

Presentation by Baffour Amoa, President WAANSA, on National and regional ratification and implementation: How to achieve results on the ground - at the Inter-parliamentary Conference 22-23 May, Lome, Togo at the National Assembly of Togo under the theme: “Enhance ATT and UNPoA Implementation by South-South Parliamentary Exchange and Cooperation”.

I would like to begin by thanking the organisers for the invitation to this important conference.

The West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA), founded in 2002 is a regional body of civil society organisations grouped in National Networks or Coalitions and an association of journalists working in the area of peace and security across the fifteen member States of the ECOWAS. WAANSA has a track record of achievement on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and ATT issues. WAANSA works in collaboration with ECOWAS and UNREC in the region. The World Council of Churches Regional Consultant is an ATT promotion partner of WAANSA linking faith based organisations.

The 2013 April’s historic UN General Assembly agreement on an ATT was a significant step towards reducing the human suffering caused by an unconstrained trade in weapons in Africa and around the world. An agreement for an Arms Trade Treaty though significant is only a first step in the treaty process. To make a real difference, the treaty has to be ratified and fully implemented on a global scale, with 50 signatories needing to ratify the Treaty in order for it come into force. Thirteen ECOWAS Member States have signed, but only two countries (Nigeria and Mali) have ratified the Treaty to date.

WAANSA is implementing right now a project that is encouraging member states in the ECOWAS region to ratify the treaty that will contribute not only to disarmament objectives in West Africa but also to reach the global target of 50 ratifications. WAANSA has been working since January this year with civil society, parliamentarians, governments and other partners to achieve the goals of the project.

WAANSA currently is conducting lobbying and campaigning activities in all the ECOWAS Member States to achieve full signature and ratification and also identify the ATT implementation needs of the States.

The project commenced with a planning workshop that discussed the content of the Training of Trainers’ Workshops aimed at building the capacity of National Networks to be able to rally local support to aid the lobbying and campaigning by WAANSA in ECOWAS Member States. WAANSA is also working to develop a Lobbying and Campaigning manual to assist National Networks in lobbying for future treaties. Having been at the forefront in lobbying and campaigning for the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, time had been allowed during the training workshop for participants to share “lessons learnt” from that process.

The two prong strategy of WAANSA thus involves capacity building of civil society activists and high level visits to ECOWAS Member States.

Sign ATT	Ratify ATT	Domesticate ATT	Implement ATT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •14 ECOWAS Countries have signed •Gambia is the only country yet to sign the treaty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Of the 14 ECOWAS countries 2 have ratified(Nigeria,Mali) •Advocacy and lobbying encourage ratification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support towards domestication of laws •Legal and structural implications in national governance architecture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support towards the enforcing of the conditions of the ATT

TRAINING VENUE	WEST AFRICA COUNTRY GROUPING	TRAINING DATES
Dakar	Gambia ,Cape Verde ,Guinea Bissau, Senegal	Jan 27-28th
Abidjan	Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Cote d’ivoire	Feb 12-13th
Freetown	Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry	Feb 24-25th
Lome	Nigeria, Benin, Togo	March 12-13th

OBJECTIVE OF THE TRAINING

The two-day training of trainers’ workshop in Lobbying and Campaigning was targeted at WAANSA members and organized in four (4) cities (Dakar, Freetown, Lome, and Abidjan) across the West African region, had the following objectives:

- To Increase capacity of civil society organisations in in West Africa to lobby and campaign for ATT signature and ratification in their States;
- To discuss and input into the draft CSO lobby and campaign manual content and discuss also lessons learnt from the implementation of the ECOWAS convention on SALW;
- To encourage media work in support of the ATT ratification process through press releases, Facebook postings and tweets;
- To increase awareness in the region of ATT signing and ratification process.

HIGH LEVEL VISITS

So far, WAANSA has conducted high level visits in Senegal, Cote d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Togo, Burkina Faso and Niamey. WAANSA has committed itself to deliver 12 ratifications by March 2015. The high level visits continue. In each country, we lobby for the ratification of the arms trade treaty, in partnership with National Commissions on Small Arms, the Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Security, Office of National Security, Defence and Security Committees of National Assemblies, civil society organisations and the Media.

The value of such visits was expressed by authorities in every country we have visited and I quote the Director of Cabinet at the Presidency in Niamey, Niger who said and I quote: “ Your presence here helps a lot as there are always competing issues but your presence helps brings up the issue of ratification of the ATT as a top priority.”

IMPLEMENTATION

Since the Arms Trade Treaty calls for the establishment of an International Support Unit, we hope Member States will have to decide in their respective countries where to lodge the ATT Implementation responsibility. WAANSA commits to pursue this process with its partners to assure successful implementation of the ATT. The ATT has to be domesticated so that old laws are modified and new laws elaborated to bring national laws in conformity with the ATT.

In Lome, November 2010, a Project on GUIDE FOR THE HARMONIZATION OF NATIONAL SALW LEGISLATIONS IN WEST AFRICA was executed for the ECOWAS Commission by United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) and funded by the Government of Austria. It is my hope that UNREC may consider a similar project for the ATT.

Thank you.