



The Brussels Declaration was adopted at the General Assembly and Thematic Seminar “**Prevention and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons related violence - Parliamentary Action for Peaceful & Sustainably Developed Societies**” organised by the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and the Flemish Peace Institute, in Brussels, Belgium, on the 28th and 29th of November, 2018.

The participants extend their heartfelt gratitude to the Flemish Peace Institute and the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons for generously hosting the seminar.

The Brussels Declaration – Parliamentary Action for Peace

Parliamentarians from countries in **Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East**, with presence also from representatives from the civil society and international organisations, coming together for the General Assembly and thematic seminar, **note with deep concern** the state of the world where forcibly displaced people reached over 68.5 million in 2018, the highest number since records began. Armed violence and conflict, independent of its scale, is perpetuated by the availability of SALW. More than 1 billion SALW are circulating worldwide, 85% of these in the hands of civilians.

The participants therefore express their common concern regarding the fact that the world experiences a continued high level of SALW-related violence and conflict, breaches of international humanitarian law as well as the spread of global terrorism and organised crime; **and stresses the need** for concise and effective steps to tackle the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW.

The Parliamentarians present call for the need to prioritise the prevention and reduction of SALW-related violence and underscore the paramount need for parliamentary action to advance universalisation and strengthened implementation of relevant international instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Programme on illicit SALW (UNPoA)¹.

The **illicit trade and uncontrolled proliferation of SALW and irresponsible arms transfers** pose a real obstacle to human security and sustainable development in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East, and facilitates the spread of terrorism and violent organised crime;

The participants request continued efforts to achieve more peaceful, inclusive and sustainably developed societies through capacity-building, policy-shaping and awareness-raising, by enhancing parliamentary action in the implementation and universalisation of relevant international frameworks for the prevention

¹ United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

and reduction of SALW-related violence. In particular to implement Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16), since the adoption of SDG16 signals a consensus within the international community that peace and security is a foundation for development. Likewise, Target 4 of Goal 16, aims to significantly reduce illicit arms flows, explicitly acknowledging the proliferation and misuse of SALW as an obstacle to development and the security and wellbeing of women, men, girls and boys.

The participants affirm the vital role of parliamentarians in relation to the need to strengthen the implementation of the UNPoA, the ATT and the 2030 Agenda SDG16 and its connection to SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 17 on strengthening global partnerships for sustainable development. The UNPoA is complementary to the ATT, which entered into force in 2014 and so far, has been signed by 135 states and has 99 state parties. **The participants welcome** the positive development of the ATT and emphasise the importance of its universalisation and implementation in the region and at a global level, as well as a thorough and strict implementation.

The participants emphasise the legislative, oversight and awareness-raising role of parliamentarians in transforming the relevant international frameworks to enforceable laws, regulations and building national ownership for a sustainable development. Nation specific implementation shall be accountable and inclusive, and adapted to the specific country context by creating National Sustainable Development Strategies and Plans.

The participants also welcome the work of Forum Members at the international level, and highlight important results in relation to the Third Review Conference of the UNPoA (RevCon3). Initiatives like “Connecting the Dots”, implemented by the Forum, are good examples of how parliamentary action at the national and international level can have considerable impact; **therefore, participants further encourage** strong co-operation, additional parliamentary initiatives and acknowledge the key role that parliamentarians have in SALW control and prevention.

The participants confirm the need for the immediate implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent relevant Resolutions. The role of women in SALW-related violence prevention and reduction is imperative for successful sustainable peace and security globally. Women’s active and meaningful engagement is crucial in Peace and Security related processes, and actively take part in violence prevention, conflict resolution and peace processes.

The participants underscore the importance of continued joint efforts, engagement and co-operation between different actors and stakeholders, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 17. **The participants call for** actions towards strengthening global partnerships to prevent and reduce SALW-related violence - bringing together national governments, national, regional and international parliamentary assemblies, the international community, civil society, the research community, the private sector and other actors.