



**PARLIAMENTARY FORUM**  
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

**Inter-parliamentary Conference**  
**21-22 May, Lima, Peru**  
**Venue: United Nations House “Javier Pérez de Cuellar”**

**“Enhancing ATT and UNPoA Implementation  
through South –South Parliamentary Exchange and Cooperation”**

**FINAL DECLARATION**

Parliamentarians from 16 African and Latin American states; meeting at the “Inter-parliamentary Conference to Enhance the Arms Trade Treaty and United Nations’ Programme of Action Implementation by South-South Parliamentary Exchange and Cooperation”, in Lima, Peru, May 21-22 2015, recognizing the important role that African, Caribbean and Latin American states are playing in shaping the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to reflect their concerns, in particular to ensure that small arms and ammunition were included in the scope of the Treaty.

Control of international transfers of small arms and light weapons (SALW) 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 undertake commercial activities 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 illicit exploitation of natural resources, 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 selling conventional arms. Furthermore, the treaty seeks to prevent conventional military weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists or organized criminal groups, of which SALW and their ammunition most commonly are used.

In this sense, it is essential to fight the more lucrative aspects of organized crime more effectively, such as drug trafficking and human trafficking, in a way that the economic power of criminal organizations is reduced and thus, their ability to buy weapons from the illicit market. The United Nations Special Session on drugs in 2016 (UNGASS 2016), will be important in order to revise the prohibitionist paradigm which has not had the expected results.

The participants welcome the positive development in terms of ratification of the ATT which has yielded a solid representation of the regions among the Treaty's State Parties. In Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa the ATT is now ratified by 29 states and signed by an additional 37 states, but still 25 % of the states in the regions are yet to sign the treaty.<sup>1</sup>

The participants highlight and recognize with gratitude other important parliamentary efforts on the topic, such as the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) which is doing excellent work in promoting the ATT and has a number of tools available. Also the British Group of the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) has contributed greatly through dedicating their annual conference that took place in November 2014 to the ATT. The participants further highlights 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.

The PoA explicitly calls for simultaneously approaching the small arms issue from both the supply and demand perspectives. However the Conference acknowledges that the demand side of SALW is not addressed in a satisfactory way and hence seriously underdeveloped, and that a major driver of illicit trafficking and subsequent gun violence is the demand for weapons. There is a widespread perception among individuals living in communities with high levels of interpersonal violence that possession of firearms increases personal security. This perception is not supported by available data, and leads to a vicious cycle of increasingly lethal interpersonal violence. Breaking this vicious cycle is a central concern of the PoA and should be a focal point when considering PoA-related programs.

The PoA 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 gratitude 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

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<sup>1</sup> By 22 May 2015

obvious next step is to ensure the broadest possible ratification. Participants express their concern that the speed of the ratification process among many states does not reflect the importance and urgency of the problem which the ATT would help to address. Efforts must be made to ensure that the process of ratification will continue among the many signatories in the regions.

Due to their authority to ratify international treaties, parliamentarians' concerns should be heard by their governments. It behoves on supportive parliamentarians, through outreach and cooperation across political parties and with government, to speed the ratification process within their national contexts.

Parliamentarians should be able to contribute to ensure that the necessary national implementation mechanisms are in place, to oversee and politically interpret the implementation of the ATT to ensure the strongest possible application of the Treaty. This would be facilitated by improved capacity and knowledge among parliamentarians.

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 UN PoA, which offers many opportunities to reduce supply and demand for lethal weapons.

The participants extend their heartfelt thanks the Congress and Government of Peru and the United Nations Regional Centre of Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) for hosting the meeting.