



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS



One Africa, One Voice

Connecting the Dots: Supporting 2030 Agenda, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms (UNPOA) implementation through increased parliamentary engagement and action in international processes

2-3 March 2018

Regional Seminar, Pan-African Parliament, Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Preparatory step to the UNPoA 3rd Review Conference

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION PLAN

Part 1 – Introduction and purpose

The state of the world underlines the need to prioritise 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 study¹, 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-

¹Oxfam, 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

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, fuels violence and causes severe human, economic and social costs for the continent.

The “Connecting the Dots” project and seminars aim to build on the on-going efforts towards 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goal 16.4, 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 Arms Trade Treaty (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 2030 Agenda, the UNPoA and the ATT have created, in order to gather parliamentarians from focus countries in an effort to facilitate the exchange of experiences, challenges and best practices that surround the legislative work on the three instruments.

Based on the analysis and recommendations set out in the Policy Brief on the same topic, this Parliamentary Action Plan is outlining main priorities and actions needed to reinforce parliamentary ownership, participation and understanding of the ATT and the UNPOA,² within the framework of SDG 16. It should serve as a tool for parliamentary action in the field of armed violence reduction and prevention and consider other relevant instruments.³

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

² Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPOA)

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).

This 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 and the UNPOA, addressing synergies between the instruments within the framework of Agenda 2030, SDG16;
- Guide parliamentarians in their work related to the ATT and UNPOA within the framework of SDG 16, 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.

Three action areas have been identified and are based on the key roles of a parliamentarian;

1. Awareness raising
2. Legislation
3. Oversight

This Plan will be condensed with the other Plans approved in the Latin American and Asian seminars which are part of the “Connecting the Dots” initiative. They will provide, from the parliamentary perspective, an input to the Preparatory Committee and the Third Review Conference of UNPoA in March and June 2018 in New York.

Part 2 – Recommendations on Universalisation and Implementation of 2030 Agenda SDG 16, the UNPoA and the ATT

Based on the three key roles of a parliamentarian; legislation, oversight and awareness raising, below follow 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 2030 Agenda SDG 16, the UNPoA and 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.

Awareness Raising

- Pursue sensitisation on the SDG 16, UNPoA, and ATT, among fellow parliamentarians by submitting a report on the topic to respective parliamentary committees
- Pursue sensitisation on the SDG 16, UNPoA, and ATT among the population
- Table questions in parliaments to relevant government institutions
- Raise motions on the topic in relation to relevant instruments
- Promote and support arms amnesty initiatives among relevant governmental entities, ensuring the protection of the population participating
- Approach media coherently to highlight SDG 16, UNPoA, and ATT
- Maintain interaction with the population at grassroots level, in coordination with peacekeeping forces, if applicable

Legislation

- Ensure that relevant Treaties and instruments related the topic of SALW control are signed by governments
- Ensure ratification and domestication of relevant Treaties and instruments related to the topic
- Ensure relevant national legislative initiatives are taken, including protection of civilians
- Support harmonisation efforts of relevant legislation at African level
- Ensure criminal laws safe-guarding the well-being and protection of civilians
- Ensure strengthening of regional legislation related the topic
- Guarantee the domestication of regional and international laws
- Safeguard the implementation of existing legislation
- Promote cooperation between countries

- Promote the introduction and approval of a Model Law in collaboration with the Pan-African Parliament
- Include the gender equality perspective consistently

Oversight

- Ensure implementation of relevant legislation on the topic
- Maximize the oversight of the Government by relevant Parliamentary Committees
- Periodical review of relevant legislation on the topic
- Encourage oversight by the Parliament
- Encourage oversight by Civil Society Organisations
- Empower the role of the population as whistle-blowers regarding the illicit flow and use of SALW
- Encourage the population to voluntarily surrender SALW in their possession
- Ensure adequate operation and function of the SALW Commissions

Part 3 – Partnerships and resources⁴

The efforts of parliamentarians and the Parliamentary Forum in promoting increased or enhanced parliamentary action on ATT, UNPOA and SDG 16.4 can be multiplied if working in partnership with organisations with similar or overlapping interests. It is therefore recommended that the Parliamentary Forum and its members seek partnerships and structured dialogue with a range of actors.

Parliamentary action constitutes a unique effort to create the missing link between the local and national level. Parliamentarians have an important role in identifying and highlighting good practice at the local level in order to inform national policies and legislation and to promote good practice internationally.

⁴ The Plan is inspired by action plans and tools created by other international parliamentary organisations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Parliamentarians for Global Action.

Other Parliamentary networks

[Inter-Parliamentary Union \(IPU\)](#)

[Pan-African Parliament \(PAP\)](#)

[East African Legislative Assembly\(EALA\)](#)

[Economic Community of West African States Parliament \(ECOWAS Parliament\)](#)

[Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum \(SADC Parliamentary Forum\)](#)

[Africa - Caribbean - Pacific - European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly \(ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly\)](#)

[Parliamentarians for Global Action \(PGA\)](#)

[The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons \(PFSALW\)](#)

Intergovernmental structures

[United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\) - Rule of Law, Justice, Security & Human Rights Team](#)

[ISACS Inter-Agency Support Unit](#)

[United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs \(UNODA\)](#)

[United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa \(UNREC\)](#)

[United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\) – Global Firearms Programme](#)

Civil Society Organisations

[Control Arms Coalition](#)

[International Action Network on Small Arms \(IANSA\)](#)

[International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War \(IPPNW\) – Armed violence and health perspective](#)

[Women's International League for Peace and Freedom \(WILPF\) – Gender perspective related to SALW and Women Peace and Security](#)

Research institutes

[Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces \(DCAF\) – Public - Private Partnerships Division](#)

[Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security \(GRIP\)](#)

[Small Arms Survey](#)

[Bonn International Centre for Conversion \(BICC\)](#)

[Stockholm International Peace Research Institute \(SIPRI\)](#)

[Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation – Africa Department](#)

Other sources

[The Arms Trade Treaty](#)

[The UNPoA](#)

[UNCOMTRADE](#)

[NISAT](#)

[UNROCA](#)