



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS



One Africa, One Voice

“Enhancing parliamentary engagement and action for more peaceful and sustainably developed societies - implementation of 2030 Agenda, the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA)”

3-4 October 2019

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

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION PLAN¹

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 organised 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 characterise many regions in Africa. According to a recent study², 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-

¹ Adopted at the Regional seminar in the Pan-African Parliament on 4th of October 2019.

²Oxfam, 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 seminar aims 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 (UN PoA) and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) universalization and implementation, as well as the United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and UNSCR 2250. Special focus is on providing parliamentarians with adequate tools to support the process at the national and regional level. It seeks to use the momentum that the 2030 Agenda, the UN PoA and the ATT have created, in order to gather parliamentarians from different 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 Concept Note 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 UN PoA,³ within the framework of SDG 16 and SDG 5 with links to UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 2250. It should serve as a tool for parliamentary action in the field of armed violence reduction and prevention and consider other relevant instruments.⁴

The present Parliamentary Action Plan has been revised and adopted in its amended version, based on the Parliamentary Action Plan adopted in the

³ Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA)

⁴ 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 (UN PoA).

Pan African Parliament in March 2018. It is a result of the seminar discussions identifying main conclusions from the participants' perspectives.

This Action 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 UN PoA, addressing synergies between the instruments within the framework of Agenda 2030, SDG 16 and SDG 5;
- Guide parliamentarians in their work related to the ATT and UN PoA within the framework of SDG 16 and SDG 5, 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. Legislation
2. Oversight
3. Awareness raising

Part 2 – Recommendations on Universalisation and Implementation of 2030 Agenda SDG 16 and SDG 5, the UN PoA 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 and SDG 5, the UN PoA 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.

Legislation

1. Ensure that relevant Treaties and instruments related the topic of SALW control are signed by governments
2. Ensure ratification and domestication of relevant Treaties and instruments related to the topic
3. Ensure relevant national legislative initiatives are taken into account in the protection of civilians
4. Support harmonisation efforts of relevant legislation at African level
5. Ensure criminal laws safe-guarding the well-being and protection of civilians
6. Ensure strengthening of regional legislation related to the topic
7. Guarantee the domestication of regional and international laws
8. Promote cooperation between countries
9. Promote the introduction and approval of a Model Law in collaboration with the Pan-African Parliament
10. Include the gender equality perspective consistently
11. Ensure equitable access to resources to address illicit proliferation of SALW
12. Address foreign based root causes in relevant foras especially relating to natural resources interest, including wild life trafficking and illicit SALW

Oversight

1. Maximize the monitoring and oversight of the Government by competent and or relevant Parliamentary Committees or parliamentarians themselves
2. Encourage oversight by Civil Society Organisations
3. Empower the role of the population as whistle-blowers regarding the illicit flow and use of SALW

4. Encourage the population to voluntarily surrender SALW in their possession
5. Ensure adequate operation and function of the SALW Commissions
6. Address foreign based root causes in relevant foras especially relating to natural resources interest, including wild life trafficking and illicit SALW
7. Collect data, document and report on SALW
8. Address the issue of porous borders by relevant measure including community policing
9. Establish periodic reviews and evaluations by control mechanisms, for the monitoring and follow up of implementation of laws.
10. Consider the equal access to education, SDG 4.7 especially on reducing violence and promoting gender equality

Awareness Raising

1. Pursue sensitisation on the SDG 16, SDG 5, UN PoA, and ATT, among fellow parliamentarians by submitting a report on the topic to respective parliamentary committees
2. Pursue sensitisation on the SDG 16, SDG 5, UN PoA, and ATT among the population
3. Table questions in parliaments to relevant government institutions,
4. Raise motions on the topic in relation to relevant instruments
5. Promote and support arms amnesty initiatives among relevant governmental entities, ensuring the protection of the population participating
6. Involve media at all levels coherently to highlight SDG 16, UN PoA, and ATT
7. Maintain interaction with the population at grassroots level, in coordination with peacekeeping forces, if applicable
8. Increased capacity building seminars with parliamentarians on ATT, UN PoA, SDG 4 and SDG 5
9. Strengthen collaboration with civil society organisations
10. Increase multi-stakeholder dialogues
11. Establish periodic meetings with stakeholders at national sub-regional and international level

12. Address foreign based root causes in relevant foras especially relating to natural resources interest, including wild life trafficking and illicit SALW

Part 3 – Partnerships and resources⁵

The efforts of parliamentarians and the Parliamentary Forum in promoting increased or enhanced parliamentary action on ATT, UN PoA and SDG 16.4 and SDG 5 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.

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](#)

⁵ 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.

[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](#)
[Gun Free South Africa](#)

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](#)
[Institute for Security Studies](#)

Other sources

[The Arms Trade Treaty](#)
[The UN PoA](#)
[NISAT](#)
[UNROCA](#)
[UNSCR 1325](#)
[UNSCR 2250](#)