PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2018
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 4  
2. Context .......................................................................................................................................................... 4  
3. Theory of change ......................................................................................................................................... 6  
   a. Specific objectives ................................................................................................................................. 6  
   b. Strategic priorities ................................................................................................................................. 8  
4. Partner Organizations ............................................................................................................................... 9  
5. Transparency and Accountability ............................................................................................................. 10
Executive Summary

The state of the world underlines the need to prioritise the prevention and reduction of armed violence. The world in 2016 is marked by an upsurge of violence and armed conflict, as reflected by the Syrian civil war, the conflicts in Yemen and East Ukraine, as well as the spread of global terrorism and organized crime. The number of forcibly displaced people has reached 65.3 million, the highest number since the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees records began. Armed conflicts and violence, independent of the scale, are perpetuated by the availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), increasing the need for concise and effective steps to tackle its proliferation.

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

The Parliamentary Forum aims to support parliamentarians across party-political lines in their work to reduce and prevent armed violence as well as to contribute to the advancement of the global disarmament agenda, and provide a space for parliamentarians to meet and join forces with other stakeholders and actors.

The Parliamentary Forum’s work rests on two pillars: policy-shaping and capacity-building. As point of departure for these pillars are the three key roles of a parliamentarian; the legislative, over-sight and awareness-raising functions.

Based on the underlying working methodology of policy-shaping and capacity-building, the Forum has developed five specific objectives structured around its overall objective;

- Improving, refining and harmonizing the policy framework for SALW control at national level and regionally harmonize laws on SALW
- Develop further parliamentarians’ capacities to address SALW issues
- Contribute to the building of an international consensus on SALW and armed violence through parliamentary exchange and intervention
- Increase public awareness of SALW violence, its impacts, and parliamentary action
- Consolidate the financial and operational sustainability

During 2016-2018, the core of the Forum’s mandate is maintained. However, certain strategic priorities will be emphasised as to maximize the political potential of the Forum. Three strategic priorities have

---

1 The Strategic Plan 2016-2018 was approved by the Board of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons in August 2016.
been identified based on recent international policy development on SALW-related violence, recommendations from previous external evaluations, and in response to the needs of our members;

- The role of parliamentarians in relation to the implementation of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda, in specific SDG16, target 16.4, to significantly reduce illicit flow of arms.
- Strengthen the policy-shaping/building role of the Forum by enabling topical, relevant knowledge tailor-made for parliamentarians.
- Strengthen the Gender equality perspective of the Parliamentary Forum, internally and externally, based on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and other relevant Resolutions related to women, peace and security.

The three key roles of a parliamentarian will continue to be vital points of departure. However, more emphasis will be placed on the awareness-raising role during the period.

1. Introduction³

The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons is the only international platform for Members of the Parliament specifically focused on the issues of SALW-related violence. Our over-all objective is to contribute to the achievement of more peaceful and developed societies by parliamentary action against armed violence to increase human security.

The Parliamentary Forum aims to support parliamentarians across party-political lines in their work to reduce and prevent armed violence as well as to contribute to the advancement of the global disarmament agenda, and provide a space for parliamentarians to meet and join forces with other stakeholders and actors.

The Forum emanates from the double acknowledgement that SALW availability and misuse constitutes a threat to development, human security, human rights, and good governance and the fact that parliamentarians possess tools vital to prevent and reduce SALW-related violence.

2. Context

Problem statement

The state of the world underlines the need to prioritise the prevention and reduction of armed violence. The world in 2016 is marked by an upsurge of violence and armed conflict, as reflected by the Syrian civil war, the conflicts in Yemen and East Ukraine, as well as the spread of global terrorism and

³ This Strategic Plan is a summarized, over-all presentation of the objectives and scope of the organisation. The Plan will be translated to more detailed annual operational plans according to available financial and human resources of the Secretariat.
organized crime. The number of forcibly displaced people has reached 65.3 million, the highest number since the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees records began.4 Armed conflicts and violence, independent of the scale, are perpetuated by the availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), increasing the need for concise and effective steps to tackle its proliferation.

Armed violence caused by the proliferation and misuse of SALW has wide-spread human, economic and social costs. It endangers human security and constitutes a development obstacle globally. Furthermore, it threatens democracy and good governance, facilitates violations of human rights, and contributes to the persistence of armed conflict in all parts of the world. Parliamentarians are crucial to the fight against SALW proliferation at national, regional and international levels. However, their full potential remains often unrealized as they lack the necessary capacities to act and receive little, if any, support from international development stakeholders.

Prevention and reduction of SALW-related violence: a role for parliamentarians

The prevention and reduction of SALW-related violence requires a complex set of interventions. One can regulate SALW acquisition and possession, transfers (import, export, transfer, brokering, transit and transhipment), manufacture and selling, marking and record-keeping, as well as use. Beyond controls, one can target the demand for SALW by awareness-raising efforts, changing perceptions associated with SALW possession or increasing the level of compliance with the law. One can act at domestic level through the tightening of legislation or the implementation of armed violence reduction programmes, or one can carry out initiatives at regional or international levels.

Parliamentarians have a central role to play at all levels. Legislatures have the mandate to introduce new laws and review existing ones, ensuring that they adequately regulate emerging practices. Parliaments also play an important oversight function vis-à-vis the government. By exercising their right to interpellation, requesting and reviewing reports on government achievements, and importantly, approving the budget, Members of Parliaments can positively influence the level of implementation of the law. In addition, parliamentarians interact with the public and translate contemporary concerns into policies. Doing so, they play a vital role in stimulating the public debate and can contribute to cultural and behavioural changes. With regards to international processes, parliamentarians ratify international treaties and can initiate discussions with fellow colleagues in other countries, greatly contributing to the formation of international norms on SALW and harmonization at the regional level. In conclusion, parliamentarians are crucial in the work against SALW proliferation at the national, regional and international level.

---

3. Theory of change

The theory of change of the Parliamentary Forum is to contribute to the achievement of more peaceful and developed societies by parliamentary action against armed violence to increase human security.

As a global network of parliamentarians dedicated to the prevention and reduction of small arms and light weapons’ proliferation and violence, the Parliamentary Forum provides a multi-party space for parliamentarians to debate, join forces, and contribute to the advancement of the small arms agenda at the national, regional and international levels.

The Forum serves as a platform for inter-parliamentary dialogue, consensus building, and parliamentary capacity-building, public awareness-raising, exchange of best practices and harmonization of initiatives. As such, the Parliamentary Forum enables parliamentarians to realize their full potential in preventing and reducing SALW-related violence in the legislative, over-sight and awareness-raising functions.

a. Specific objectives

Based on its theory of change and the underlying working methodology of policy-shaping and capacity-building, the Forum has developed five specific objectives. These are continuously revised and refined based on previous experience and the external context. This enables the Forum to function in a manner that is up to date in relation to current global events and needs of its members, as well as to build upon past experiences. During 2016-2018 the Forum will base its work on the following five specific objectives. Within each objective certain priorities for the upcoming period are emphasized.

1. Improve, refine and harmonize the policy framework for SALW control at national level and regionally harmonize laws on SALW

This objective is built upon past achievements of the Parliamentary Forum with regards to the development of the policy framework for SALW-related violence reduction at national and regional levels. Its aim is to reach common standards that would facilitate legislative work according to regional and specific needs in terms of SALW and armed violence control.

Priorities:

- Publication and usage of policy statements and final declarations to guide parliamentary work
- Increase and support parliamentary processes by parliamentarians requesting a legislative or oversight change
- Promote parliamentary dialogue between affected and producing countries

2. Develop further parliamentarians’ capacities to address SALW issues

This objective will ensure that parliamentarians, members of the Forum or not, are well equipped to address SALW-related issues within their national legislature and in regional and international arenas.
In order to build their capacities, parliamentarians will be provided with expert knowledge and material to guide their action. It refers to actions taken by parliamentarians in their respective home parliament and the support given to them by the Forum in this endeavour – both to the individual member as well as making tools and material available to the membership as a whole.

Priorities:

- Attend members request to receive policy and technical support for parliamentary initiatives and legislative action
- Increase awareness raising through interventions or media activities at national, regional or international levels
- Continued and increased technical/policy/capacity building support to members and other parliamentarians

3. **Contribute to the building of an international consensus on SALW and armed violence through parliamentary exchange and intervention**

The specific objective realises the provision of a platform for parliamentary exchange and dialogue, as well as secure parliamentary engagement in international fora. Forum members come from diverse backgrounds and various political convictions, but they all experience the problems caused by the wide availability of SALW and their misuse. While these problems sometimes differ in relation to the national and regional contexts, parliamentarians can learn from measures implemented in other countries.

International treaties envisage and highlight various parliamentary tasks, such as legislation, oversight and awareness-raising. Thus, Parliamentary inclusion is essential, in order to support ownership and full implementation of international treaties. This objective aims at ensuring the flow of information among members and enabling the building of common policies and action.

Priorities:

- Maintain and further develop parliamentary work on SALW related armed violence reduction and prevention with international parliamentary organisations such as the Latin American Parliament, the EuroLat and the IPU
- Promote and secure parliamentary engagement in UN processes related to SALW and disarmament such as the ATT, the CCM and the UNPoA
- Facilitate regional parliamentary work and interchange on issues of SALW related armed violence reduction and prevention

4. **Increase public awareness of SALW violence, its impacts, and Parliamentarians’ action**
This specific objective aims at enhancing the general public knowledge of the SALW issue, their negative effects on societies and the ways to prevent and reduce SALW-related violence. This work is conducted by parliamentarians in their constituencies as well as through national and international media.

Priorities:

- Increase impact of parliamentary work through better dialogue and awareness raising with the general public
- Prepare parliamentarians for media interventions and encourage the use of social media as an awareness raising tool.
- Encourage parliamentary contributions through articles, Op-Eds and interviews to reach out a wider audience.

5. Consolidate the Financial and operational sustainability

This last objective aims to address the refinement of the financial and operational management and control of the Forum. A solid financial and operational management is key for achieving the objectives of the Forum. As part of its fundamental work, the Forum has in the past two years, engaged in a series of efforts to strengthen, institutionalise and further develop financial and operational routines, as well as adopted policies to address specific issues. This work is based on lessons learned within the organisation and recommendations from external auditors. The process is supervised by the Board, in line with decisions made by the General Assembly and is executed by the Secretariat.

Priorities:

- Secure a robust financial management platform for the Forum, including an adequate process for budget planning, follow-up, reporting and institutionalized administrative and operational routines within the organisation.
- Secure financial sustainability, including steps towards donor diversification.
- Implement policies related to anti-corruption, per diems and procurement.

b. Strategic priorities

During 2016-2018, the core of the Forum’s mandate will be maintained. However, certain strategic priorities will be emphasised as to maximize the political impact of the Forum. Three strategic priorities were identified based on recent international policy development on SALW-related violence, recommendations from previous external evaluation, and in response to the needs of our members. The strategic priorities will permeate the Forum’s work. The 2030 Agenda and an increased gender perspective will be important topical foci in the Forum’s upcoming activities and publications, as well as to maximize the Forum’s knowledge enabling function as to strengthen the policy-shaping role. The Forum’s partnerships with other organisations will be of decisive importance for this process.
The 2030 Agenda

The Forum is very pleased to find SDG16 within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as it provides a clear international goal and point of departure on the issue of armed violence and SALW proliferation. The role of the Parliamentary Forum is to translate the global policies and goals to the political language of parliamentarians, and connect them to the national level, where parliamentarians affect implementation through their legislative, over-sight and awareness raising roles. Agenda 2030, and more specifically Goal 16, target 16.4, will be an important guideline for the Forum’s work during the upcoming period, and will be emphasized in the Forum’s activities and publications.

Enabling policy-oriented knowledge

The Forum will strengthen the policy-shaping/building role by enabling topical, relevant knowledge tailor-made for parliamentarians. This will include materials such as policy briefs, policy statements and final declarations, as well as ad hoc support to specific country needs. The topics will focus on the Agenda 2030, international instruments such as the ATT and the UNPoA, women, peace and security in relation to the role of the parliamentarians in preventing and reducing armed violence.

Gender equality

The Parliamentary Forum will strengthen its Gender equality perspective through targeted outreach activities to attract more women parliamentarian members, and by thematically by involving Women, Peace and Security (WSP) - relevant content in the work agenda. Focus in this endeavour will lay on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and other relevant Resolutions related to women, peace and security.

4. Partner Organizations

The Forum benefits from close cooperation with international organizations, governments, research institutions, and civil society. Through individual members’ contacts, presence in national, regional and international fora, as well as its Secretariat, the Forum maintains a large network of experts on SALW and related issues enabling the Forum to draw on specific knowledge and competencies on the most complex SALW-related issues.

The Forum adheres to and promotes the idea that effective intervention aimed at preventing or reducing SALW-related violence needs to be all-encompassing in nature. SALW-related violence manifests itself in a broad range of behaviours and in various contexts. It is the result of the interaction of a multitude of risk factors, and has far-reaching consequences on various aspects of societies. The Parliamentary Forum therefore pursues a comprehensive approach towards the prevention and reduction of SALW-related violence, with parliamentarians, government officials, international organisations and civil society organisations taking part in the work of the Forum.
In order to achieve the strategic priorities for the period 2016-2018, the Forum aims to increase the cooperation with certain key actors by strengthening its capacity-building and policy-shaping pillars to assure the quality and long term impact of its mandate, as well as consolidating previous collaboration.

5. Transparency and Accountability

The Forum is committed to principles of transparency and accountability, based on the democratic and inclusive character of the organisation. The principles apply both to the internal organizational and financial aspects as well as thematic scope and content. Through its different communication channels, the Forum transmits the results of its work to beneficiaries, partners, donors and the general public alike in the different levels and geographical areas of action. In addition, the inclusive character of the Forum facilitates the dialogue with different partners and stakeholders, creating a solid process of communication and accountability that channels adequately the impact and challenges of the Forum.

Quality Assurance

Based on its mandate and the state of the world, the Forum has a political relevance and a solid foundation in its global parliamentarian membership base. Since its foundation in 2002, the organisation has developed to encompass a broader geographical and thematic scope and vital results, experiences and partnerships have been achieved.

However, the effective fulfilment of the Parliamentary Forum’s objectives is challenged by a variety of risks related to sustainability: parliamentarians’ turnover, priorities and limited impact in parliament, as well as the capacity of the Secretariat in the face of an increasing membership base. The Forum is actively taking measures to mitigate these risks by promoting continuity, for example by engaging with parliamentary’ staff and former members by inviting them to become Friends of the Forum. The Forum employs flexibility in the planning of its activities, and strives to adapt them to parliamentarians’ schedules, host activities in parliaments’ premises, and develops qualitative programmes. The capacity-building function of the Forum and the additional weight given to their position by being a member multiplies the impact the Forum’s members have in their parliaments and in international organizations.

Together with these measures, the Forum is strengthening its strategic long-term planning and the financial management. The Forum is introducing policies to regulate financial and administrative practices, and constantly evaluating results and challenges on a yearly basis, in order to secure the long term impact of its work. In sum, these efforts will ensure organizational and thematic sustainability and accountability.

The Forum’s projects are monitored, evaluated, and reported on by the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Forum. Narrative and financial reports are provided as stipulated in the agreements with donors. The
Board of the organisation has a vital role to play in providing strategic guidance to the Secretariat on the over-all thematic and financial situation, being the entity with final responsibility for the organisation.