



**Inter-parliamentary Conference
15-16 June 2015
Venue: Senate Hall
Assembly of the Portuguese Republic**

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

LISBON DECLARATION

Parliamentarians from 9 countries in Africa, Europe and South Asia, from the Portuguese speaking community and from Small Island States:

Meeting at the “Inter-parliamentary Conference to Enhance the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Programme of Action by South-South Parliamentary Exchange and Cooperation”, in Lisbon, Portugal, June 15-16 2015;

The participants, recognizing the important role that states in the global South 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.

The participants point out that 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. Due to the nature and characteristics of SALW as well as their easy availability and multiplicity of use it is particularly difficult to control the internal and cross-border movements of those weapons. This is particularly so in countries with weak institutions and deficient border-controls.

The ATT represents a major step in international efforts to prevent the proliferation and misuse of conventional arms, including SALW. The ATT, which entered into force on December 24, following the treaty requirement 50 ratifications, 2014 sets high common standards for the regulation of international arms transfers and the prevention of their diversion. Therefore, the effective implementation of the Treaty will make it more difficult for conventional weapons, including SALW, and ammunition to fall into the hands of non-state actors, human rights abusers and organized criminal groups.

The vast majority of the states represented at the Conference have signed the ATT, but hitherto only Portugal and Burkina Faso have ratified it. The participants emphasize the signatories should continue pursuing efforts to expeditiously ratify the Treaty, while those that have not signed the Treaty are encouraged to take the necessary steps to accede to it.

The particular focus of the Conference is Portuguese speaking states. It also aimed to provide a forum for exchanges of experiences between those countries and a Small Island States. The Conference recognised that the ATT poses a specific set of challenges to Small Island States, as they have limited capacity to exercise control over their relatively vast territorial waters, which, consequently, can be easily used for illicit transit or trans-shipment of weapons and ammunition.

The participants highlight and commend other important parliamentary efforts on the topic undertaken by other actors, such as the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), which has been actively promoting the ATT and PoA and supporting the development of tools to assist States Parties in the implementation of those instruments. Similarly, 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 the effective implementation of the ATT through capacity building, sharing of experiences, and technical and legal expertise.

While recognising the significance of the ATT, the participants stress that the *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 an essential instrument for addressing the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects. In fact, the ATT and the UNPoA are mutually reinforcing, as they complement and supplement each other.

The PoA explicitly calls for simultaneously approaching the SALW issue from both the supply and demand perspectives. There is a widespread perception among individuals living in communities with high levels of armed 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 violence. Breaking this vicious cycle is a central concern of the PoA and should be a focal point when considering PoA-related programs. The participants further points out that effort made on marking and tracing SALW must be promoted.

Parliamentarians from all regions are aware of the consequences of uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of SALW and their ammunition 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 and call for the application of International Humanitarian Law whenever adequate.

The participants underline the significant role that parliamentarians still have to play to ensure that the ATT, if effectively implemented, can go a long way towards preventing and reducing armed violence and conflict. The obvious next step is to ensure the broadest adherence of States in the Treaty and, eventually, universal participation. The participation of major exporters and importers of arms is essential for the success of the ATT.

Due to their authority to ratify international treaties, parliamentarians' concerns should be heard by their governments. Supportive parliamentarians, through outreach and cooperation across political parties and working with government, can play major role in speeding up their countries' adherence to the ATT.

Parliamentarians will be able to contribute to efforts to put in place the necessary national measures required by the treaty and can play a role in overseeing its implementation. This would be facilitated by training and other activities aimed at enhancing knowledge and understanding of the ATT among parliamentarians.

In countries that have not yet ratified the Treaty, parliamentarians are encouraged to promote parliamentary debate on the importance of doing so, for those that are already signatories, or of acceding to it. 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 progress in implementation.

The Conference urges parliamentarians worldwide to take action regarding the Arms Trade Treaty and to ensure the full implementation at the national level of the UN PoA. Due to the complementarity between the two, there is considerable room for the building of significant synergies in their implementation

The participants extend their heartfelt thanks the National Assembly to the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic and the Parliamentary Forum for Small Arms and Light Weapons for generously hosting the meeting.

Hon. Roberto Leal Ramos Monteiro MP - Angola

Hon. Maoulana Charif MP – Comoros

Hon. Mohamed Rachadi Abdou, MP Comoros

Hon. Lassana Fati MP - Guinea-Bissau

Hon. Mohammed Hussain MP – Maldives

Hon. Mohamed Ismail MP – Maldives

Hon. Isekiel Molde Gusse MP – Mozambique

Hon. Edson Macuacua MP - Mozambique

Hon. João Rebelo MP - Portugal

Hon. João Lobo MP – Portugal

Hon. André Pardal MP – Portugal

Hon. Alda Ramos MP – Sao Tome and Principe

Hon. Manuel M. Lima MP – Sao Tome and Principe

Hon. Marc Volcere MP – Seychelles

Hon. Aniceto Guterres MP – Timor Leste

Hon. Maria Angelic Rangel MP – Timor Leste