



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS



*Houses of Parliament
Jamaica*

**Inter-Parliamentary Conference
25-26 June, Kingston, Jamaica
Hosted by the Parliament of Jamaica at
the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel**

**“Enhance ATT and UNPoA Implementation
by Parliamentary Exchange and Cooperation”**

FINAL DECLARATION

Parliamentarians from Caribbean states; meeting at the “Inter-parliamentary Conference to Enhance the Arms Trade Treaty and United Nations’ Programme of Actions Implementation by South-South Parliamentary Exchange and Cooperation”, in Kingston, Jamaica, June 25-26 2015, recognizing the important role that Island States are playing in shaping the Arms Trade Treaty to reflect their concerns, in particular to ensure that small arms, their parts and components, and ammunition were included in the scope of the treaty.

Control of international transfers of small arms and light weapons (SALW) their parts and components and their ammunition is at the centre of the global agenda for tackling the proliferation of such arms. The nature of SALW, their characteristics, as well as the sheer number or global stock, and the range of actors that possess or trade with them, makes it particularly difficult to control the movement of SALW not only within states, but also between them. Weak institutions and border-controls, as well as social unrest and organised criminal activities, often add to the difficulty.

The recently adopted ATT is an important step in the right direction to impede the proliferation and misuse of arms. The entry into force of the Treaty on December 24, 2014, following 50 ratifications, allows for enhanced control over arms transfers through established regulations for transferring conventional arms. Further, the treaty seeks to prevent conventional weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists and organized criminal groups, of which SALW and their ammunition are most commonly used.

Island States in Africa, Latin America, the Pacific and the Caribbean have been identified as a priority for ATT-related efforts as these nations will face specific challenges with respect to regulating the transit of arms through their territorial waters’.

The participants hence welcome the positive development in terms of ratification of the ATT which has yielded a solid representation of the CARICOM Member States among the Treaty's State Parties – 13 in total, including Dominican Republic, as well as two signatory states.

The participants highlight and recognize other important parliamentary efforts on the topic, such as the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) which is doing excellent work on promoting the ATT and has a number of tools available. Also the British Group of the IPU has contributed greatly through dedicating their annual conference that took place in November 2014 to the ATT. The participants further highlight the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), their fruitful cooperation with Parliamentary networks and their contribution to effective implementation of the ATT through capacity building, sharing of experiences, and technical expertise that provide support for interpretation of the Treaty.

Entry into force of the ATT is much welcomed and appreciated, however the 2001 *United Nations Programme of Action to Combat, Prevent and Eradicate the Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects* (UNPoA) still remains essential in relation to addressing the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects. The ATT and the UNPoA are hence complementary and mutually reinforcing in preventing and addressing diversion of weapons.

The PoA provide opportunities for disarmament and arms control measures through weapons and ammunition destruction, stockpile management, and marking and tracing instruments. The participants point out that such effort must be promoted.

The PoA also offers opportunities for national governments to reduce the high rates of injury and death associated with armed violence by investing in research on firearm-related injuries and deaths, armed violence prevention and peacebuilding programs at the community level, and harmonization between health and other sectors, such as the World Health Organization's national focal points on violence prevention and the PoA National Commissions on Small Arms.

Parliamentarians from all regions see the consequences of uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of SALW and their ammunition on a daily basis and acknowledge that armed violence is a serious public health issue with consequences that stretch beyond the immediate victims. They strongly condemn all illegal use of SALW and their ammunition and express their solidarity with the victims and survivors of such violence.

The participants express their consent to the formal adoption of the ATT while underlining the significant role that parliamentarians still have to play to ensure that the Arms Trade Treaty effectively prevents and reduces armed violence, and in particular SALW-related violence. The obvious next step is to ensure the broadest possible ratification globally and effective implementation for the many State Parties among the CARICOM members.

The Conference underlines the several important roles that parliamentarians have to play with regard to the ATT and the PoA. Following ratification of the ATT, parliamentarians are in position to review the necessary legislation for full compliance with the Treaty, and manage its passage through parliament consistent with the dictates of the national system. Further, parliamentarians *are responsible for* monitoring government implementation of the ATT and all aspects of the PoA, including the International Tracing Instrument and encourage government to adopt best practices in the context of the ATT and the PoA, rather than a culture of minimal compliance.

Among the roles of parliamentarians is also included the promotion of a fully transparent approach by government to the ATT and the PoA, including through proactive and comprehensive participation in relevant reporting mechanisms. It is important that parliamentarians remain excited of the impact

the ATT and PoA are having on their national and *regional* populations, with a view to developing recommendations where appropriate for how the government should engage in the follow-on processes (e.g. Conferences of State Parties for the ATT, Biennial Meetings of States and Review Conferences for the PoA).

The participants further underline the importance of parliamentarians continuing to raise awareness of the ATT and PoA with other parliamentarians from both within the country and elsewhere, and that they champion ongoing substantive interaction among government, parliament and broader civil society on these issues.

In countries that have not yet ratified the Treaty, parliamentarians are encouraged to promote parliamentary debate on the importance of doing so. And, for countries that have ratified, parliamentarians are encouraged to review legislation and make proposals to bring national norms in line with the Treaty obligations and establish parliamentary bodies to oversee implementation over time.

The Conference urges parliamentarians worldwide to take action regarding the Arms Trade Treaty and to ensure the most comprehensive implementation at the national level of the UNPoA, which offers many opportunities to reduce diversion of lethal weapons.

The participants extend their heartfelt thanks to the Parliament of Jamaica for generously hosting the meeting.