

Regional Conference:
Promoting Stakeholder and Parliamentary Dialogue
on the Arms Trade Treaty

In cooperation with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)
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PARLIAMENTARY ACTION PLAN¹

Part 1 – Introduction and purpose

The state of the world underlines the need to prioritize the prevention and reduction of armed violence. Today's world is marked by violence and armed conflict, as well as global terrorism and organized crime. Armed conflicts and violence, regardless of its scale, are perpetuated by the uncontrolled availability of small arms and light weapons (SALW), which increases the need for concise and effective steps to address its proliferation as to achieve peace and sustainable development.

In Africa, countries are severely affected by the uncontrolled proliferation and trafficking of SALW. Conflict, proxy wars, and inter-communal strife characterize many regions in Africa. According to a recent study², the concentration of most of Africa's estimated 100 million uncontrolled small arms and light weapons (SALW) is found in crisis zones and other security-challenged environments having devastating consequences for the security of women, men, girls and boys.

Most conflicts in Africa involve non-state actors who use uncontrolled arms. Since non-state actors (such as militias, warlords and extremist groups) have no legal authority to purchase or bear arms, they resort to illicit means of arms acquisition – mainly through diversion from state stockpiles, black markets and trafficking, as well as locally produced arms.

In sum, the flow of uncontrolled arms in Africa exacerbates conflicts, fuel violence and causes severe human, economic and social costs for the continent.

¹ The Plan may be adapted as appropriate according to progress made and challenges identified related to the instruments.

²Oxfam, The Human Cost of Uncontrolled Arms in Africa. Available in:

https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/rr-human-cost-uncontrolled-arms-africa-080317-en.pdf

“Promoting Stakeholder and Parliamentary Dialogue on SDG 16 and Arms Trade Treaty Universalization and Implementation” aims to build on the on-going efforts towards the implementation of the Agenda 2030 SDG 16 and ATT universalization and implementation, putting special focus on providing parliamentarians with the adequate tools to support the process at the national and regional level. It seeks to use the momentum that the ATT created and the subsequently approved SDG 16, in order to gather parliamentarians from State Parties and signatories in an effort to facilitate the exchange of experiences, challenges and best practices that surrounds the legislative work necessary for the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

The present draft Parliamentary Action Plan is a result of the Conference discussions identifying main conclusions from the participants perspectives.

The plan outlines actions needed to reinforce parliamentary ownership, participation and understanding of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and other relevant instruments, and should serve as a tool for parliamentary action in the field of armed violence reduction and prevention.³

The Parliamentary Action Plan also seeks to facilitate, gather the experiences and recommendations from the conference, on specific issues to be addressed and actions to be taken related to the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty in Africa.

This will serve to provide, from the parliamentary perspective, as an input to the Third Conference of State Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty (CSP3) in September 2017 in Geneva.

This Parliamentary Action Plan focuses on parliaments’ role in strengthening the response to armed violence and SALW proliferation and has been designed to:

- Support the universalization and/or effective implementation of the ATT, addressing synergies between the ATT and the framework of Agenda 2030, SDG16 and the UNPOA;
- Guide parliamentarians in their work related to the ATT, to ensure that the legislative response is both nationally appropriate and consistent with the aims of the instruments;
- Suggest mechanisms for effective oversight of government;
- Recommend methods to strengthen links between the executive and legislative branches of government and between parliaments and civil society on the armed violence prevention and reduction agenda – strengthening the social contract.

Part 2 – Recommendations on Universalisation and Implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty

Based on the three key roles of a parliamentarian; legislation, oversight and awareness raising follows below the most important recommendations for actions to be taken. This serves as point of departure to reach maximum results when it comes to implementation and universalisation of the ATT, as well as fulfilling state obligations on international treaties considering vital aspects such as transparency and accountability. In all efforts, it is fundamental to include the gender equality perspective, the role of women and youth, as well as other relevant international instruments on conventional arms control.

³ Consider the [Firearms Protocol](#), as it is a legally binding instrument, as well as the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 16.4 and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPOA).

Universalisation

- * Establish understanding of the rationale that prevents ratification by a specific country, and adopt a strategy according to the findings
- * Enable awareness raising efforts in coordination with civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders, organise trainings with parliamentarians and civil society
- * Clarify role of defence and the security actors and ensure their participation
- * Identification of national authorities and responsible focal points, based on multi-stakeholder national commissions in interinstitutional coordination
- * Ensure the support of regional organisations, such as the Regional Economic Communities (REC) in the facilitation of outreach, reporting and other relevant efforts
- * Ensure donor coordination and funding, enabling a base for international exchange for parliamentarians at the national, regional and international level

Implementation

- * Increase context specific capacity building initiatives, including awareness raising between parliamentarians and civil society, shadow reporting mechanisms and establish a roster of experts
- * Clarify leadership on the national level, e.g. National Commissions on SALW, ensuring coordination with existing regional structures, such as the Regional Economic Communities (REC)
- * Include parliamentarians in national delegations to the Conference of State Parties, based on stakeholder involvement and interinstitutional arrangement
- * Elaborate a national strategy linked to national political priorities and relevant international frameworks such as the Agenda 2030 and the UNPOA
- * Ensure domestication of the Arms Trade Treaty, that is to adapt national legislation to the Treaty's commitments
- * Strive for streamlining and compliance of reporting