there is a permanent concern for this topic. Since the 1980's the country has transitioned slowly but strongly into a democracy. The situation is similar to that in Paraguay. She highlighted the Model Legislation on SALW and requested that a similar model be developed for private security companies. These companies are legal but need to be controlled.

Hon. Muñoz (Costa Rica) mentioned that this was also her first Forum meeting and passed on her regards from former Forum member Mrs. Elizabeth Fonseca who left the parliament after the last elections. A conference was recently held in Costa Rica which mainly focused on global economical cooperation but also brought up the issue of arms. In Costa Rica, recent data show that it is assumed that around 20% of the population hold arms. In addition to this there are lot of private security companies. The security committee, of which she is a member, will soon present a proposal legislation reform on arms.

Hon. Lara (El Salvador) underscored the serious problems of SALW in relation to health. In El Salvador large efforts are being made to find illegal arms and make them legal again.

Hon. Winbäck (Sweden) thanked all participants for their contributions and highlighted that by sharing we can find new innovative solutions to our problems. Time is short and for those who did not get a chance to speak now, there would be opportunities later.

Reports from the Vice-President and Secretary General

Dr. Manuel de Araujo, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW(Mozambique) reported that the Forum now works with a variety of issues such as assisting parliamentarians in establishing legislative frameworks and encouraging the oversight role. He mentioned some of the meetings the Forum has organised during the past two years. The first regional meeting after the General Assembly in 2008 was held in the German Parliament in Berlin and the aim was to reach out to parliamentarians in South Eastern- and Eastern Europe. He also highlighted the meetings held in the Parliament of Nicaragua under the auspices of Forum member Hon. José Figueroa as well as the two capacity-building meetings held for West Africa.

An important achievement was the seminar held in the Congress of the USA where US Congressmen participated.

Apart from these regional meetings, the Forum has also been active at the United Nations and international level.

He finished by mentioning the 16 policy statements adopted by the Forum over the past two years. These are all available on the Forum's website and he urged the members of the Forum to make use of these statements as tools in their parliamentary work.

Mr. Peter Weiderud, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, gave a report from the Secretariat to the General Assembly. He initiated by saying that there is an enormous interest among parliamentarians, globally, to work on gun control issues. This interest and engagement is essential for the possibilities of advancing the small arms agenda. Parliaments are the only bodies with authority to create and reform legislation and support and approve ratification of international agreements.

Parliamentarians has the duty to oversee government performance in the security sector and together with civil society, parliamentarians can form public opinion and hence contribute to a culture of peace that can ultimately prevent violent conflicts in a very violent world.

Since the UN Charter was signed 65 years ago 30 million people have died in different armed conflicts of which 26 million were killed with SALW. Some 600 millions small arms are in circulation and nearly 300.000 individuals are killed by firearms throughout the world each year.

There is a lot of information about small arms and violence but what is really lacking is wisdom, which will help us to understand what to do with all the information and new knowledge. Wisdom is created in the exchange between parliamentarians. It is in that context understanding can grow on how to translate what we know into political action and make a difference for people. In order to emphasise this he quoted what T.S. Eliot that once said; *"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"*

As continuation, Mr. Weiderud gave an outline of the scope of the organization and started by saying that the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons is a young organization of parliamentarians that was established as an organization in 2002. At present, the Forum is strong in membership in parts of Latin America, Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the Forum has a global identity and should have global, but realistic, ambitions; hence there is a need to have a strategy on how to deal with the rest of the world.

Today, the Forum is the only global focal point for parliamentarians related to the specific issues of armed violence and small arms. As such, the Parliamentary Forum has the potential to contribute substantially to the effort of reducing the proliferation of small arms.

Over the past years there has been a clear development of the work of the Forum, as well as of the international small arms agenda in general, moving from a focus on control issues, such as illegality and non-proliferation, towards a deeper and wider approach, aimed at comprehensively targeting armed violence, notably parting from the perspectives of security and justice sector reforms. In his view, this is a natural and most welcome development, not only to address the symptoms of violence, but also deal with the root causes, and ultimately try to prevent conflicts from being solved violently.

Furthermore, Mr. Weiderud explained that as a method to strengthen the policy making role of the Forum, in May 2007 draft statements were introduced for the consideration of the Board and the General Assembly. This is a democratic tool for policy making, allowing the board members to discuss and agree on the policy guidance for the Forum. Once policy is in place, it gives more space for the President and the Secretariat to act on behalf of the Forum within the policy guidelines given. So far the Board and the assemblies have decided on 16 statements including on the Arms Trade Treaty, Cluster Munitions, Gender and SALW, Privatisation on Security, Aid and Security, Stockpiling of Ammunition, Security Sector Reform, the Private Illicit Arms Transfer to Latin America and so on. Consequently, during this General Assembly the Board is also proposing a draft statement for the consideration on the links between the illicit trafficking on drugs and small arms.

Mr. Weiderud also gave an update on the activities of the Forum since the last General Assembly that was held in Arusha, Tanzania, in October 2008. Since then the Board has met in Berlin, Buenos Aires, Managua, Washington DC and in New York. In addition to this the Forum has been able to host several regional meetings around the world focusing on various issues related to SALW. Regional meetings is the Forums most important working method both for capacity building for parliamentarians and to raise awareness of specific small arms related problems, since this is a way to bring existing and new members together, make exchange with expertise and efficiently advance the small arms agenda. The next regional meeting will be held together with the House of Representatives in Cyprus in February next year, with the aim to move into the Middle East region for the first time. He also emphasised the importance of working closely with other civil society organisations.

Over the years, the Forum has received generous support from various donors of which some are the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Folke Bernadotte Academy. The main donors have looked upon the Forum as an exciting project, young alert, un-bureaucratic and effectively being able to give political results. Sida has asked for an evaluation and an assessment of the future strategic road for the Forum and they have also indicated that they cannot guarantee any grants beyond 2011. They are very pleased with the cooperation so far in content, but their intention was not necessarily to support the creation of an inter-parliamentary institution, which they have to take the main responsibility for over time. The Forum is hence at a cross-road and there are several options possible:

1. Seek deeper and structural cooperation with an existing inter-parliamentary organization, e.g. the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) or Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA);
2. Institutionalize further, which would include seeking more governments which can provide long-term support to the Forum, like Sweden and Spain are at the moment;
3. Move the Secretariat to a country willing to continue to support the Forum at least on the level of Sida and for at least five years;
4. Convince Sida that the unique work of the Forum should have support also in the future.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Weiderud said that after a few years of a very dynamic development combined with consolidating membership, policies, relations, programme work, Secretariat and finances, the Forum is at a crossroad and to find the right way forward, we should be able to benefit from the wisdom of the General Assembly. He then continued to quote what Mahatma Ghandi once said; *“There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.”*

Lastly, he stated that the dedicated work on small arms by parliamentarians is focusing on the core issues to create a secure, prosperous and good life for people and societies. For a full description of the Forum’s past, existing and future work please see Secretary General’s Report on www.parlforum.org.

Colombia and the effects of SALW in our society



*Vice President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW,
Dr. de Araujo, Mozambique and
Mr. Reyes, Former Chancellor of Colombia*

Mr. Camilio Reyes, Former Chancellor of Colombia, commented on the issue of SALW in Colombia and began by stating that it is very clear that SALW has affected Colombian communities deeply. Colombia has endured constant violation of humanitarian and international rights and as a result, the democratic institutions in Colombia have weakened.

The use of SALW should be under state control and under stringent norms with the aim of defending the institutions and the people of the state

SALW has affected this norm, i.e. that the state can and should be the only actor to have weapons.

He then expressed his concerns about the ongoing and enhanced privatisation of security and claimed that there is no longer a link between the governor and the governed, which, as a result has a devastating effect on a country, which can also be seen in the case of Colombia.

When SALW contaminate a society, the conflict deepens. Armed groups and individuals are often no longer willing to negotiate, or the negotiation is on different terms than before. We have seen this happening in various parts of our continent as well as in other places of the world, mainly in developing countries where state institutions are weak. Situations arise where it is difficult to reach consensus and the ones holding the firearms take over, that is, the firearms define the situation.

There is a double dimension here. Firearms are threatening even when they are not used. Their sole presence is enough.

The second dimension is the health issue and its relation to development. The World Health Organisation (WHO), has issued a study analysing how state health sectors are affected when SALW are abundant. The conclusion for Colombia is that the health sector was close to collapsing. Gun wounds need urgent treatment and other patients have to wait.

There is also still a great gap between legislation and reality. He urged the international community to join and renew their efforts since there is still a lot to do and parliamentarians have an important role in this. He highlighted the need to support the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and keep this initiative on top of the agenda. There is also a strong need to strengthen capacity and to facilitate interaction between the states and international organisations.

In relation to the United Nations Programme of Action on illicit SALW, he noted that states find it difficult to maintain the issue on the agenda as well as to maintain human and financial resources.

He noted the efforts made in various Colombian cities which had declared a whole month without weapons. He highlighted that armed violence is an issue of gender and age since young men are often the victims and perpetrators and that alcohol and drugs are often involved. He also noted the brave decisions made by many mayors who recently have reduced the opening hours of clubs and bars in an effort to curb the crime rate.

He passed on a recommendation made by civil society organisations; to higher the age limit for gun purchasing to 25 years of age and also that all holders should have insurance. It should be as natural as having insurance for a car. The profit from these insurances should support the victims. Each municipality also has the responsibility for collecting weapons. Today Colombia has an average of 33 gun related murders per 100.000 inhabitants which is a very high figure and in some areas the rate is up to 80–85 murders per 100.000 inhabitants

He finished by thanking Senator Barreras and the organisers for this wonderful opportunity.

Session I: Presentation on the links between the illicit trade on arms and drugs

Hon. Benito Lara, Board Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW (El Salvador), facilitated this session and before giving the floor to the key note speaker he gave an introduction of the topic of discussion.

The arms trade is closely linked to the illicit drug trade as well as to other collateral issues, such as trafficking of humans and organized crime in general. Many countries in the north have a large production of weapons while countries in the south have large productions of illicit drugs. Hon. Lara himself comes from El Salvador, one of the countries right in the middle of these trade routes.

The illicit trade has made the situation in Latin America more complex and lead to more deaths than what have been seen before. The production of weapons as well as the profit made from the trade is enormous and a powerful sector makes a profitable living from the insecurity in these countries. These networks also often benefit from the perception of great insecurity among people which of course leads to proliferation of arms as well as a growing number of private security companies. He underscored that the state should provide security for all.

Key note speaker: Mr. Samuel Logan, Journalist and Analyst, Founding Editor of Southern Pulse Networked Intelligence, made a PowerPoint presentation on the issue. Slides are available on the Forum's website www.parlforum.org.

During his presentation Mr. Logan gave an overview on arms trafficking routes and drug trafficking routes and showed how these overlap almost perfectly. It is a similar system and the close overlap is because of the same actors and the same connections are involved in the operations. The two commodities are used both as products and payment and provide traders with power and control.

Some of the cartel names listed were; FARC, Rastrojos, Urabaños, Comando Vermelho, Primeiro Comando Capital, Tijuana Cartel, Los Zetas, Juarez Cartel, Sinaloa Federation, Gulf Cartel, La Familia, MS-13, M-18, Transportistas and the Sun Cartel.

Looking back a few years, one of these criminal groups is the Suri Cartel which has existed since the middle of the 1990's and it is an exemplary case of the overlap of the drugs and guns trades. There were three main actors involved; Mr. Mendonça (Brazilian airplane pilot and mechanic), Desi Bouterse (former military dictator of Suriname), and Tomas Molina (Negro Acacio, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC). He noted later that Desi Bouterse is now elected president in Surinam. Their operations would work in the following way: the airplanes came from Brazil to Surinam with weapons, gold and money and were reloaded with weapons in Surinam and then flown to Colombia where the weapons were offloaded and traded for cocaine, which normally would come from the FARC. The cocaine then went back to Surinam and then to Europe via Amsterdam. Four to five rifles would buy about one kilo of cocaine.

Historically the FARC is a demand driver for weapons in the region but were not linked to the drug trade initially but were instead a political insurgency which has evolved into a drug trafficking organization (DTO).

By 1995 the demands for weapons had grown due to higher access to cocaine. The trade went from Surinam to Rio and then spread to Sao Paulo. Brazil was then a leader in cocaine consumption. Lack of employment is a huge contributor to the street violence and the use of drugs is more a symptom of a greater problem such as lack of education and other root causes. Brazil is also well-known for making pistols and has a large manufacturing component. Many of these arms are sold legally to other countries. Some of these weapons were sold legally to Paraguay and then sold illegally into the black market by altering end user certificates inside Paraguay. The police do seize weapons and some are destroyed but corrupt elements sell weapons back to the black market. In relation to Brazil, he explained that women are also involved in the trade.

Historically Central America has been feeding guns to Colombia, but has now also become a supplier for Mexico, which is the second major demand market for illegal weapons in Latin America.

The Zetas have operated in Guatemala since 2005 where they control Alta Verapaz and Peten where they recruit 'kaibiles' which are a special operations force of the military of Guatemala as well as corrupt serving officers.

In terms of the weapons used Mr. Logan also noted an escalation in Mexico, moving from pistols to high-powered rifles to grenades and explosives. The weapon of choice still seems to be the AK-47.

In the USA the demand for cocaine has reached a plateau while in Europe there is an increasing demand for the drug and it is said that every new EU member state opens up a new market. The drug is notably more expensive in Europe and becomes increasingly expensive further east. It is hence a good source of income for criminal groups. There is also a link to China where certain chemicals used in drug production are produced.

On a final note Mr. Logan said that criminal gangs communicate very well in Latin America and even with criminal gangs in Africa. He urged the parliamentary participants to match that level of communication.

Representatives from Colombia highlighted education as a vital part in order to teach children not to use arms.

Hon. Senator Mendoza de Acha (Paraguay) highlighted the need to allocate resources since the resources held by people involved in organised crime far exceed that of the police and the military forces. She proposed to draft a legislation obligating the police and the armed forces to inform the parliament of the weapons they use each year. When parliamentarians then examine the national budget they can analyse the needs of the police forces for these weapons and conduct an inventory. This would strengthen parliamentary oversight and help control corruption.



Senator Mendoza de Acha, Paraguay

Hon. Garcia (Guatemala) regrettably confirmed that all data showed by Mr. Logan was true. He noted that Guatemala had been mentioned several times. However, he wanted to share some comments: 80 % of crimes in Guatemala are committed with illegal weapons from Mexico which are later flown to neighbouring countries. 45% of all crimes in Guatemala are connected with the drug trade. A law is simply not enough and he wished to come back to this point the next day.

Hon. Tourné (Uruguay) congratulated Mr. Logan and stressed the need to assume the political responsibility since people involved in the illicit trade also bribe politicians and policemen.

She also reported that in Uruguay and Argentina derivatives of cocaine is being sold which significantly affect the health of consumers.

Hon. Sorie (Sierra Leone) confirmed that the trafficking of arms and narcotics is a serious concern for the West African region and said that they are very interested in learning from Colombia. Progress has been made by the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS. On a

positive note he described a situation where a plane arrived in Sierra Leone at three o'clock in the morning loaded with drugs and arms but the people involved were arrested and handed over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the United States of American (FBI) in Freetown. He urged other countries to follow the example of Sierra Leone in order to reduce the trade of drugs and arms in the sub-region.

He continued by bringing up the legalisation on drugs which is currently being discussed in West Africa, drawing a parallel to the case of alcohol. Once this substance was legalised the price dropped significantly. It would no longer be profitable for criminals to engage in the trade. There is a need for political will to combat and hinder that drugs and arms comes in to our countries and destroy the economies.

Hon. Gomes (Guinea Bissau) described that his country is used as a transit area for drugs. The country is divided into two areas – the continental part and the islands. The islands are many and often difficult to access making it difficult for police to work there.

He stressed that cooperation from neighbouring countries mainly is needed, as well as international cooperation since the illicit trade threatens the stability in the region. Guinea Bissau has undergone a coup d'état and a civil war which had nothing to do with drugs. The drug problem is global and therefore all countries must participate and a global strategy is needed.

Hon. Sanogo (Burkina Faso) declared that after the war there were more arms than persons in his country. Since then, Burkina Faso has changed significantly and he felt that the parliament has access to control the manufactures, registration, sales of arms as well as what enters and what is exported in Burkina Faso. He expressed his gratitude towards the Forum for the assistance and guidance.

Hon. Muñoz (Costa Rica) noted that corrupt activities are a breeding ground that affects the fight against arms trafficking. She highlighted the information exchange model on security, adopted by her country which aims to counter the trafficking of arms and drugs.

Several of the participants stressed the need to work at a global level since the problem is clearly intercontinental.

Hon. Ocampo (Nicaragua) followed up on Hon. Lara's comment and noted that Nicaragua is also a transit country for drugs and organized crime. She also noted that Mr. Logan had mentioned that corruption is due to low salaries. She was pleased to say that this was not applicable to Nicaragua. Nicaragua has a poor population but the police officers defending the country have a good reputation among citizens in and outside of the country. She highlighted once again the issue expressed earlier by Hon. Figueroa, also from Nicaragua, the importance of working together with the citizens, involving them in the work.

Mr. Logan was then given the floor to respond to the comments. He started by explaining that in organised crime there is always a need for new recruits for trafficking arms and drugs. Reports show that organized crime groups and cartels control a large number of education centres. When

young people finish education they look for opportunities and their only option is often street gangs.

He agreed with the proposal to design a project where different actors report to legislators the numbers of arms seized. This has been implemented to some level in Brazil but before there was a need to cataloguing the weapons. He has seen that in many countries weapons are often dumped into warehouses and forgotten about. He confirmed that many weapons move from Mexico to Guatemala and the borders between these countries are porous. He explained that he had personally experienced these porous borders by crossing the river. Someone like himself who is obviously not Mexican was able to do this at a small cost.

On the border between Guatemala and El Salvador there are at least 62 blind spots. He agreed with the MP from Guatemala that even the best legislations cannot stop the problem; you still need the right people to implement these laws. Evidence shows that within the police, even at the top level, people are involved in organized crime.

He continued mentioning the issue of gun smiths. Just four pieces of metal put together makes a one shot weapon and gun smiths are able to make AK-47s with pieces of older weapons. They often visit gun shows to acquire these spare parts. He then asked how we control the people who make guns in their back garden.

He asked the participants from West Africa if they had any information on what happened on the return flights. His guess was that these planes are loaded with cheap AK 47s. There are still a lot of arms in West Africa but nowadays there is less demand, but there is still a demand for arms in Mexico.

He especially thanked the member from Guinea Bissau for participating in this event. He had often found it difficult to dialogue with Guinea Bissau but stated that there is a lot to learn from their experience.

His final comment was on Costa Rica which is a country that has maintained a reputation of being a secure country. However, we now know that it is a transit area but he was pleased that Costa Rica enjoys strong cooperation between various actors and that there is information sharing.

Session II: Multilateral processes, treaties and conventions – an update

Facilitator and Key note speaker: *Hon. Celestino Suarez Gonzales*, Spain, Board Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW

Hon. Suarez gave an account of the situation in Spain which is part of all international disarmament agreements and negotiation processes, both in terms of conventional weapons, such as the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-personnel Landmines Convention as well as in terms of chemical and biological weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Their latest commitment has been to support the negotiations for an Arms Trade Treaty.

Spain has also strengthened its national legislation in order to have better control on exports of defence and dual use material.

The conventions and processes especially highlighted during the General Assembly were the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA), and the Cluster Munition Convention (CCM).

Cluster Munition Convention (CCM)

The Process (also known as the Oslo process) was launched in February 2007 when a group of 46 states committed to "conclude by 2008 a legally binding international instrument that prohibits the use and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians and secures adequate provision of care and rehabilitation to survivors and clearance of contaminated areas".

After a round of negotiation meetings held in various parts of the world, a final diplomatic conference was held in Dublin in May 2008, where over 100 States attended and adopted the Convention. The signing conference took place in Oslo, Norway in December 2008 where 93 states signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

The aim of the Convention is an immediate and unconditional ban on all cluster munitions which cause unacceptable harm to civilians. Each State Party undertakes never, under any circumstances, to use, develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer cluster munitions, or to assist another party in doing so.

Spain signed the Convention in December 2008 and deposited its instrument of ratification on June 17, 2009, thus becoming the tenth country to ratify. Spain declared a unilateral moratorium in July 2008 and was the first party state to destroy its national stockpile.

The Convention entered into force on August 1, 2010 and the First Meeting of States Parties was held in November 2010 in Vientiane, Laos, adopting three documents that mark the implementation. He underscored that Spain will continue to promote the universalisation of this international instrument.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

This proposed treaty can be described as a comprehensive instrument since it includes all conventional weapons, including SALW and is aimed at all types of international arms transfers, and contains requirements of both procedural and substantive nature.

Since the process started there have been positive developments. After years of discussions and debates the breakthrough came in October 2009 when the UN First Committee considered a draft resolution that would convert the four remaining sessions of the open-ended working group into preparatory committee meetings, thus adopting a clear timeline for work on a treaty.

A series of preparatory meetings will lead up to a UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2012 that hopefully will finalise the treaty. The vast majority of governments – 153 in total – agreed on a timetable to establish a “strong and robust” Arms Trade Treaty with the “highest common standards” to control international transfers of conventional arms. The approved resolution states that the conference will be undertaken “on the basis of consensus”. Very positive news is that the USA, the world’s top arms exporter, for the first time voted in favour.

Spain takes active part in these negotiations in order to reach an agreement to establish common standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms that respect Human Rights. During the first half of 2010, Spain held the Presidency for the European Union (EU), and the Arms Trade Treaty was identified as one of the highest priorities of the Spanish Presidency in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament and has taken an active role during the working group meetings which have taken place within the framework of the EU. Spain has also promoted the Treaty at international seminars, seeking to propose solutions to advance the negotiations.

United Nation’s Programme of Action (UNPoA)

Lastly he mentioned the United Nation’s Programme of Action, UNPoA, from 2001 on combating the illicit trade in SALW which allows state parties to report back to the UN on progresses made and implementations in this area. Review conferences are held biennially. These conferences has met several challenges but in the meeting in 2008 resulted in a final document adopted by vote, highlighting three main areas, namely; international assistance, cooperation and capacity-building, stockpile management as well as brokering of illicit SALW.

A strong example of how Spain has supported the UNPoA are seven implementation workshops on the issue, which since 2004 have all been held in and for Latin America and sponsored by the Spanish Development and Cooperation Agency, AECID. As a donor country Spain also financially supports various international organisations working on arms control, including ECOWAS, UN initiatives and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and last but not least the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons. The contribution for 2008 was € 30.000 and for 2010 €100.000. In addition to this, Spain has sponsored various seminars and conferences on the topic. For a full description of Spain’s work in the area, please see ‘Sesión I Dip. Suárez’ on www.parlforum.org.



MP Palacios and MP Figueroa, Nicaragua

Comments: Hon. Alba Palacios, MP Nicaragua, Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, highlighted how important it is that the permanent members of the United Nation Security Council join the negotiations on international treaties on disarmament since these five countries are also the largest producers.

These kinds of processes are slow and they should be. 80% of arms exports are carried out by China, Russia and the United States, and she called on these countries to take greater control and demonstrate their commitment against illegal trafficking.

There are two bullets per person in the world and for every arm that is destroyed another 10 are produced. She highlighted how the use of small arms and light weapons increases abuse and sexual crimes as well as affects the economic development of states. A third of the countries in the world spend more money on weapons than on social needs. This calls for creating new and effective economic and social models, in order to address trafficking in arms and drugs, while at the same time we should make joint actions at the legislative level in each country.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), recognizes that because of the way Nicaragua has dealt with drug trafficking, the routes have been diverted to Costa Rica and Panama. The countries need to work together. Political work to end the proliferation of SALW must be realistic and parliamentarians need to be firmly involved.

A short term response is to promote new legislation to control arms sales and that governments make sure these laws are implemented, under the supervision of the parliament. She ended by noting that Nicaragua has gone through war and it has cost a lot. This must never happen again.

Hon. Tourné (Uruguay) talked about how the drug trafficking business makes profitable use of the poor sectors, using people without social opportunities as drug mules etc. Social exclusion is a serious problem. The increase of violence and the creation of fear in society is a very lucrative business for some. She dared to say that if people were to stop consuming drugs some countries would collapse due to lack of income. There is a need to face the truth.

Hon. Sanogo (Burkina Faso) declared that states must commit themselves to enforce existing laws. When we talk about cooperation all individuals are responsible. He had heard that in some countries there are tendencies in the debates favouring legalisation of narcotics. He called on all members states to support parliamentarians and forums like this.

Hon. Sorie (Sierra Leone) explained the common African position on these treaties and that Africa always looks towards international cooperation and SALW is a prime example of an area where

we need cooperation and he highlighted the importance of seeing the link between security and development. The use of cluster munitions and anti-personnel landmines has destroyed arable land. Africa and maybe also Latin America look to Europe for leadership since this is where many of these weapons are manufactured. We rely on the effectiveness of parliamentarians once treaties are in place and we look forward to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in terms of victim assistance as well as to a future Arms Trade Treaty.

Hon. Suarez (Spain) ended by saying that in order to effectively stop this plague of our time we need to be realistic. A global treaty will be difficult, especially since the world is very complex and arms sales make a god profit for many countries. The negotiations should be based on consensus.

Session III: Discussion on Parliamentary Forum Policy Statements

Mr. Peter Weiderud, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW moderated this session and started by presenting the draft statement on the illicit trade of arms and drugs to the members of the General Assembly.

The draft policy statement was distributed to all members present and then they were divided into working groups.

Group 1: believed that a declaration of this nature is important and that it should be more concrete, the draft in its current form, they believed, was much too general. Also, group 1 noted some confusion regarding the wording. There is a need to distinguish between organised crime and rebels. Furthermore, they also commented on the importance of transnational organisations and not only national organisations as well as urged the Forum to call for a strengthening of democracy in their countries since that is part of what the members are facing in their home countries.

Group 2: made a few complimentary comments in addition to the first group's remarks underlining the importance of adopting common strategies on a regional scale in the section where fighting corruption is mentioned.

Group 3: also agreed on that there is no need to get into specific details in different countries, as the draft suggested. They also said that they would like to see a clearer link between security and development, that the role of arms brokers is very important as well as emphasised the importance of strengthening regional economical cooperation, such as the ECOWAS etc.

Group 4: agreed to the proposed modifications made by the other groups. Regarding the remark about the link between poverty and security they said that it is important not penalise poverty, instead the Forum should emphasise on the need for a social dimension in all countries. Lastly, they believed that there is a direct link between exporting and importing drugs and arms.

Mr. Weiderud (Secretary General of the Forum) summarised the comments from the working groups and based on the result there was a need for a redraft. Two rapporteurs were appointed to take on this task.

The members of the Forum agreed on the following changes and amendments:

- that there is no need for pointing at individual countries;
- changing the wording from pinpointing poverty to social inequality and exclusion;
- adding the word legal capitol in the fourth paragraph in connection to strengthening the fight against corruption;
- clarify the last operative paragraph that the policy statement refers to transnational arms and drugs instead of national.

The policy statement on the illicit trade of arms and drugs was adopted by the General Assembly

Tuesday 23 November

Session IV: Beyond the Parlatino Model Law on Firearms, Ammunition and Related Materials

Ongoing legislation reforms; how do we achieve results?



MP Tourné, Uruguay

Introduction and facilitation: Hon. Daisy Tourné, Uruguay, Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW. The Model Law on Firearms, Ammunitions and Related Materials was adopted unanimously in 2008 by the Latin American Parliament, Parlatino, represented by over 100 parliamentarians from 19 countries.

Hon. Tourné (Uruguay) gave an introductory presentation based on the findings from the latest report (2009) from the annual study 'the Latin American Barometer'. During the study 20,204 face to face interviews were conducted in 18 countries, with samples representing 100% of the population in each country. The margin of error is about 3%.

The detailed slides from this presentation can be found on the Forum's website www.parlforum.org and on the website of the Latin American Barometer www.latinobarometro.org.

Some of the questions highlighted in Hon. Tourné's presentation were on popular satisfaction with democracy, whether democracy can guarantee freedom, rights and opportunities, etc. Democracy is strengthened in times of crisis. The perception of progress increases despite the coup in Honduras, and the economic crisis. Latin Americans have a higher appreciation of their institutions, their presidents and the free market and are more satisfied with their democracy. However, statistics show that the satisfaction with how well democracy can protect against crime is very low. Latin Americans consider crime and public security to be a more serious problem than unemployment and other economic issues. The study also shows a very low trust in institutions such as the parliament, the judicial power and unions. As an institution, political parties were the lowest of all categories mentioned.

Key note speaker: Dr. Gustavo Colás, Head of the Committee on Security and Narco-trafficking of the Honourable Senate of Argentina, who formed part of the drafting group of the law, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the challenges parliamentarians face and how countries can achieve results in the area of legislation reform. The PowerPoint slides are available on the Forum's website www.parlforum.org.

Since then progress has been made but there are some challenges along the way. The basic assumptions are that to recognize the limitations of the law and that any changes made should be real and not mere cosmetics. Legislation reform is complex and requires an integral approach. He continued by highlighting the importance of the debate around the reform and to go deeper into the understanding of the consequences of armed violence and to consider testimonies from victims and health sector personnel as well as awareness raising on the issue. This work is just as important as the law itself.

There are two sides when dealing with stopping the proliferation of arms. One side deals with the illegal nature of firearms and attempts to reduce the excess of the illegal firearms in a society, registering, formal controls etc. The other side points towards reducing the overall amount of firearms in society including some of those in the legal market i.e. actively discouraging the use of arms. The Model Law fuses the two paradigms of measures: "control" and "disarmament". There is also the changing approach to security. The traditional concept of security is national security which is linked with protection of the territory whereas the new concept of human security is more focused on protection of the citizens and protection of Human Rights.

The main obstacles are above all 1) cultural resistance against this paradigm change, moving towards disarmament of the citizens and get rid of the perceptions that there are 'friends and enemies' in society as well as traditional macho stereotypes; 2) economic interest of producers, salesmen and private security companies as well as the interests coming from sportsmen and hunters; 3) arguments coming from the control agencies that the current regulation is enough and lastly; 4) the media who strengthen cultural perceptions and have a tendency to favor 'bad news'.

In order to strengthen the process, Dr. Colás highlighted the importance to work together with civil society as well as to harmonize with the international agenda and he mentioned a number of international instruments and tools. In addition, he mentioned the names of a range of civil society organizations and networks working on disarmament.

He ended by highlighting how the obstacles and resistance mentioned earlier can be alleviated. In relation to cultural resistance, NGO's and testimonies from victims as well as political leadership can be a strong support. To approach the various interest groups and actors involved, economic support can help. In terms of control agencies, an international approach must be taken to show what the norm is international, and lastly in relation to the media, there is a need to find media actors to ally with and who can support the figures and invite them to cover events and forums on these issues.

Experiences from Latin America and Africa:

Guatemala: Hon. Aníbal García, Guatemala, Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, said that Guatemala, despite the opposition, has adopted a new law on weapons and ammunition in 2009. Unfortunately the regulations of the new law have still not been issued, which is both fundamental and important for its applicability. Neither have any measures been implemented to strengthen the legislation. However, it is worth mentioning that there has been some efforts made to limiting the number of firearms a person may carry or purchase for personal use. This issue has also been taken up in the country's Constitutional Court.

In summary, Hon. Garcia highlighted the importance of seeking administrative measures as well as judiciary and governmental commitment after the adoption of a law in order to be successful in the fight against proliferation of weapons and ammunition.

He concluded his intervention by urging the Forum to expand its specific thematic area of work and hence work with issues related to security and justice as for example criminal investigation. This would allow the Forum to propound real and possible alternatives, especially for those members who sustain a progressive position, which is often strongly criticized by the opponents. Taking on the approach of the establishment of successful democratic measures is thus very important since we are at risk of not solving the serious problems of citizen security that affects our countries.



Senator Londoño, Colombia

Colombia: Hon. Jorge Eduardo Londoño Ulloa, Senator of the Republic of Colombia presented on the theme “Voluntary disarmament as an expression of the fulfilment of civil duty in order to reach peaceful coexistence”.

Hon. Senator Londoño began his intervention by saying that Colombia has been subject to social tension, both political and economical. The Colombian internal conflict is well known and according to him peace and harmony goes beyond established institutional powers and regulations of weapons.

In order to obtain peace, he urged the citizens of Colombia to fulfill the requirements stated in the Colombian Constitution from 1991 where it states that disarmament is one of the steps to achieve peace and by disarming on a voluntary basis it will contribute to its legitimization (article 95, paragraph 6).

The twenty-first century citizenship includes both rights *and* moral duties and he spoke about ethical pacifism. The Colombian Constitution recognizes both individual and citizen rights and freedoms, but at the same time, it imposes obligations. He also underlined that the path to peace and freedom must also recognize the protection of Human Rights.

Hon. Senator Londoño continued by saying that the question is not what the nation can do for you – but what you can do for the nation? In a society, distributive justice cannot only be the role of the government, but should be the attitude and practice of all, and especially from the gifted.

Disarmament policy has had little success. The arms available to the citizens have not been eliminated nor declined, but they have instead increased rapidly. Then, the voluntary disarmament that conducted in the exercise of the right to freedom, without institutional impositions, as announced in the beginning of his intervention, is an expression of the fulfilment of civic duty in striving to achieve and maintain peace, and in this sense it is a contribution to state building that many consider is still in developing.

He concluded his speech by saying that controversies should be resolved through the force of reason and not by arms. His full presentation is available on the Forum's website www.parlforum.org.

The Democratic Republic of Congo: Hon. Raymond Luet Katembo, Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW

Hon. Katembo began his presentation by describing the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) which has since the beginning of the 1990's endured a long and troublesome period of conflict. The proliferation of SALW in the country is considered to be the main threat for peace and security for this people. The national legislation which dated from 1985 was obsolete and filled with loopholes and needed urgent reform. Together with a colleague he therefore initiated a proposal for a new law which included the prevention, control and reduction of SALW as well as munitions. This law has now been adopted by the lower house of the Parliament and is currently being discussed in the Senate. The new law encompasses many of the legal acts developed and adopted by the United Nations Member States, including the United Nations Programme of Action on the illicit trade of SALW (UN PoA), the Bamako Declaration, the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol as well as experiences and recommendation from other regional initiatives.

The new law also includes a total ban on civil possession and use of all firearms, proper tracing and marking and a centralized registration of all seized arms, as well as the adoption of effective programs for collection and destruction of SALW, which is led by a national Non-Governmental Organisation.

Hon. Katembo then underlined that 300.000 arms are currently in circulation in DRC, which to date has caused 3 million civilian deaths. The main concern for DRC is the link between the exploitation of natural resources and the financing of the DRC conflict. An isolated action from one country is not enough to eradicate the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW in the country. For this reason, Hon. Katembo finished by calling for solidarity between parliamentarians and he asked them to urge their respective governments to obtain information about their own involvement in the armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. His full presentation is available on the Forum's website www.parlforum.org.



L-r: MP Gomes, Guinea Bissau, Sen. Hamuli Kitsa, DRC, MP Luete Katembo DRC, MP Ndiaye, Senegal, MP Sanogo, Burkina Faso and Dr. de Araujo, Mozambique

Session V: Discussion and election of new Board

Mr. Peter Weiderud, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, moderated this session and begun with reading a official letter from the current President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, Hon. Senator Sonia M. Escudero (Argentina).

In her absence she thanked the Forum and its members and shared some experiences on the difficulties in promoting reforms in this area as well as highlighted the vital support that is the task of the Forum to help overcome these difficulties by facilitating the transition to more effective regulations, disarmament and culture of peace. Amongst other things, she brought up the written cooperation agreement between the Forum and the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) and the fruitful cooperation between parliamentarians that has since then been established. In her address to the General Assembly she also mentioned the Model Law on Firearms which is a model for harmonization of legislation for the countries in the region, and a guide for effective control of the process associated with the manufacture, import, export, trade, purchase and use of arms as well as the control of deposits and stockpiles, reduction of surpluses and destruction of confiscated arms. For a full report please see 'Letter Senator Escudero', available at www.parlforum.org.

Mr. Weiderud also gave thanks to Vice-President of the Forum, Dr. de Araujo (Mozambique), for his hard and dedicated work during the past two years.

Mr. Weiderud then invited the former Vice-President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW and current President of the Search Committee, Hon. General Nkaisserry (Kenya), to present the nominees for the new board.



MP General Nkaisserry, Kenya

Hon. General Nkaisserry (Kenya) began by thanking the Congress of Colombia and in particular Hon. Senator Barreras for hosting the IV General Assembly of the Forum. He also thanked all the participants for their fruitful and positive contributions during the past days.

Before presenting the result of the Search Committee, Hon. Nkaisserry made a few remarks regarding the objective of the Forum. According to him there is a need to categorise the regions where the Forum is active as well as to have a more aggressive lobby in order to take action on different matters, for example the UN processes.

With regards to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) the Forum needs to develop a common position. Arms trade has to do with both the supply and the demand side.

Coordination between regions is also important and Hon. Nkaisserry proposed to create central units in the various regions in order to facilitate such coordination. He ended this section by thanking the current board for the achievements they have made during the past two years and said that it was a privilege to have been appointed President of the Search Committee.

The Search Committee proposed the following structure of the new board (based on criteria including but not limiting to: continuity of the Board, reflection of the Forum's work and members in different regions, gender balance, representation from core donor countries, national elections):

- 3 representatives from Africa
- 2 representatives from Europe
- 3 representatives from Latin America
- 1 representative from Civil Society
- 1 representative from the Middle East

The list of nominees:

Africa:

- (1) Board member: Hon. Rose Abunaw, Cameroon
- (2) Vice-President: Hon. Ibrahim Sorie, Sierra Leone
- (3) Board member: Hon. Raphael Chegeni, Tanzania

Europe:

- (4) Board member: Hon. Christer Winbäck, Sweden
- (5) Board member: Hon. Celestino Suárez González, Spain

Latin America:

- (6) President: Hon. Benito Lara, El Salvador
- (7) Board member: Hon. Roy Barreras, Colombia
- (8) Board member: Hon. Daisy Tourné, Uruguay

Middle East Region

- (9) Board member: Vacant

NGO representative:

- (10) Board member: Ana Yancy Espinoza, the Arias Foundation, Costa Rica

The proposal was adopted by consensus and in effect, the new board of the Forum was elected. The post for one representative from the Middle East Region is currently vacant. The next meeting will be held in February in Cyprus for the Middle East and North African (MENA) region. In connection to the regional meeting a board meeting will be held with the aim to provide the new board with the possibility of identifying a member to fill the last post of the board.

Mr. Weiderud said that the election of the Board is the responsibility of the General Assembly. It is a strong board. Although the Board does not have the best gender balance it is still a better balance compared to the gender balance in the Forum as a whole.

Mr. Weiderud also brought up the importance of electing a new Search Committee for the next coming General Assembly of the Forum. According to tradition, the former Vice-President of the Forum is appointed President of the Search Committee. The proposal was accepted by the General Assembly and Dr. de Araujo was elected President of the Search Committee by consensus.

The floor was then given to the new President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, Hon. Lara from El Salvador.



Newly elected Parliamentary Forum on SALW President Lara and Vice President Sorie

Hon. Lara (El Salvador) was welcomed by a lot of applauses from the participants and he began with thanking the former President, Hon. Senator Escudero (Argentina) for her dedicated work and efforts during the past period. He also thanked the Secretary General of the Forum, Mr. Peter Weiderud, and the Secretariat of the Forum for their dedicated work and for allowing the Forum to continue to grow.

He also emphasized that time is our enemy and although there is a need to go deeper, we often do not have time to do so and discuss issues such as the costs on the health sector of the state.

It is important for us to know how to tackle supply as well as demand. However, we will continue to control our arms but if the supply is still there, heavy pressure is put on developing countries.

He also stated the importance of maintaining relations and exchange between the regions represented in the Forum.

The wisdom we have in this Forum gives us ideas which are not necessarily possible to copy but which can generate other ideas. As Mr. Weiderud said yesterday we need to seek the root causes and we need a profound view of the problem. This will allow us to discuss the comprehensive policies.

He concluded by thanking all participants and the Forum for the confidence bestowed in him.

Discussion

Hon. Sorie (Sierra Leone) said that in his role as Vice-President of the Forum he will assist the President of the Forum. He is also a former board member of the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) as well as a member of the ECOWAS Parliament and the Forum should seek to deepen its work with West Africa.

Hon. Barreras (Colombia) said that in addition to the policy statement on the links between the illicit drugs and arms trade that was adopted earlier he urged the members of the Forum to continue to bring this issue up in their respective governments. Monopoly of violence should be in the hands of the state and not in the hands of non state actors, which also represents a democratic society. If this is not achieved then instability and violence will occur. The situation is both problematic and contradictory; democratic countries defend the monopoly of violence of the state and at the same time it defends the rights of the citizens to carry weapons. He concluded by stressing that the monopoly of weapons should be of the state and not of the citizens.

Closing

Hon. Senator Roy Barreras, Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, President of the Peace Commission in the Congress of Colombia, proposed that the host country of the Forum's IV General Assembly hold a meeting of chancellors in order to contribute to a rapid signing of international treaties concerning the control of SALW.

In his concluding remarks he insisted that the monopoly of weapons should be in the hands of the state, along with the argument that work should be done to prevent society to feel the need to have weapons for self-defence.

Mr. Peter Weiderud, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, thanked all participants for taking the time to come to Colombia for this General Assembly. On behalf of the secretariat he expressed a enormous gratitude to the members of the Forum and underscored that it was indeed an honour and a pleasure to work with such a committed members.

Hon. Benito Lara, President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW (El Salvador), once again thanked the members of the Forum for the confidence bestowed on him and thanked all participants for their strong commitment to combat the proliferation of SALW in society, making our world a safer place.

Dr. María Carolina Castillo, advisor to Dr. Germán Varga Lleras, Minister of Interior, Colombia, highlighted the results of the General Assembly of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, and in particular underlined the initiative to hold meetings with chancellors in order to work towards a more rapid signing of international treaties on arms control. She also informed the participants of the General Assembly on the scope of the statute of citizen security that is currently being revised for approval in the Congress of the Republic of Colombia.

END

Participants

Members of Parliament	Country	Parliamentary Committee
<i>Africa</i>		
Hon. MP Drissa Sanogo	Burkina Faso	Foreign Affairs and Defence
Hon. MP Vesa Gomes Naluak	Guinea Bissau	Defence and Security
Hon. MP General JK Nkaiserry	Kenya	Defence
Dr. Manuel de Araujo	Mozambique	Vice President of the Forum, Former MP
Hon. Sen. Ernest Hamuli Kitsa	Democratic Republic of Congo	Defence and Security
Hon. MP Raimond Luete Katembo	Democratic Republic of Congo	President Defence and Security
Hon. MP Mamadou Bamba Ndiaye	Senegal	Defence and Security
Hon. MP Ibrahim Sorie	Sierra Leone	Legal and Judicial Affairs

<i>Latin America</i>		
Hon. MP Griselda Baldata	Argentina	Internal Security
Hon. Sen. Roy Barreras	Colombia	President Peace
Hon. Sen. Jorge Eduardo Londoño Ulloa	Colombia	First Committee
Hon. Sen. Juan Carlos Vélez Uribe	Colombia	First Committee
Hon. Rep. Luis Felipe Barrios	Colombia	Second Committee; International Politics and National Defence
Hon. Rep. Eduardo José Castañeda Murillo	Colombia	Second Committee; International Politics and National Defence
Hon. Rep. Victor Hugo Moreno	Colombia	Second Committee; International Politics and National Defence
Hon. MP Carmen Muñoz Quesada	Costa Rica	Security and Drugs Trafficking
Hon. MP Benito Lara	El Salvador	Public Security and Combat of Drugs Trafficking Activities
Hon. MP Rodolfo Anibal García	Guatemala	Peace
Hon. Dip. José Figueroa	Nicaragua	Defence and Governance
Hon. MP Olga Xochilt Ocampo Rocha	Nicaragua	Modernization and Tourism
Hon. MP Alba Palacios	Nicaragua	Vice President Foreign Affairs
Hon. Sen. Ana Maria Mendoza de Acha	Paraguay	Human Rights
Hon. MP Daisy Tourné	Uruguay	Asuntos Exteriores y Defensa Nacional

Europe		
Hon. MP Arben Çuko	Albania	National Security
Hon. MP Celestino Suárez González	Spain	First Vice President Defence
Hon. MP Pedro Azpiazuri Uriarte	Spain	
Hon. MP Tomás Burgos Gallego	Spain	Defence
Hon. MP Christer Winbäck	Sweden	Foreign Affairs

Parliamentary Advisors		
Mr. Gustavo Colás	Head of the Committee on Security and Drugs Trafficking	Senate of Argentina
Ms. Diana Jaqueline Rodríguez Ojeda	Jurist, Advisor	Chamber of Representatives
Mr. Julian Molina	Advisor Peace Committee of the Senate	Senate of Colombia
Mr. Felipe Ferro	Advisor Peace Committee of the Senate	Senate of Colombia
Ms. Magda Viviana Correa	Communications Advisor Senator Barreras	Senate of Colombia
Ms. Luz Estrella Guevara	Assistant Senator Barreras	Senate of Colombia
Ms. Gina Marcela Ramirez	Advisor Senator Barreras	Senate of Colombia
Ms. Hilzyl Noriega	Advisor Senator Barreras	Senate of Colombia
Ms. Carmenza Rojas	Advisor Senator Barreras	Senate of Colombia
Mr. Leonardo Martínez Martínez	First Committee of the Senate	Senate of Colombia
Ms. Sonia Viviana Huérfano	Communication Assistant Senator Barreras	Senate of Colombia
Ms. Alicia Silvia Rodríguez	Advisor Senator Barreras	Senate of Colombia

Government Representatives		
Dr. María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar	Minister	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Colombia
Ms. Victoria González Ariza	Director Multilateral Policies	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Colombia
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