



Stakeholder Assessment and Strategic Analysis of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons

Introduction

The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (from hereon referred to as the Forum, or PF) was officially founded in 2002 in the Spanish Parliament. The decision to establish the Forum originates from a series of conferences about reconstruction in Central America held after the hurricane Mitch, when the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) was identified as a serious obstacle to sustainable development in the region. Swedish and Spanish parliamentarians took the initiative to form the Forum in order to support their colleagues in Central America to address the issue in a structured way.

To this day, the Forum unites about 200 parliamentarians from more than 60 countries. The strongest member representation comes from Latin America, Europe (primarily the Balkans) and Africa. Apart from the strong parliamentary ownership, the Forum distinguishes itself for its thematic capacity, which is made possible thanks to close contacts between experts and representatives of foremost the civil society in the countries and regions in which the network is present, but also multilateral organisations such as UNDP.

The parliamentarians come from various political affiliations, left, centre and right. Compared to other organisations' work e.g. with nuclear disarmament, the Forum's work with SALW is not linked to what is often seen as "left-wing" issues.

So far, the majority of members are men, however PF continues with their efforts to invite more female parliamentarians to join the Forum.

Organisational structure

The Forum's Secretariat was established in June 2005 and is located in Stockholm. The staff is comprised of a secretary general, who works half time; two programme officers employed on a full time basis and often an intern. At present though, there is only one programme officer (PO) working at the Forum, the second PO is on a one-year leave of absence (till the beginning of 2012). The secretariat primarily has a backstopping and a service function. Until



now, the Forum has received most of its core funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

As the secretariat is small, it does not require vast amounts of funding for the administration. At present, the total annual core funding amounts to roughly 3 million SEK, approximately € 350 000 (February 2011).

The aim of this study

The Forum has always been balancing their work between two perspectives: policymaking and capacity building. While the former expresses the Forum members' collective experience and political relevance, the latter incorporates a possibility to strengthen the members' ability to initiate concrete changes in their parliamentary workday. These two perspectives are of equal importance in Forum's general SALW discussion on the global arena, as well as in the parliamentarians' national and regional work that aims to tackle the issues on a more basic level. The Forum has so far worked well to prepare its members for SALW discussions on national, regional and global levels. Through capacity building, policy statements, model laws and frequent meetings, many members were able to apply their knowledge and generate discussions on SALW issues in their countries. Some of those discussions had resulted in legislative and policy changes in countries where such changes were urgently needed. Still, a key issue for the future is how the Forum should work in order to increase its political influence, expand the activities and therewith generate more change in individual countries.

In order to give an answer to this question, the Forum must find a solution to secure a more permanent funding both to run the secretariat, and to expand the scope of their activities with members. Hence, the Forum is at another crossroad and must decide whether to:

- Assess and evaluate the political relevance, political impact and outcome of the Forum,
- Evaluate the working methods of the Forum and propose improvements.
- Explore the sustainability with present funding and options for new funding partners
- Give guidance for the future with regard to political programmatic priorities, further outreach and possible cooperation,
- Explore two alternative locations for the Secretariat and find out if the Parliaments and Governments in these countries are willing to take responsibility for the Forum.



- Describe pros and cons with different strategic choices for the board and offer advice with regard to them.

Considering the points above, the aim of this study is to analyse the current working methods of the Forum, its structure and present sources of funding, and to propose changes that would lift up the work of the Forum, energize its members and attract donors. This study shall also give guidance for the future with regard to political programmatic priorities, further outreach and possible cooperation with other actors including possible locations for the secretariat. The study shall also analyse advantages and disadvantages of different strategic choices of the board and offer advice with regard to them. For more details, please refer to the ToR of this study, Appendix 1.

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1. Political Relevance, Political Impact and Outcome of the Forum

According to the Small Arms Survey, there are about 900 million small arms in circulation worldwide. Every year, roughly 740.000 people die from armed violence, and two-thirds of those deaths are caused in non-conflict settings. In today's globalised world, small arms are easily accessible. Considering the growing socioeconomic inequality, rapid urbanization, unemployment and a breakdown in the rule of law, the likelihood of armed conflict, organised crime and inter-personal violence becomes extremely high. Of 49 major conflicts in the 1990s, 47 were waged with small arms as the weapons of choice. With the increasing number of non-conflict related deaths involving the use of small arms, discussions on small arms proliferation, production, transfer, use, etc. have become very relevant on the political arena, particularly in Latin America where armed violence prevention is today more relevant than conflict prevention. The governmental institutions, parliamentary associations, UN bodies, development agencies, civil society all play a crucial role in developing new strategies to tackle the SALW issue globally. With the ongoing Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) negotiations, there is an opportunity to resolve some of the small arms and light weapons issues in a more permanent manner. Being the only association of parliamentarians with the particular SALW focus, the Forum and its members could give crucial contribution to the positive outcome of the ATT negotiations.

From this perspective, the Forum's role in the political debate on SALW definitely has an added value. It brings systematisation into the discussion by being well organised and having a strong focus, which is a great advantage considering that many actors working with SALW are not. The Forum's global work and outreach is of high importance, and so are the geographic distribution and regional work. As SALW is a transnational issue that requires joint efforts of many stakeholders, the Forum's regional connectedness and their way of gathering parliamentarians from the same region and connecting them with parliamentarians from other regions is clearly an advantage.

The Forum's challenge lies in keeping the SALW issue on the table and continuing to help parliamentarians around the world with staying updated at all times and giving them the



instruments necessary for including the SALW issue in their political, social and economic agenda.

Although donors and ministries for foreign affairs considered SALW to be a hot topic several years ago, at present it seems more difficult to generate SALW discussions, as the international debate has been focusing more on cluster munitions, nuclear disarmament and proliferation, etc. Without high-level leaders from important countries that engage in the SALW discussion, the issue tends to fall off the public discussion boards. The topic has, for example, a low priority at the Swedish MFA.

One explanation for the low priority given to SALW is that it is seen as something isolated, not related to development and current political issues. Even though there is a clear link between the SALW issue and poverty reduction, human rights, democracy, etc., not everybody makes that connection and relation to the importance of the Forum's work. Human security is a thematic area that is steadily increasing in importance in programmes funded by Sida, the Spanish development cooperation and other donors. Folke Bernadotte Academy has acknowledged the link between security and development, which is why they established a fund called "Fredsmiljonen", and one of their programmes is called precisely that: security and development. Nonetheless, the direct inclusion of SALW is missing.

Thus, one important role for the PF is to create better linkage between SALW, human security and development. This could be done by taking part in the international debate, on broader human security issues, for example, on security sector reform, through articles and participation at seminars and workshops. Of equal importance is increasing the person-to-person dialogue with policy makers at EU, MFAs, donor and loan agencies, INGOs etc.

In addition, the Forum could draw experience about public campaigning on SALW issues from the coalition against cluster ammunition, as well as the global action to ban landmines and the coalition to stop the use of child soldiers.

Political impact: The role of the parliaments

In order to influence the debate on SALW, there is a need to create regional and global networks, as well as to improve country-based connections. The Forum's role in connecting legislators on national, regional, and global levels is from this perspective highly relevant.



As the parliamentarians are the ones having the power to change things in their own countries, they are key actors in all processes. Apart from overseeing the executive branch of government, ratifying international treaties, allocating budgets, etc., MPs have an important legislative role to put the right laws in place, improve existing legislations, etc. However, donors often limit their contacts with government and ministries, overlooking the role of the parliament. Still the present Policy for Democratic Development by the Swedish MFA highlights the need to work with strategic actors including parliaments and parliamentarians. Another problem is that in many countries MPs lack the power to influence change in legislations because the executive power in the country is so dominant, making the parliament nothing more than a rubberstamp.

The PF influences foremost the work within a parliament and opens discussions about changes in legislation, but it is in the implementation, in the political decisions of the ministries of defence, justice, police etc. to include SALW in their annual plans and budgets through which results can be achieved. Thus, there should not be unrealistic goals for what the individual members of the PF could actually achieve.

When asked, the individual members highlighted the key role of PF to be capacity building, knowledge sharing and technical support. It gives its members available and accessible information, increased knowledge and research-based arguments. It enables the members to lift the SALW problem on the agenda in the parliament and advocate for necessary changes required for arms control.

The PF is also an engine that drives the members to unite in their efforts to respond to the issue of SALW proliferation, as it is the global, borderless and stateless problem.

How to measure results

One thing that makes PF unique is that it is an organisation driven by the individual parliamentarians themselves, and not by the secretariat. Several interviewees characterised the forum as "a group of parliamentarians who are passionate about the issues which could potentially yield some great results." The question is how this is and could be transformed into concrete results.

Changing legislations requires a long-term political engagement and support from many legislators. Sida, as well as other donors are under a strong pressure to produce and show



results from their work. However, it is much more difficult to measure the impact of a long-term political process than the short-term tangible output and outcome results.

This being said, we believe that the work of PF has indeed yielded results and that there are ways to measure them. The fact that an individual MP has raised the SALW issue in his/her national parliament is in itself an important result that should be acknowledged. On a long-term basis, these results can also be measured through impact, by e.g. measuring the proliferation and effects of SALW, reviewing changing tendencies in crime, the number of victims of gun violence in a country, the homicide rate, etc.

The following are some ways to measure results that could be used as indicators for the work of PF:

- Number of meetings taking place.
- Number of laws introduced.
- Number of discussions held in parliaments.
- Number of articles etc. written by MPs.
- Number of PF members.
- Number of events etc. during which MPs bring up SALW issues.
- Number of guns destroyed in the country through campaigns supported by the PF.

Influencing the change in legislation

Using examples from countries where a change of legislation has taken place is a good way to visualize what is indeed possible to achieve through the work of individual MPs. In Latin America, PF, together with CLAVE and Viva Rio, made a model legislation, a framework law that was later adopted by Parlatino, which could be used by Latin American parliamentarians to initiate change in their own countries: Uruguay and Guatemala changed their national laws as a consequence, for example.

Another example is from Mozambique where the gun laws have been changed because the NGOs working with SALW could identify and collaborate with a parliamentarian who was knowledgeable about SALW and had the power to gather other parliamentarians around the issue. Through the Forum's capacity building and the skills that this parliamentarian acquired from the Forum, he was able to go back to his parliament and apply his knowledge on the national level.



Also in Mozambique, Mozambiquan board members initiated a creation of a policy statement and a parliamentary handbook after an explosion in ammunition storage in 2007 when more than 100 people were killed. This helped raising awareness about the issue that has become a serious problem in many countries.

Another example is observations from MPs in Latin America and Africa about growth of private security sector companies and implications on state monopoly on the use of force and the concept of security as a common good. This resulted in drafting of a policy statement and beginning of dialogue with private security companies (Securitas) about the need for improved codes of conduct.

Dialogue with the US Congress

Initiating and conducting a dialogue with the US Congress about small arms issues has been a strongly expressed wish and priority expressed for many years by Latin American Forum members. Latin American countries cannot tackle the SALW proliferation efficiently without talking to the country that is one of the main sources of proliferation, USA. In April 2010 PF brought together Latin American parliamentarians and members of the US congress to look into illegal transfer of SALW from the southern US states into Mexico. Estimated 750 000 pieces of weaponry per year are trafficked through to Mexico from the US, many of which end up as far south as Brazil. Weapon smuggling between the US and Mexico bears the same structure as drug smuggling and is quite often linked with drug trafficking. Pregnant women, college students etc. legally buy weapons in the US, carry them across the border and sell them in Mexico for triple and even quadruple amount from the original price. This problem cannot be addressed in a serious manner unless the US weapon legislations are modified. With the knowledge that the US is very protective of their citizens' right to bear arms, the PF does not suggest changing the Second Amendment of the US Constitution, but rather wishes to see modifications to the existing laws which will prohibit purchase of more than e.g. three weapons per citizen, as that would significantly reduce the weapon transfer from the US to Latin America.

Achieving long-term political results take years, but the PF has done a significant groundwork with the US politicians in this regard. After the meetings between Latin American parliamentarians with the US Congresspersons, the Forum arranged additional meetings with US senators and Congresspersons, thus influencing policies "behind scenes". By sharing experiences like these, more could be achieved and others could be inspired.



PF and other actors in the same field

Nowadays, the Parliamentary Forum is frequently invited as observer to meetings of the IPU, WEU, OSCE, NATO, Parlatino etc. At the same time, many of Forum's members participate in international meetings as parts of their countries' parliamentary delegations or other parliamentary associations (i.e. Forum's board members also have other key functions through which they represent the Forum at the same time: Hans Raidel was in the Parliamentary Assemblies of NATO, OSCE and WEU. Celestino Soares is in NATO. Former President Sonia Escudero was secretary general for Parlatino. Ibrahim Sorie is in the ECOWAS parliament). However, with its limited capacity, PF cannot and should not take part in all events. Thus, the Forum has given high priority to having a qualified presence of knowledgeable members taking part in the UN-related processes, especially processes in which there are opportunities to make a change. In the last few years BMS, Disarmament Week in the UN General Assembly and the meetings that preceded the signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of Cluster Munitions have been prioritised.

The Forum has also strengthened its cooperation with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND).

There are at present several other actors working with issues directly or indirectly linked to SALW. Some of our interviewees propose that the PF works more closely with relevant actors in the security and arms field, such as the UN regional offices, the police networks and the border control organs. Others argue that PF should form closer links with other parliamentary organisations.

NGOs

The PF members are generally very positive about the Forum's collaboration with NGOs, but the position they are given varies from a strategic partner to an observer. Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) and the Forum have shared experiences and possibilities to cooperate quite a number of times, particularly with helping parliamentarians influence the UN disarmament agenda. Their core work differentiates significantly in the sense that the PNND works with different types of proliferation and different types of weapons. However, some issues, such as production and smuggling of materials from which weapons are produced, necessity to improve cross-border cooperation to limit illegal trading, regional and international proliferation, etc. PNND and the Forum were



able to share expertise and share information. PNND and the Forum should continue looking at practices and try to develop new mechanisms to tackle the issues.

International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)

IANSA and the Forum have organised joint events, joint projects such as educating parliamentarians on SALW issues and building their capacity. IANSA has expressed its desire to incorporate some of Forum's working methods, increase mutual sharing of information and improve communication. IANSA's expertise does not lie in capacity building, so this is an area where Forum's work could be very relevant.

A formal arrangement between IANSA and the Forum (memorandum of understanding) would help both organisations to mutually support each other in order to be more effective.

Other parliamentary organisations/unions

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

The greatest difference between the PF and IPU is that the IPU is an association of parliaments and not parliamentarians. IPU is a rather conservative organisation, which means that their work is conducted more from the background rather than through public campaigns and direct engagement of parliamentarians. This is why IPU's working methods take time to be adopted and implemented; the Parliamentary Forum on the other hand is rather independent, flexible and quick-paced.

IPU's expertise lies in democracy, human rights, peace and conflict resolution, etc., which is why the Forum could well complement IPU's work with their expertise on SALW. As PF's methods are different from IPU's, the IPU could also benefit from Forum's openness and flexibility and open up more itself.

PF understands the crucial importance of engaging with parliamentarians and parliaments, and IPU can definitely see an added value of having the PF on board in one joint organisation. As to the present cooperation between the IPU and the Forum, PF has an observatory status to the IPU. The Forum has also given input to the draft resolution that will be presented at IPU's 124th Assembly and Related Meetings in Panama City in April 2011.



Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA)

PGA and the Forum have cooperated at conferences related to small arms issues. In spite of its long experience in working with parliamentarians and government officials from all over the world, PGA is a rather formal organisation that is less dynamic than the PF. Although PGA is structurally more similar to the Forum than the IPU, it does not represent a real option for PF to join forces with and incorporate their work as one single association.

In addition to what is mentioned above, the PF has been working well in cooperation with other networks, particularly with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation, Central American Small Arms Control Program (CASAC) and the South Eastern Europe Small Arms Control (SEESAC), which has been largely successful in the Balkans. In addition, there are initiatives such as the Cap. Letters: Parliamentarians Network for Conflict Prevention, which is a part of the East-West Institute.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The Forum and UNDP have been cooperating intermittently for the past five years. UNDP representatives praised the Forum's well-organised way of working, which brings more structure and systematisation into the SALW discussion. They also added that the Forum should connect much better with the security sector reform (SSR) governance bodies and some other non-proliferation bodies, which would increase their effectiveness and level of success. The UNDP BCPR programme should definitely be on the list of prioritised partner organisations. With head offices in New York and Geneva and staff in regional offices around the world and some of the national UNIDIR offices, they play an important role within the SSR and SALW area of work.

Joining other organisation – or not?

As mentioned above, the PF is at a crossroad. As a part of this study we have been examining the different options for PF's structural development. There are pros and cons for various alternatives. Below we will try to list some of the most important ones. To merge all union-like organisations into one that could possibly be called "Parliamentarians for Disarmament" could be an option, but this is not advocated by anyone we spoke to.



Advantages of being part of a larger organisation

- It would be possible to create synergies with more actors.
- The organisation will have an increased capacity for SALW and other tasks
- It will be easier to reach out.
- It will be easier to secure funding.
- The organisation could be more known in media etc.
- There could be more resources for advocacy work etc.

Disadvantages with being part of a larger organisation

- SALW issues could “disappear” or be lost among many others.
- The organisation will lose its uniqueness (flexibility, smallness, very personal etc.)
- The bureaucracy could be suffocating, risk of internal conflicts etc.
- Higher cost, more vulnerable to cut in funding.
- PF could lose its politically unbiased profile (if becoming to associated with NGOs or more politically linked organisations)

Advantages of being independent

- Not much money needed for core funding (additional funds will always be needed for organising events etc.)
- Unique in character.
- Flexibility in discussing different topics, in cooperation with other counterparts, and liaising to participate in specific thematic and/or geographic campaigns.
- Specific focus on SALW is kept and not diverted from the course by other topics. This could make PF more attractive as an organisation with specific expertise, available for cooperation with other organisations with a different focus.
- Members are content and like the organisation and setup.
- Administrative changes take time and cost money, losing speed and momentum.
- Small is beautiful!

Technical support from the secretariat

The secretariat's main function is to elaborate and follow up on strategic planning, give support to members and coordinate activities. The parliamentarians attend the international



conferences organised by the Forum, they get relevant capacity building and then return to their parliaments where their role on national level is absolutely critical. With gained knowledge from the Forum, they have the relevant capacity to assess the laws in their countries, evaluate their effectiveness, present necessary legal changes, push for ratification and then advocate for implementation in national policies, politics, programmes and corresponding budgets.

Generally speaking, the members are very content with the work of the secretariat, also considering the limited human and financial resources at disposal. The members express an overall satisfaction with the material elaborated by the secretariat. They would all like to see the secretariat strengthened, but not altered in its actual functions. However, as the setup is limited, the staff cannot respond to all demands from the members. Therefore, increasing the number of staff would definitely increase the secretariat's capacity to fulfil the demands.

Key areas for secretariat's work:

- Capacity building. The parliamentarians need relevant capacity building in order to be eligible to discuss the SALW issues in their respective parliaments, as well as to push for new laws to be elaborated and later ratified. The members confirm that the policy documents are relevant in most circumstances and they want the secretariat to continue elaborating them. They are relevant for short messages to decision-makers and quick learning about the SALW issues.
- As parliamentarians get re-elected every four to five years depending on individual countries, new members of different parliaments need new capacity building on SALW, and the Forum is one of the few organisations dedicated to SALW that offers such a good capacity building.
- Technical support on dialogue and communication issues. The secretariat should support the members on how to communicate the SALW dilemma. Many times, it is communicated in relation to defence and security issues, but it should also be expressed in regard to the issues more related to the population such as in the broader human security and development agenda. There are many good NGOs that could support the communication strategies that the secretariat should promulgate to the members. However, this would require expansion of the secretariat. The issue is further elaborated in chapter 4.
- Rapid response to individual demands, for example in reviewing law proposals, advocacy papers, background materials for presentations on country level. The Forum provides the members with information, brings them up to speed on a variety of issues, and helps them formulate national policies that they did not have the capacity for before that.



- Support from international SALW networks and organisations. The secretariat facilitates contacts and helps members make use of national and regional networks (drafting policy statements and developing and advising on the policy and organising seminars are the key tasks).

Additionally, the members would like to see:

- Technical legal advice on draft proposals (given in a limited way today).
- Handbooks on how to create public policy (beyond legislation).
- Map gaps and progress of legislation in entire regions (the secretariat can have an update function reporting on this).
- Communication from the secretariat directly with parliaments (not only members). For example, after meetings, the secretariat could make it a routine to send a letter of appreciation for the participation of a particular MP. This would strengthen the link between that particular parliament and the secretariat and give the individual PF-member legitimacy and credibility.
- A study that compares the Framework Law/Ley Marco with the PF's members' national laws.
- Increased research capacity (part-time through external researchers on demand – same principle as legal support on demand)
- Give more legal support to draft legal instruments (one internal legal expert or external legal support adapted to the demand).
- Bring in regular collaboration with regional and national NGOs /civil society organisations.
- Improve the advocacy capacity in order to push for global legislation, for example at the UN General Assembly Third Committee, for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

In addition, some interviewees argue that the secretariat should introduce possibilities to improve monitoring of the engagement of individual members, whereby the less active members would not receive financial support to attend the meetings organised by the secretariat. Some of the proposed ways to monitor the engagement of different members include yearly reports, update at the general assemblies, requests for support, exchange of information and other communication with the secretariat and between members.



2. Evaluation of Forum's working methods and proposed improvements

Today, the Forum has about 200 members from different countries in the world. The list of members is revised regularly and in accordance with election processes and re-election of members to their respective parliaments. This means that the secretariat has a chart of election dates worldwide and follows the election results throughout the year. At times, however, publication of election results takes longer time, which is why the secretariat revises all member countries' parliamentarians once or twice a year. To approach new members, the Forum first identifies a region of interest and thereafter proceeds to identify parliamentarians and government staffers (current and former defence staff), using the entry point of the chair of the standing committee on foreign affairs and/or defence. The Forum then calls for a regional meeting and engages both the invitees and the parliamentarians from the hosting country in two-day seminars. The participants of the regional meeting are then invited to become the members of the Forum.

The Forum does not actively recruit new members, but offer those who have been engaged in SALW issues in their countries to continue as Forum's members. Hence, Forum's membership group is small, but very dedicated. In order to avoid increasing the workload of their members, the secretariat offers full assistance with parliamentarians' activities concerning SALW, such as writing speeches, arranging meetings with other members, etc. Roughly 90 percent of Forum's members are enlisted through the above-mentioned process, others are invited directly. The Forum strives to invite a good mix of parliamentarians to the regional meeting (both men and women, politicians from all parties, from big and small countries, etc.).

PF regularly receives ambitious national and regional activities- and project proposals. However, PF is not able to give but very small grants for such activities/projects. An increase in sustainable funding (as well as in administrative capacity) would make it possible to administer and assess these kinds of applications.



Members' working process

Today, the members collaborate mainly with thematically relevant commissions and committees within their own parliaments, but also with ministries and actors from civil society, such as thematic NGOs, as well as with regional actors. The Secretariat facilitates the interaction between members and regional and national experts on arms control. The members have different relations to the Ministries: some MPs work closely with government agencies, other don't trust the information they receive and recompile parallel information to verify the politics on arms control in their countries.

Participation in conferences, etc.

There is a role to play for the PF at international events within the UN and also the regional political organs. It is however important to have an impact during these meetings, that the participating members are prepared within the national delegations, that they have been assured space and possibilities and that they come back with viable recommendations that their individual governments are prepared to commit themselves to. An example is the meeting that is organised every second year by the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. The secretariat sponsors participation of the board and some members. It is recommended that for each and every international and regional meeting that the PF participates at, the secretariat and the members elaborate a terms of reference with emphasis on national follow-up. In 2010, the Forum wrote to heads of parliamentary delegations that were to participate in Biennial Meeting of States and encouraged them to include of the PF member parliamentarian in the delegation. This proved to be particularly successful among the African MPs.

New declarations and policy statements

The PF keeps their information database updated by following news and events around the world that concern SALW issues. The ideas for new declarations and policy statements come from Forum's board and the secretariat, as well as from Forum's members. The secretariat edits a first draft and sends it out to the board to receive input and comments. Once the comments have been incorporated into the text, the draft awaits the next meeting of the board to be approved. It is the decision-making bodies, such as the General Assembly and board, who take responsibility for policy statements. The Forum meets for a General Assembly once every second year.



Below is a description of methods used by the PF for its work with members. The methods mentioned below could possibly also give an input about how to visualize results better. It could be done from the yearly reports and tested with the secretariat.

- General meetings: Some of the interviewees suggested that several parliamentarians from each country (at least two) should be invited to general meetings, whereby the costs could be shared and sought for by members from sources other than the secretariat. This would ensure that the follow-up responsibilities in those parliamentarians' countries are shared and the continuity in case of change of members is guaranteed.
- Regional meetings are popular. The working groups at the meetings are constructive. It is recommended that more time is given to group work and that the members come to meetings with prepared positions, documents etc., and that they are given tasks beforehand.
- General Assembly meetings are held once every second year. The agenda includes a review of the year that past, a statement from the secretary general, the president of the board, and presentations from other members that have achieved particular a progress in their countries or in other way have issues of importance to share with the Forum. A new board is elected by all members at the GA for a two-year commitment. The board is normally elected so that several aspects are considered, such as: gender balance, regional balance, political left-, right- wing and centre representation, etc.
- Exchange: The members encourage the PF to have more exchange between parliamentarians from different countries to give credibility and support to the SALW process in their parliaments. Exchange also takes place when new laws are being processed as when one legal instrument is used to influence the drafting of laws in another country (Nicaragua, Guatemala and Bolivia). All members teach each other and learn from each other.
- Working groups: Today there are working groups at some of the meetings. Some members suggest that there should be working groups on specific areas of interest. These working groups should not be regional, but give an incentive to work globally. Good examples could possibly be found in the output from these groups.
- Written material: They are elaborated by the secretariat, sometimes with an external thematic specialist. The secretariat generally asks a member with specific knowledge to give his/her input to the document. It is spread mainly at meetings and on demand from specific members. Policy papers are made by the secretariat directly and are usually sent out to relevant allies for quality control and input.



Recommendations

- Bring Speakers of parliaments on board, as this could be a way to engage with the national parliaments collectively, rather than with individual parliamentarians only. Do this before, during and after meetings when possible.
- Identify strategic regional and international meetings and processes during for the period between 2011-2013, where the PF could be represented. If it is in countries with members, the members should be sent to present and promote the PF, else the board or the secretariat should do it. One example, is the UN meetings on SALW, but moreover meetings where cooperation partners meet, such as at the regional meetings on security issues, the network meetings at OECD DAC, or regional training programmes on SALW conducted by e.g. ISSAT or UNLiREC.
- Members of PF's board and secretariat could visit the regions to follow the work of individual members in their countries. They should have a dialogue with the chairperson/members of parliament, ministries, civil society etc. and advocate for PF's work.
- Create closer cooperation with UN bodies and share information and follow-up on different UN and similar treaty-based mechanisms, their recommendations and plans of action. The role of the legislators is to learn about the treaty processes in order to be able to use the acquired knowledge to formulate legislations in their countries on national level.
- Elaborate a format for annual planning that could be used by each member, which stipulates the support requested from the secretariat. It could include follow-up (on distance) meetings between the member/members, the secretariat and other relevant actors (chairperson of parliament civil society representatives, government staff etc.). Annual plans could be discussed and followed up with the individual member and the secretariat and presented at the general assembly. Individual reports should be presented so that they could serve as lessons learned and feed into other members' work.
- Make a communication and dissemination plan for each and every new document/material that is produced by the PF.
- Initiate a discussion if there should be a code of conduct for member MPs, apart from the criteria for membership, e.g. on the position on SALW in relation to public security vs. an individual's right to carry a gun.
- Engage the PF in investigation, elaboration and use of monitoring tools for public expenditure on arms control.
- Bring in French-, Arabic- and Portuguese speaking capacities, and legal resources (from the international networks and external consultants on demand).
- Work in a structured way with media and communication issues (see more under chapter 4).



3. Funding

At present, the Forum main financiers are Sida and the Spanish MFA. Sida contributes annually with SEK 2 – 2,5 million, while the Spanish MFA's support varies from 30.000 to 100.000 EUR. Sida has based its condition for funding for 2011 on the presentation of this study. It is not sure that the Spanish MFA will continue funding PF in the future, even though they are at present showing great enthusiasm and strong dedication. The PF has also been given small funds for certain activities. In addition, national parliaments contribute to the work of the PF with donations connected to events they are hosting. All these contributions (mainly from the Folke Bernadotte Academy, DfID and the German MFA) have been very significant for Forum's work and should be recognised. However, finding funding for small projects can somehow be managed, but the main challenge remains finding core funding.

The funding efforts have so far been ad hoc activities, more depending on the secretariat. It has been more difficult to attract more core funders. The secretariat has had some intent to spread the funding efforts, but has not been successful in receiving additional institutional support. Applications have also been sent to foundations but without any significant success (i.e. The Forum secured funding from Folke Bernadotte Academy for small projects, as well as from the Princess Diana's Memorial Fund for work on cluster munitions, but has not yet been successful with larger US foundations).

In the long run, the PF does not necessarily need to seek support from cooperation agencies. It could be of more political relevance to get support from governmental institutions such as ministries for foreign affairs and parliaments themselves.

The Spanish board member has been very helpful in seeking funding for the Forum, and the German board member helped open a door to the German government. The Swedish board member has promised more engagement in seeking funding from the Swedish MFA and Sida. However, generally speaking, individual members are not involved in the fundraising and have little to add on how to go about to find new financiers. But this might also reflect the fact that they had not yet been involved in the issue.

There is an imminent risk that Sida will terminate its support. This would put the Forum's entire work at risk. The Forum should thus give high priority to secure future funding from Sida or from the Swedish MFA. This could be done by mobilising the Swedish board members



and the secretariat in Sweden, but also by approaching embassies with regional programmes on democratic governance and peace and security, such as in Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Cairo. In addition, the Forum should invest time and efforts to secure more sustainable funding from Spain, as Forum's activities and presence in Spain are very relevant not only for Spain's general engagement in SALW issues, but also to keep focus on SALW issues in Latin America in Europe.

In the longer run, the Forum must develop a more sustainable solution and not rely on one major donor. The Forum is running the risk that their staff will go and seek a long-term employment elsewhere if PF is not able to give them extended contracts.

The fact that the Forum has a bit of an unclear identity (is it a branch of government, NGO, or what?) might affect the fundraising in a negative way. Efforts should be made to better explain the unique character of the forum.

Recommendations

- Highest priority should be set on securing funding for 2012 and 2013. Our recommendation is that the Forum arranges a high-level personal meeting between board members (from Sweden) and Sida's director general as well as with the minister for development cooperation, Gunilla Carlsson and other relevant officials.
- The PF should review main cooperation agencies and MFA networks and their arenas to introduce the PF, e.g. the International Network on Conflict and Fragility within OECD DAC.
- At present, fundraising is ad hoc. The forum should develop a fundraising strategy, in which realistic targets are set with the aim to become less dependent on the present core-funders. The strategy could be relatively short and simple, but should be discussed and approved by the board.
- It should be possible to increase the number of financiers, however, with a small administrative capacity the forum should focus on a few strategic partners that could be additional core funders. Board members as well as Spanish MFA should be enlisted in this process.
- The secretariat should encourage their parliaments to support their members' participation financially.
- Fundraising should be integrated in the permanent work. This could be done by contracting (on a consultancy basis or employed) a fundraiser who could integrate fundraising with communication and outreach activities.



- Fundraising could also be done by using a network of “friends of PF”.
- In order to secure funding it is important to link SALW to poverty reduction and human security. This is especially important in contacts with donors with strict financial policies.
- BRIC countries (and others) that want to play a bigger and more active role in the global scene should be contacted. Countries of particular interest could be Brazil, South Africa and India. Other countries to contact could be Japan and Norway.
- PF should be more proactive in developing contacts with foreign diplomatic missions in Sweden as a way to reach out to other possible donors. This could be done by the secretary general in cooperation with board members and possibly the ambassador from the country from which the president of the board also comes (El Salvador).
- Memorandum of understanding should be signed with more partners, for example IANSA as this makes it easier for donors to justify their support.
- PF should set up a model for matching of smaller core contributions. For example, if the Spanish MFA contributes with 30 000 EUR (Spain’s contribution to the Forum dropped from 100.000 EUR in the beginning to 30.000 in 2010), PF could ask another ten countries to match the same amount.



4. The future: political programmatic priorities, further outreach and possible cooperation

As mentioned in the introduction to this document, the PF is at a crossroad. The issues could be summarized as follows:

- Should the focus be SALW only, or should PF broaden the span of issues? For example, work harder to engage parliamentarians from weapon producing countries?
- Should PF remain small and independent, or become a part of a larger governmental agency/parliamentary union/network?
- Should PF move its secretariat to another country as a way of securing new core financiers?

Most members appreciate the clear focus on SALW. They believe it is important that PF maintains its sail set towards arms control, not broadening the subject too much (poverty reduction etc.) In fact, those who argue that the Forum should become broader are often persons outside of the organisation.

As mentioned earlier, the members need instruments to follow up on legislation and politics. They need to increase their capacity on how to review and monitor budget issues related to small arms in order to be able to propose legislations for arms control.

Even though we do not suggest that the PF should broaden its focus, it is important to be aware of issues that would most likely be on the agenda also in the future. Those include arms and natural resources, gender-based violence and criminal investigation.

Moreover, the PF should be proactive with the regional political actors, such as Parlatino, SICA in Central America (Border Control Programme, Regional Commission for Heads of Police), OAS, ECOWAS in Western Africa, SADEC in Southern Africa, OSCE and others. The secretariat should review together with IPU the possibilities for interaction in the coming years (according to their planning). In the same way, the secretariat should review planning with IANSA and regional civil society organisations for possible synergies.

The Forum could work more to inspire their members to connect with NGOs operating in their countries and have parliamentarians ask the questions in the parliament on NGOs' behalf. For example, a parliamentarian could ask a minister how many gun licences have been approved and issued that year. By asking questions, the parliamentarians can generate information, and



if the information is unavailable, they could highlight the fact that it is unavailable, so that the NGOs can demand answers.

Often, the parliamentarians' work is well covered by the national media. This fact could be utilised to increase the awareness of the SALW issue among the population.

Regional focus and recruitment of new members

The PF is gradually moving away from its strong focus on Latin America. This is important, as the strength of the organisation lies in the fact that it can draw on experiences from different regions and political and cultural contexts. However, it is important that Latin America is not forgotten, especially now when many donors (particularly Sweden) are phasing out their cooperation with the region.

The current developments in the MENA region provide new challenges for the PF. The seminar at Cyprus with invited MPs from the MENA region was from this perspective extremely well timed. With spread of democracy in the MENA region, the role of the parliament will be of increased importance and from this perspective the PF has a key role to play, not only with regard to SALW issues, but in general as an organisation that can develop contacts between MPs in the MENA region, Europe and other parts of the world.

If resources permit, we would also encourage the PF to develop its network in South Asia and South East Asia.

Influencing governments in weapon-producing countries

Some interviewees argue that the PF should put more effort into the discussion on the role of weapon producing countries. Members of the Forum come mainly from the countries affected by arms trade, but not necessary from the producing countries. What the Forum could do in the future is to dedicate more time and resources engaging politicians and parliamentarians from such countries. By doing this, PF would be able to push its members to influence their governments to regulate their weapons production and exports in addition to focusing on changing existing regulations about gun use. It would also strengthen the PF if it had more active members from EU countries, as this would make it possible to increase fundraising activities as well as to initiate discussions on weapons export, similar to ones taking place in Sweden.



US regulations

Latin American parliamentarians meeting members of the US Congress is something that the PF as well as most of the interviewees render as extremely important to continue with, especially because a possible change of US laws on gun-possession could significantly reduce the cross-border small arms smuggling, affecting the situation in many countries not only in Latin America but worldwide.

Getting frequency in discussing SALW issues in the US Congress is a very worthwhile ambition, but it is a painstaking and long-term process that could last for years. If the Forum could find partners who are generally supporting the gun-control issues in the US, it could possibly move the agenda forward. A lot could be achieved for Latin America, even with small changes and improved regulations in the US: stricter end user control, limiting the number of guns that can be bought by an individual, improving police and customs control, etc. PF has never challenged the Second Amendment, but pointed to necessity of improvements within the existing frame. Some interviewees suggested that the Forum targets Congresspersons who are already pro gun control in the US, and work with them to further the issue within the Congress.

A clear focus on SALW

Some interviewees have argued that working with many different disarmament issues would give strength to the organisation. However, we believe that there are clear advantages keeping a clear focus on SALW issues and not deviate (nuclear disarmament issues etc.) With the exception of the US, SALW is not a left-right issue: it is one that attracts politicians regardless of their political affiliation.

This also related to the discussion of a possible merger with another organisation. This however, we believe, would mean that the SALW issue would risk disappearing among other issues. Nonetheless, the different parliamentary forums could do more to utilise each other's specific expertise.

Presenting good practises

The following is a sample list of good practices supported by the PF members on arms control beyond legislation. It is recommended that they are documented and presented in a format



that describes the process, making them replicable on other countries, regardless of the region.

- El Salvador. Handover of illegal arms.
- Peru. Destruction of illegal arms.
- National Commission in Guinea Bissau. 53 out of 100 Parliamentarians are members of the Permanent National Commission of Internal Administration within which the work on SALW has been fundamental.
- The Swedish National Parliamentarian Group on SALW works together with the Forum and SWEFOR, which are both active members of SANSA, the Swedish branch of IANSA. Among other things, the Group discusses cluster munitions- and landmines issues, weapon export, SALW, etc.
- Others (to be elaborated by the secretariat).

This report recommends that the secretariat, with support from its members updates and uses the mapping of relevant security actors to begin dialogue with and describe how the parliamentarians could increase their collaboration with these actors (input from SALW and SSR handbook) and of course, also for connecting stakeholders for financial support.

A viable alternative (if resources permit) that would make it possible to respond to increased demand is to set up a helpdesk together with IANSA. There are several models, but one that would cover regional, thematic and legal expertise is the key.

Another possible option could be to organize hearings together with NGOs and think tanks on SALW. The PF members could invite other actors to establish offices or liaisons for SALW in the parliament and in some state institutions, or independently.

The MPs should have a dialogue with embassies in their countries. The secretariat could communicate with the members that embassy could be of interest to seek support in the members' countries.

Recommendations

- Set realistic targets. The advantage of the Forum is that it has a strong focus on SALW. Keep it, but continue to build relations with other actors.



- Make it clearer to donors that there are good results. Make use of a list of good practices. Present impact on SALW control.
- Increase the dialogue with Sida, Swedish MFA and other donors. Strengthen the role of the board in this.
- The trend towards showing more measurable results has been marginalising support for political processes, and the Forum could have a responsibility to show how political processes can be very effective. This is why the Forum should connect SALW to human security; create a better link to poverty alleviation issues. In addition, work to make a clearer connection between SALW and strengthening of democracy. The Forum builds parliamentarians' capacity, which in turn leads to parliamentarians taking a more active role in policymaking in their respective countries and cease to be a mere rubberstamp.
- Make use of former members. MPs who are leaving could bring on board those who are succeeding them and keep them interested in SALW issues. One way could be to create a loose lobbying network, "Friends of PF" or similar.
- Improve communication and information sharing.
- Integrate more with the security sector reform (SSR) and democratic governance sectors. Because the SALW issue is such a niche issue, the Forum and its members need a better connection with security, justice and other governance bodies and institutions.
- Apply for funding for the development of a specific program in the MENA region.

Communication issues

As the PF has a very small number of staff, the resources are limited and should be used wisely. Successful communication is a key to achieve the overall goals of the PF. It is also a fact that no matter how good your results are, if you don't know how to communicate them you will not be able to influence the debate and spread lessons learned to others. For that reason, we have written a text, which deals specifically with communication issues.

In recent years, the Forum has independently and in collaboration with others contributed to the production of a series of writings and publications. Some of those include policies that are adopted by the board and the members. Adopted policies are also a good starting point for the Forum to conduct advocacy. In addition, the Forum's practical guides are appreciated by the members. Through articles, seminars, speeches, writings and the website, the Forum's issues and positions could be spread wider and influence policymakers.



During 2007 and part of 2008, UK Department for International Development (DFID) financed a communication officer at PF which made it possible to establish media relations, develop the website and spread information through newsletters and other channels.

One issue worth discussing is whether the full name of the forum is too long and unclear, thus making communication and outreach activities more difficult than necessary. It is however, important to maintain the word "parliamentary" in the name of the organisation in order to give a clear signal as of what the PF is (and not).

Information production

The Forum is excellent in producing materials: having short parliamentary declarations on different issues and circulating them widely on all levels (national, regional, international). The material is available for MPs to use in existing media campaigns, or in their own election campaigns.

The small-format books on model laws and policy statements on different issues are excellent tools for parliamentarians to use. What the Forum needs to do better is to make sure that those booklets are well distributed.

Media relations

Good media relations are crucial for any organisation that wishes to reach out and influence the society. With help of skilled campaign- and media specialists a lot of publicity could be created. One example is the landmine campaign that showed people disabled from explosions of landmines, who organised a sit-in in front of the UN building in New York.

Becoming too well known could however lead to resources being spent on serving students, researchers and others with material, thus reducing the time that could be spent on core issues.

Web and the social media

The website contains a lot of documents but is not updated to the current technical level. After entering SALW into a web search engine (e.g. Google), the Forum's website does not appear high up. In order to be more accessible, the Forum should work on search



optimisation. The PF should also establish a presence in social medias. The following are some measures that could be taken to improve the web and develop capacities in social media.

- Develop the website. Register names such as SALW.org and SALWforum.org that links to their website
- Update calendar of events.
- The web should include linkage to individual blogs, articles etc. from members.
- Use Twitter to post short notifications about the latest developments within the SALW area: create a fan-page on Facebook where members or people in general could post news on SALW.
- Publish news flow on the web (RSS feed).
- Buy www-addresses that could be linked to the web. Suggested addresses: salw.info, salw.org, salwforum.org.
- The PF should encourage members to use Twitter. The Forum could start the hash code (#)Smallarms (or similar) to make it possible for others to follow the discussion.
- The Forum should publish a news flow on small arms at the web page (RSS).

Strengthening the media capacity

As shown above, there is definitely a need to strengthen the communication capacity of the Forum. This is, however, something that could be done in different ways. Contracting a communication officer with temporary funding is not recommended, as it will not be a sustainable solution. Instead, we would advocate the use of consultants to further develop the communication expertise among present staff, as well as among the members themselves. However, persons could be contracted for different, well-defined assignments. As modern ICT technology does not have any geographic limitations, a web master (as an example) could be placed just anywhere in the world.

Recommendations

- The Forum should develop a media strategy. It could be short, but would serve as a guideline for what the forum should do.
- The secretariat should support the members on how to communicate the SALW dilemma.
- The secretariat should give the members training/capacity building on communication issues. This could be done by producing a small manual and to bring in trainers to seminars.



- The secretariat itself should take part in capacity building on communication.
- Coordination should be sought with other actors for seminars and events in order not to duplicate.
- A person from PF's network (ideally MP, assistant to MP or similar) with an interest in social media should be contracted in the development of social media channels. This person could be located just anywhere in the world.
- The Forum should develop a simple online-service, whereby the handbook could be made clearly visible and easily accessible on the website.
- The forum should increase its media activities. In each country PF should do media outreach and communicate the fact that PF members are experts on SALW issues and show readiness to talk about the topic (for example, in relation to the Arizona shooting). By making more media outreach, the SALW issue will remain high on the political agenda. This also increases the members' credibility and reliability in their countries, as well as towards their constituents.
- The Forum should develop template/sample articles that MPs could use when writing op-ed articles themselves.
- In order to save resources and increase spread and dissimulation more material should be in electronic form (PDF).
- 9th of July is the International small arms destruction day, and it is often neglected. Parliamentarians are in position to push for a symbolic destruction of weapons in their countries. Respecting and marking these events could raise awareness among the population, as well as among other politicians in the respective country.



5. Alternative locations for the Secretariat

There is a mix of opinions whether the secretariat should remain where it is, or if the secretariat should be moved to another country. All interviewees agree that the most important thing is not where it is, but that it functions. The present secretariat functions very well, even though it should have more resources to be able to respond to all of its members' demands.

The mix of opinions is mainly linked to whether there should be regional offices or not. Some argue that it would be good with a regional office or two. It would give more access and vitality to the processes between meetings. Others argue that it is not sustainable and that a regionalisation would significantly increase Forum's core costs and administrative workload.

Today the secretariat works very well considering its small resources. If it were relocated it would be important to give it the time to document existing knowledge before the transfer.

Possible countries

The requirements for the placement of the secretariat have to be political will, resources and sustainable funds. If the government where it is located has the political will to promote the small arms control agenda, then this is a plus. At the same time, any potential host country must be ready to take over Forum's core funding costs.

Countries in the toss-up for a potential move of the Forum are those countries in which the parliamentarians have shown the most enthusiastic engagement. Cyprus, together with Germany, Spain and Sweden are the European countries in which parliaments have been most active working with the Forum. Parliaments in the South that have been active are from Mozambique, East Africa (Arusha) Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Nicaragua, Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia and Panama.

The options presented are as follows:

- Remain in Sweden. This is the most logical but requires continuous funding from Sweden.
- Move to Spain. The representative from MFA Spain had not considered the possibilities of moving the secretariat to Spain, nor to move it to Latin America or Africa.



- Move to the country of the elected president of the board. The board changes every other year and changing the location of the secretariat with the same frequency would affect its sustainability, effectiveness and cost-efficiency.
- Move to Cyprus. Cyprus might be willing to host the secretariat because they don't have an international body of such nature.
- Move to Germany. Could be possible, but at present there are no gains as far as we could see.
- PF is registered in Belgium, so Belgium could be another option to move the secretariat to. This could be useful because of the closeness to the EU Parliament. However, PF's focus is not on EU, so it is no real reason to be in Brussels.
- Location in the south. A location in Africa or Latin America could be a solution and also an important signal as to the importance of the work outside of Europe. However, relocation to Africa or Latin America could obscure the work in other developing regions, making it to regionally biased.
- Move to New York. Being located in NY gives many good connections to UN bodies, to NGOs, however the costs of moving and being located there would be too much to bear for the small Forum.

Recommendations

- Maintain the secretariat in Stockholm, at least as long as there is a substantial core funding from Sweden.
- Put focus on securing core funding for 2012-13 from the present donor. Make it well known to Swedish MPs and government that the secretariat will otherwise move!
- Don't start sub-offices. It is costly. Keeping the administration down is an advantage. Instead, use digital channels to network, rely on contracted persons. If budget permit, employ desk officers with regional specialisation.



6. Strategic choices

Some interviewees call for more structure in handling MPs, documents, reports, regional meetings etc. While all these could be developed, we believe that the Forum's small size and the fact that it is driven by MPs is something that makes it attractive, both to members and to other actors. It is also open for flexibility.

The question is how to strengthen the PF without reducing its unique character, or as it we put the issues earlier in this document:

- Seek deeper and structural cooperation with existing inter-parliamentary organisations or other actors and in that way secure funding through those organisations.
- Institutionalise further, which would include seeking more governments to support the Forum in the long run, like Sweden and Spain at the moment.
- Move the secretariat to a country willing to continue to support the Forum through core funding (like Sida is doing at the moment) and for at least five years.

Key recommendations

- **Remain independent.** We recommend the Forum to remain an independent organisation as this has clear advantages. However, the Forum should increase its cooperation with different actors. Instead of merging with other organisations, the Forum could share offices with an organisation with similar international outlooks such as International IDEA or SIPRI. This would make it possible to make use of available administrative resources and would give staff a possibility to increase their capacity on SALW issues (SIPRI) and give input in their work.
- **Grow, but grow slowly in a sustainable way.** Secure core funding from Sweden as an urgent, first step. Then go for an increase in core funding. As the Forum is small, a budget increase with €100.000-200.000 would make a huge difference for the Forum's ability to develop their work. It should not be impossible to achieve this – or even more.
- **Let the secretariat remain in Sweden.** The secretariat works very well, wherefore it would be a risk to move it. We also don't see any point in establishing regional offices. However, if Sweden fails to provide core funding, the secretariat should be moved to a country that would better appreciate the work of the Forum.
- **Keep the focus on SALW issues.** Don't venture into other areas such as weapon production; work more on visualising the connection between poverty reduction and SALW.



- **Continue with long-term strategic planning.** Put resources only on activities that are linked to long-term objectives and results. Avoid all isolated activities without possibilities to follow up and impact.