

15th Anniversary Publication



Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons

Parliamentary action to achieve more peaceful and inclusive societies



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons is the only international organisation for Members of the Parliament across party-political lines specifically related to the issues of reduction and prevention of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)-related violence. Our over-all objective is to contribute to the achievement of more peaceful and developed societies by parliamentary action against armed violence to increase human security.

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Acronyms

AMANI	Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum on Peace
APP	Asociación Para Política Públicas
ATT	The Arms Trade Treaty
ECOWAS	Economic Commission of West African States
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
IPU	Intern-Parliamentary Union
ITI	International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons
IWC	International Women 's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Peace
KEX	Committee of Inquiry on Export Controls of Military Equipment
RAD	Argentina Disarmament Network
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SweFOR	Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation
The Forum	Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons
UN	United Nations
UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs



UNPoA	United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
USD	United States Dollars
WAANSA	West African Action Network on Small Arms
WCLAC	Women 's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling
WFC	World Future Council



Foreword

Hon. Senator Daisy Tourné– Member of the Senate and President of the Forum (Uruguay)

Mr. Christer Winbäck– Former Member of Parliament, former Vice-president and co-founder of the Forum (Sweden)



It has been 15 years since a group of parliamentarians from Central America, Spain and Sweden, with support from the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR), met in Madrid with the idea to support national legislative efforts on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), and help parliamentarians in the implementation of international instruments. An idea that consolidated into what we know today as the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (the Forum), present in more than 80 countries and with more than 200 members across party political lines.

Since its foundation in 2002, the Forum has provided a much-needed platform for parliamentarians to gather, exchange ideas, build parliamentary capacity, propose policies and create common ground for armed violence prevention and reduction. During these years, the Forum has supported parliamentarians from different political backgrounds and facing challenging realities, with fundamental policy tools, knowledge and the political relevance of



a network that supports efforts to tackle the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW.

Forum members in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and Europe have become a driving force in their parliaments, promoting responsible national legislation, contributing to the adoption and implementation of relevant international instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA) and the 2030 Agenda. Members advocate and raise awareness both in the parliament and their constituencies, as well as hold their governments accountable for the policies implemented on SALW control.

The Forum, through its members, has also highly prioritised, thematically and in structure, gender equality in the parliamentary work, in specific the inclusion and women's active participation as decision makers in peace and security issues. Since its foundation in 2002, the Forum has published diverse specialised publications and policies on Women, Peace and Security and its Board has approved a Strategic Plan where strengthening the gender equality and implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 is a priority. Finally, women have presided the Forum for a total of nine out of the fifteen years. The Forum also favours a multi-stakeholder approach, promoting a wider dialogue with representatives from the civil society and the government, which also leads to a broader inclusion of women.

15 years have passed since civil society organisations and a group of parliamentarians from Spain, Latin America and Sweden gathered to create the Forum. During these years the organisation



and its members have been able to successfully contribute to the achievement of more peaceful and sustainably developed societies by parliamentary action against armed violence to increase human security. This publication is dedicated to the celebration of the 15 years of work of the Forum, but more than anything, to encourage fellow parliamentarians and reaffirm the Forum's and its members' commitment to work for a more peaceful world, where sustainable development becomes a reality for women, men, girls and boys around the globe.



Key Achievements

The state of the world, marked by violence and conflict, underlines the need to prioritise the prevention and reduction of armed violence. 875 million Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) are circulating worldwide. According to the Small Arms Survey, **214 000** persons died yearly of lethal violence caused by firearms during 2010-2015.

However, recent years have seen some positive development of the international policy agenda on reducing armed violence. The important link between sustainable development, human security and SALW proliferation is recognised in the **2030 Agenda** from 2015, **Sustainable Development Goal 16.4** (SDG) on illicit arms flows, the **Arms Trade Treaty** (ATT) regulating international arms transfers that entered into force 2014, and the **United Nations Programme of Actions to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects** (UNPoA) adopted in 2001. These three international frameworks constitute the point of departure for the Forum in its work to support parliamentarians, based on its two main pillars, **Policy Shaping** and **Capacity Building**.

In the course of the past 15 years, the Forum has*:

Directly supported over **60 MPs** from **38 countries** in activities to reduce armed violence

Taken part in over **45 high-level conferences** and seminar as panellist or observer

Released **11 publications** and **36 Policy Statements** highlighting issues related to armed violence

Reached out to nearly **1000 parliamentarians** and over **1200 other stakeholders** from **120 countries**

Produced over **100 tailor-made materials** to members, used in international and national gatherings

Hosted **22 regional seminars**, **34 national seminars**, **18 side events**

Provided support contributing to **ratification of Arms Trade Treaty** in **6 countries**, and the signing in other countries

Developed a **Model Law** used in legislative reforms in **8 countries**

* Based on the Forum's annual reports and internal documentation between 2002- 2017



Chapter 1 - The Importance of Parliamentary Action

**Hon. Dr. Raphael Chegeni – Member of Parliament and the Board
of the Forum (Tanzania)**



To legislate, to hold the government accountable and to raise awareness constitute the three key roles of a parliamentarian. The exercise of these roles is intertwined, so the completion of parliamentary responsibilities cannot be evaluated positively if a strong linkage between these roles in the parliamentary work does not exist. In the Global South, as parliamentarians, we face different challenges when it comes to applying these three key roles, where the largest one derives from the limited resources to correctly carry out our parliamentary duties.

Challenges to the legislative role may appear the easiest to overcome, however, despite efforts from governments in the Global South to enable the infrastructure and human capital necessary for the efficient functioning of parliaments, the legislative processes face challenges. This is more palpable in the process of incorporating international instruments into national law, given the different policy and communication processes between the executive and legislative branches. In this endeavour, the Forum has proved to be fundamental in bridging the existing gaps, providing parliamentarians with the necessary policy tools



and thematic support to advance the implementation of international instruments at the local level.

In Tanzania, we have supported government initiatives aimed at confiscating and destroying firearms, in order to ensure that they do not fall into the wrong hands. Awareness-raising has a fundamental role in this task, as adequate information has to be shared with the population and relevant stakeholders, on the importance of having a solid control of SALW, on the prevention and reduction of armed violence and to encourage support of weapons surrender initiatives. The country faces serious challenges related to the borders and the illicit trafficking taking place there. Therefore, the Parliament of Tanzania has worked on the Firearms Control Act, passed in 2015, which is currently in its implementation phase.

As a Member of the Parliament, I have been fortunate to participate in the Forum as a regular member and Board Member, supporting the Forum's activities in the East African Region. I also had the honour of being active as Secretary General and later Chairperson of The Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum on Peace (AMANI Forum), formed in 1998 by regional parliamentarians, to create a structure to enable coordinated work towards sustainable peace. In the AMANI Forum, we supported coordinated efforts in the region to raise awareness on the problem of illicit SALW and in the implementation of international instruments. My experiences in both organisations have showed me the relevance of the parliamentary work and involvement for sustainable peace, where changes can only be achieved by dialogue, inclusion and close cooperation between relevant stakeholders.



Hon. Maria Andersson Willner – Member of Parliament and Vice-president of the Forum (Sweden)

Hon. Karin Enström – Member of Parliament, Former Board Member and co-founder of the Forum (Sweden)



Cross party work should be one of the cornerstones of democracy, however, given the reality of everyday politics, this task sometimes proves challenging to fulfil. In Sweden, the democratic character of our parliament allows and demands cross party work in different topics, where the reduction of armed violence is widely accepted as fundamental for sustainable development. There is a cross-party understanding that SALW related violence has to be prevented and reduced, however, the timing and methods have remained a point of discussion during the years.

Sweden finds itself at the forefront of development cooperation with a Foreign Policy highlighting the importance of international peace and security, armed violence prevention and reduction. Hence, Sweden has become a champion in supporting international efforts such as the ATT, the UNPoA and similar instruments where armed violence reduction initiatives form part.

However, these advances are the result of a complex process of discussions and inclusion of views both in the parliament but also in the society during the past 50 years. Let us share with you two successful stories of parliamentary cross-party work.



The first one, is the creation of the Committee of Inquiry on Export Controls of Military Equipment (KEX) in 2012, a cross party committee in charge of reviewing and proposing changes to the current arms export control in Sweden. After several years of work and negotiations between different political parties, the government has introduced a bill to the legislative, which includes changes to strengthen arms export controls, and where a democracy criterion is proposed to be included in the approval process of an arms export license. The second one, which we consider a very successful example of working to reduce and prevent armed violence, is the establishment of the Forum. Since its conception, the Forum has been an organisation with a cross party character, including, at the time of its foundation, the views from the wide spectrum of political expressions globally. The Forum has contributed to the creation of relevant model legislation, and accompanied parliamentary initiatives on SALW reduction and prevention.

At the Forum, parliamentarians from all over the world, with different party affiliations and facing different realities, have worked incessantly towards the prevention and reduction of armed violence, working for changes in national legislation, cooperating at the regional level and overseeing implementation of arms control initiatives. As members of the Swedish Parliament and the Forum, we can confirm that cross-party work is possible and necessary. Regardless of our party-political affiliation, we have to prioritise dialogue, diplomacy and conflict resolution to overcome the global challenges of today.



**Mrs. Maria Pia Devoto – Director of APP, Civil Society
Representative and Board Member of the Forum (Argentina)**



In 2013, the United Nations Office for Disarmament (UNODA) along with the World Future Council (WFC) and the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) awarded Argentina's National Programme for the Voluntary Surrender of Firearms the Future Policy award, for its virtuous circle of Public Policy implementation and the contribution to peace, sustainable development and human security.

The preparatory work for the National Programme started in 2006, promoted by the Argentina Disarmament Network (RAD). The success of the following years was possible due to the close collaboration between government and civil society, in the design, the implementation and the monitoring. The role of the parliament was to promote the debate of the Programme, and pass the law that created it. This was crucial, in order to provide democratic pluralism and contribute to the achievement of the Disarmament Programme.

Some tragic events, in particular, the homicide of a young student in a busy street in Buenos Aires in 2006, committed by a legal gun owner with mental disorders, put civil society and media on alert. In democratic societies, when there is vast concern among the people and the media draws attention to it, it echoes in the whole



political class, government and parliament. At that time, the President personally received civil society demands, including the urge for implementation of a Disarmament Programme. This led to the implementation of the Programme in 2007, which has allowed for the destruction of around 300 000 firearms since that date.

The high level of armed violence in Latin America requires joint efforts, as in the case previously presented, between governments, parliamentarians and civil society organisations at the regional level, as well as comprehensive policies to face the impact that armed violence has on the society.



Chapter 2 – Cooperation Between Stakeholders for Peacebuilding

**Hon. José Figueroa Aguilar – Member of Parliament and Board
Member of the Forum (Nicaragua)**



The world today is experiencing very complex situations in terms of armed violence, which constitute threats to world peace. The presence of terrorist groups that weaken governance in different regions on the planet; drug trafficking and organised crime, the possession of weapons in the hands of civilians without regulation or control are challenges for the people, governments and the international community.

Nicaragua has moved from a scenario of war to one of peace and reconciliation. The political will to prevent and face threats to peace, the efficient inter-institutional coordination between the different branches of the State have strengthened the system of prevention and citizen security, facilitated by the reform or approval of laws. This today allows Nicaragua to be one of the safest countries in the region, with higher levels of governance, economic growth and social inclusion compared to other Central and Latin American states.



Citizen safety indicators show comparatively the ratio of homicides and crimes in Central American countries between January 1 and May 31 of 2017. According to the Commission of Central American Police Chiefs, 1,840 homicides were carried out in Guatemala; in Honduras, 1,720; in El Salvador, 1,405; in Costa Rica, 224, and in Nicaragua, 198, which reaffirms that Nicaragua has come far in reducing armed violence.

As a Member of the Parliament, together with my colleagues, we promoted the passage of the Law 510 “Special Law for the control and regulation of firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials”, which has contributed to the decrease of possession of weapons in the hands of civilians and, consequently, the reduction of crimes and armed violence.

Likewise, we urged the approval of the Law No. 903 to “Regulate Private Security Services” performed by natural or legal persons in any of its modalities, either for commercial purposes or for its own benefit. The law regulates the conditions of its facilities, the control of its personnel and armament, equipment and performance, which has contributed to the control of weapons used by this labour segment. We also worked on Law No. 735 for the prevention, investigation and prosecution of organised crime and the administration of seized, confiscated and abandoned property, which strongly penalises criminal groups linked to organised crime.

We also supported the reforms of Law 641 "Penal Code of the Republic of Nicaragua", Law 406 "Criminal Procedure Code" and Law 779 "Comprehensive Law against Violence against Women". It is worth noting that the National Police has promoted a model of proactive and community preventive security, allowing



efficient and effective work in crime prevention, especially in the control of weapons and reduction of armed violence. This plan is part of the Citizen Security Policy with a community profile promoted by the National Government.

Nicaragua has stood out as a country where the gender approach, the preponderance of the role of women and young people, are reflected in each and every one of the Government's public policies. The Vice Presidency of the Republic, the Presidency of the Judiciary, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the Directorate of the Police, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior, among others, are all led by women.

In addition to our own difficulties, Nicaragua remains exposed to all the side effects of regional and global conflicts, but the indicators show significant progress against armed violence, organised crime and drug trafficking.

The multifaceted cooperation between the different actors, the government, the civil society and the international community, are essential in order to face the risks and advance on a route of peace, security and stability for the construction of peaceful and inclusive societies.



**Hon. Dr. Sahar Qawasmi – Member of Parliament and Board
Member of the Forum (Palestine)**



Palestine is a state under occupation, with a transitional Palestinian Authority, where the Palestinian security forces are protecting the daily life of Palestinian citizens in Area A and B in the West Bank, in accordance with the Oslo II Accord. Thus, the security forces are responsible for the well-being of the people, preventing and working to tackle any kind of crimes.

The Oslo Accords and protocols stipulate that no organisation, group or individual in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip shall manufacture, sell, acquire, possess, import or otherwise introduce into the West Bank or the Gaza Strip any firearms, ammunition, weapons, explosives, gunpowder or any related equipment.

According to the report by the UN Secretary General from 2016 on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the actions of Israeli army or Israeli settlers still cause many victims of firearms violence, aggravated by the security situation in the West Bank. This has consequences for both men and women, where insecurity for women increases, both as victims of the occupation and the already existing issues of armed violence among the Palestinian population.



As a Member of the Parliament, I work extensively to create a constructive atmosphere for enhancing compliance with international law and human rights protocols at the national, regional and international level. One example of this is my role as Chair of the Board of the Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), a Palestinian Civil Society Organisation where we work to address the causes and consequences of gender-based violence within the Palestinian community, as well as the gender-specific effects of increasing militarisation associated with the Israeli occupation. In the same way, as Vice-President of the Forum of Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development, and as a member of the Steering Committee of the last international parliamentary conference which was held in Stockholm in 2014, I took part in the group who contributed to the SDGs at a global level, working for enhancing and evaluating its implementation in the Arab region.

Another example of a similar initiative, but at a higher level, was the body created after the Oslo Accords, the International Women’s Commission for a Just and Sustainable Peace (IWC), consisting of active female leaders: 20 Palestinian, 20 Israeli and 20 international female activists. This group was based on the recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination and a two-state solution based on different United Nations resolutions. Regrettably, this body was dissolved due to political differences between the members. However, we still believe that peace is achievable, so by working together as we do in the Forum, we can achieve the goal to live free from armed violence to promote sustainable development.



Mr. Baffour Amoa – Chair of the International Advisory Council of IANSA (Ghana)



When it comes to armed violence, Africa has suffered significantly. In West Africa, it took the combined efforts of civil society, parliamentarians and several governments both within and outside the region to bring under control the armed violence arising from the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Achieving sustainable peace allowed development to take off.

Similar situations of armed violence have occurred in other countries on the continent, and some cases persist even today. Generally, it has taken a combination of civil society agitation, lobbying and mass mobilisation, as well as parliamentary support to move governments to act decisively.

Peace talks usually succeeded when they were backed by peacebuilding efforts and campaigns against small arms proliferation, and by civil society and parliamentarians engaging governments and warring parties in dialogue. In West Africa, for instance, collaboration between the West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) and the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) resulted in the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. This Convention has successfully regulated importation of SALW. Imports of weapons



into the region by member states follow strict procedures that must respect the principle of transparency and full disclosure. The West Africa story is not an exception – the rest of the African continent is replete with similar examples. In all these situations, collaborative efforts between civil society, parliamentarians and governments have yielded reasonably amicable and sustainable solutions.

However, all these armed violence reduction initiatives would not have been possible without cooperation and assistance from the international community under the auspices of the United Nations (UN). Notable arms control instruments resulting from such cooperation include the UNPoA (2001); the Firearms Protocol (2001), the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) (2005); the ATT (2013), and the 2030 Agenda (2015).

The aforementioned examples make it clear that cooperation is key when building peaceful and inclusive societies.



Chapter 3 – Policy Frameworks & Tools for Armed Violence Prevention and Reduction

H.E. Eva Walder – Ambassador for Disarmament (Sweden)

H.E. Paul Beijer – Ambassador for the Arms Trade Treaty (Sweden)*



As the international community's awareness regarding the serious impact of unregulated, illegal, and irresponsible transfers of SALW has grown, new policy frameworks have been developed to address this challenge. Such frameworks have been developed at the national, regional and global levels. These complement each other, since undesirable transfers are often cross-border and therefore impossible to address effectively on a strictly national basis.

Sweden believes strongly in the necessity of international cooperation in this area, and has consistently supported initiatives to create and apply effective instruments at both the regional and international level. We see a continuum developing, ranging from the UNPoA which focuses on measures to control SALW at the national level, through regional SALW initiatives to the global agreement reached four years ago on the ATT which also covers SALW.

The latest international achievement in this area, the SDGs, is particularly welcome because it links the concept of security to social and economic development in a holistic manner. Since none



of these instruments prohibit responsible transfers of arms in support of the right to self-defence enshrined in the United Nations Charter, Sweden feels there is no contradiction between active support for these international efforts and the production and export of defence equipment, as long as these are undertaken under a responsible national export control framework.

A very successful international effort in this area is the ATT. The speed with which a Treaty could be finalised, the pertinent nature of the obligations agreed, and the efforts now being undertaken across the globe to implement this Treaty effectively, can all be attributed to a dynamic partnership between a broad geographical range of countries, and their respective civil societies. Special mention should be made here on the important role that parliamentarians have played and will continue to play.

Representatives of different national parliaments and their international associations were active during the negotiating phase of the Treaty, and helped to ensure the substantive nature of the end product. Their role is no less important now that the ATT has entered into force: in encouraging as many governments as possible to accede to the Treaty, in urging and facilitating effective national implementation of the Treaty, and finally in ensuring that the necessary resources are made available to secure effective operation of national control systems also in the longer term. We salute the work the Forum has made to support the active participation of parliamentarians in the ATT process, and urge the Forum to continue with undiminished vigour.

*Ended his position at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on September 30 2017 due to retirement



**Hon. Vincent de Paul Emah Etoundi – Member of Parliament and
Board Member of the Forum (Cameroon)**



Violence related to SALW poses a threat to the peace and stability of States. In Cameroon, wars and instability in neighbouring countries and the asymmetric war against the terrorist sect Boko Haram have facilitated the circulation of these weapons, leading to a security crisis to which appropriate solutions have to be found.

Indeed, through our activities as parliamentarians, we are working for the ratification of the ATT, the achieving of the Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice and effective Institutions (SDG 16), and the adoption of laws regulating the circulation of SALW. Thus, through our advocacy and lobbying of decision-makers, we have contributed to the ratification of the Kinshasa Convention and the adoption of the law on arms and ammunition in Cameroon in November 2016. This law allows not only the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention but also the establishment of an administrative, legal and repressive framework for the control of the proliferation of SALW.

Along the same line, we worked in synergy to establish a National Commission to combat the proliferation of SALW whose draft decree is in the process of being finalised. In addition, in partnership with some civil society organisations, we also organised sensitisation workshops for the population, members of



the government and members of parliament on the ratification of the ATT. The purpose of these exchanges is to increase knowledge about the Treaty among stakeholders and to make them aware of the need to accelerate the process of ratification of said Treaty.

Besides, in my awareness raising role as a parliamentarian, through the NGO the Yaoundé School of Citizenship and Politics, we have organised and supported various workshops and regional sessions whose aim is to promote a culture of peace and security.

Much remains to be done to eradicate this scourge and we pledge to intensify advocacy, while actively pursuing towards the adoption of a National Action Plan of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The Plan would specifically involve women in the prevention of armed conflict and the strengthening of the involvement of young people in the prevention and reduction of armed violence for sustainable development and the consolidation of peace.



Hon. Marko Djurisić – Member of Parliament (Serbia)



Serbia was one of the first countries that ratified the ATT and implemented the Treaty provisions in national laws (the Law on the Export and Import of Arms and Military Equipment) as early as October 2014. Although the law provides for a high level of export control, in practice there are cases when arms and ammunition produced in Serbia end up in the countries which are on the United Nation's sanctions list.

In the parliamentary discussions on the need for an enhanced control, the argument referring to the lack of funds is frequently used, emphasising also that the export of arms is an important economic activity and that an increased export is one of the Government's main priorities. Unfortunately, the Serbian Parliament also lacks funds, as well as the legal framework for a better oversight. In the future, I as a parliamentarian will invest efforts to improve this. I am doing my best to raise the awareness on the ATT and SDG 16 in the 2030 Agenda with as many of my colleagues as possible, in order to enable a better contribution to peace in the region and globally.

The Law on Weapons and Ammunition of February 2015, regulating the possession and carrying of firearms, provides for a stricter control of issuing licences for firearms possession, and more severe punishments for possession of illegal firearms. In



Serbia, just like in the whole region, illegal firearms are widespread due to the wars in the 1990s. According to the web source GunPolicy.org, between 200.000 and up to 1.000.000 pieces of illegal weapons are in the possession of Serbian citizens.

Today, these weapons are used for various crimes, but accidents caused by incompetent use of weapons also frequently occur. In the parliament, I have been advocating for a thorough process of legalisation and the return of illegal weapons to the police, with clear time limits, and that punishments for possessing illegal weapons should become more severe upon the finalisation of this process. Unfortunately, this proposal was not accepted, and weapons collection activities have had poor results albeit being repeated several times.

I speak about this issue with my parliamentary colleagues from the region, we exchange experiences and use the examples of good practice from our countries. However, much more needs to be done in order to significantly reduce the number of illegal weapons that the citizens in our region possess. In this process, the Forum serves as a platform for sharing experiences on policy tools which is crucial in order to promote a more peaceful and stable development in Serbia and the region.



Chapter 4 – Looking Ahead

Mrs. Karin Olofsson – Secretary General of the Forum (Sweden)



The state of the world underlines the need to prioritise the prevention and reduction of armed violence, where the endeavour of the Forum, sadly to say, remains highly relevant. The world in 2017 is marked by violence, armed conflict, as well as the spread of global terrorism and organised crime. Armed conflicts and violence, independent of the scale, are perpetuated by the availability of SALW.

Certain advances in arms control instruments have taken place in the past 15 years, for example the entering into force of the ATT and the recognition of the linkage between sustainable development and arms flow in the 2030 Agenda, by the SDG 16.4. However, the world still faces challenges in terms of armed violence prevention and reduction. Every year, according to the Small Arms Survey, 214 000 persons lose their lives due to firearms violence, causing human, economic and social costs in both conflict and non-conflict settings.

As policy shaping and capacity building form the basis of our work, in relation to the legislative, oversight and awareness raising parliamentary roles, the Forum has faced various challenges. Political development and election turn-over are inherent challenges that require flexibility in combination with a solid,



institutional way of working. Financial sustainability is another challenge, as policy changes are long-term processes, hence adequate funding is a crucial precondition to achieve durable impact.

Political will and financial investment in peacebuilding efforts, such as the Forum's, are vital and efficient interventions to reach a more peaceful world. As stated in the Global Peace Index 2017, every US dollar (USD) invested in peacebuilding can lead to a 16 USD decline in the cost of armed conflict, meaning that resources can be constructively channelled to build sustainable developed societies.

Looking forward, the Forum will consolidate and refine results achieved by a more focused policy building work combined with awareness-raising. The 2030 Agenda, the UNPoA and the ATT are vital international frameworks for our efforts. Gender equality will continue to be a priority, emphasising the need for inclusion, representation and participation of women both in thematic substance and in structure. As highlighted in a recent Policy Statement of the Forum, the role of young people is important to recognise as victims and agents of armed violence but primarily as agents for change in achieving peace and security.

Given the situation in the world, the Forum has a responsibility to continue the work to contribute to a more peaceful world with sustainable development for women, men, girls and boys. Thanks to the engagement of our members and the solid collaboration with other stakeholders, the Forum has been and will be able to fulfil that commitment.



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Current donors:

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Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA)

International Campaign to Ban Landmines - Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Sweden (UD)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation – Spain (MAEC)

United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR)



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*Transparency is a key guiding principle for the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms & Light Weapons. Financial income and expenditure are subject to external auditing yearly by an independent auditor.

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