



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS



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

Panamá, Latin American and Caribbean Parliament
May 13, 2017

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. 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 present draft Parliamentary Action Plan has been prepared by the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons in preparation for the Regional Seminar “Connecting the Dots: Supporting SDG 16, ATT and UNPOA implementation through increased Parliamentary engagement and action in international processes” held in cooperation with the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (Parlatino), on 12 and 13 of May 2017.

Based on the analysis and recommendations set out in the Policy Brief on the same topic, the plan outlines actions needed to reinforce parliamentary ownership, participation and understanding of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms (UNPOA),¹ within the framework of SDG 16, and should serve as a tool for parliamentary action in the field of armed violence reduction and prevention.²

Following an exchange of views about the draft at the Regional seminar, the conclusions will be condensed in a revised and amended draft Action Plan, which will be decided on and submitted for formal endorsement.

This Parliamentary Action Plan focuses on parliaments’ role in strengthening the response to armed violence and SALW proliferation and has been designed to:

¹ Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPOA).

² Also consider the [Firearms Protocol](#) as a legally binding instrument.

- 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

Expected outcomes

- Increase parliamentary engagement, understanding and participation in the ATT, UNPOA and Agenda 2030;
- Boost already on-going universalization and implementation in the regions where SALW action, arms control and the ATT and the UNPOA require stronger parliamentary intervention
- Strengthened effort to engage parliamentarians as part of the run-up and preparation for international dialogue and review of the ATT and UNPOA;
 - the Conferences of States Parties (ATT) in September 2017;
 - the UNPOA PrepCom in 2017
 - the UNPOA Third Review Conference(RevCon3) in June 2018;
- Provide input to and underpin impact in ATT and UNPOA related processes;
- Promote women parliamentarians' active participation in the processes, underpinned by UNSC Resolution 1325 and other relevant Resolutions related to women's participation and SALW.
- By the end of 2018 have achieved;
 - Contribute to 5 states ratifying/acceding to the ATT from the targeted regions³
 - Contribute to in total 5 States complying with UNPOA and ATT reporting.
 - Specific parliamentary action/efforts toward ratification/accession/participation take place in all 3 processes.

Part 2 – Action areas

The Parliamentary Forum on SALW can offer substantial policy and technical support for parliamentary initiatives in all three action areas; in drafting various forms of text e.g. speeches, talking points, policy research papers and giving technical advice where needed. For reference,

³ Sub-Saharan Africa (Cameroon, DRC, Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe), Latin America (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala and Nicaragua) and South East Asia

other relevant organisations are listed in this Parliamentary Action Plan, whose work covers different areas of the SDG 16.4 implementation, ATT and UNPoA at the national, regional and international level.

Action Area 1: Awareness raising

Parliamentarians have a key role in promoting the ATT, the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) and UNPOA both nationally and internationally, accelerating ratification and supporting effective implementation of the ATT and the UNPOA. MPs interact with the public and translate contemporary concerns into policies. In doing so, parliamentarians play a vital role in stimulating the public debate and can contribute to cultural and behavioural changes. This includes forming alliances with relevant actors including civil society organisations.

Universalization

- Approach parliamentary leadership (Speakers, committee chairs, group leaders etc.) to include the issue of ATT signature and ratification on the parliamentary agenda;
- Act in the parliament and/or introduce motions related to ATT ratification;
- Raise the issue in relevant parliamentary committees, include experts in the dialogue with relevant committees;
- Approach government officials to inquire about the current status;
- For those countries where ATT ratification or UNPOA reporting is slow or delayed, parliamentarians should identify the reasons: e.g. lack of political will, administrative red tape, and lack of technical capacity / trained personnel to deal with ratification issues.

Public awareness-raising

- Engage with media – traditional and social – to broaden support for the ATT and the UNPOA among the general population;
- Link with civil society organisations, government agencies and their constituencies for awareness raising initiatives aimed at sensitise the population on the consequences and costs of armed violence, in order to look for the necessary solutions;
- Join forces with young people, both as a target group but also as an ally in the implementation of the SDG 16.4, ATT and the UNPOA at the national, regional and international level;
- Develop cooperative parliamentary and health community actions, independent of other synergies, to help states integrate public health approaches and strategies regarding armed violence prevention into UNPOA action plans.
- To make visible and increase knowledge about the human, economic and social costs of small arms and light weapons and their effects on women, men, girls and boys and youth.
- Make visible and promote the work and substantial participation of women parliamentarians in peace and security issues.

Continuously identify areas of improvement and new arising issues to address as part of the instruments, such as;

- Promote inclusion of the topic of ammunition, parts and components, as well as relevant specific issues (stockpile management, markings, international transfers) in the UNPOA

- Promote review and revitalisation of the UNPOA, based on needs assessments made by national, regional and international authorities, independent researchers and civil society
- Develop a more holistic approach to the women, peace and security agenda in relation to ATT, UNPOA and SDG 16.4
- Initiate dialogue on the developments of the indicators in SDG 16.4 with relevant national and international stakeholders such as the United Nations and statistical offices
- Call for the consolidation of the ATT financial contributions and the use of its mechanisms, for example, the Voluntary Trust Fund
- Encourage uniform reporting in order to facilitate the collation of information and conclusions in terms of best practices
- Safeguard compliance by promoting collective enforcing mechanisms

Action Area 2: Legislation

Legislatures have the mandate to introduce new laws and review existing ones, ensuring that they adequately regulate emerging practices and that measures are taken to establish a national legislative response to armed violence that is consistent with the ATT, UNPOA and SDG 16.4. Legislation should be nationally appropriate and take into account factors such as economic structure, stage of development, exposure to armed violence, legislative culture, public opinion and political leadership.

Analysis/information as basis for decision-making:

- Ensure regular mechanisms of information management, with a mandatory, timely and systematic nature, to allow a periodic risk assessment and monitor the evolution of violence. Consider the necessary measures to reverse the risks of violence and set up early warning systems;
- Promote research and development of armed violence reduction programmes to support legislation;
- Integrate SALW action plans into national development strategies;
- Use available tools such as model legislations e.g. the Parlatino⁴ or UNODC⁵ model laws on Firearms, to identify areas of improvement as well as aid the regional harmonisation or laws and common standards. Seek support from organisations e.g. Parliamentary Forum on SALW or those listed in this Plan.

Innovative committee work:

- Promote the creation of inter-committee agendas or committees of committees within the parliament, as to effectively discuss, coordinate and harmonise legislative work of relevant committees to SDG 16.4, ATT and UNPOA, such as Defence, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Health, and Gender;

⁴ The Model Law was commissioned by the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) and developed by the Forum in cooperation with the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR) and the Latin American organisations Latin American Coalition for the Prevention of Armed Violence (CLAVE) and Viva Rio. It was formally adopted by Parlatino in December 2008.

http://parlatino.org/pdf/leyes_marcos/leyes/ley-armas-municion-ingles-pma-5-dic-2008.pdf

⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Model Law against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition (2011) https://www.unodc.org/documents/legal-tools/Model_Law_Firearms_Final.pdf

- Encourage Parliamentary Committees on Health and Welfare to include the issue of armed violence prevention on their agendas, especially in countries affected by SALW proliferation;
- Guarantee interaction between legislation and relevant public policy to ensure consistency and to avoid conflicting signals or incentives;

Partnership for inclusive legislation:

- Actively encourage women parliamentarians to initiate, draft and sponsor legislation;
- Consider the incorporation of diplomatic representatives, government officials, civil society organisations, including youth organisations, in the discussions and drafting of relevant legislation as well as structures in decision-making processes at all levels to bring in young people's skills and perspectives on issues related to armed violence prevention;
- Promote the development of formal or informal cross-party groups/networks in order to champion ATT, UNPOA and SDG 16.4.

Action Area 3: Oversight/Control

Parliaments also play an important oversight function vis-à-vis the government, including enhancing transparency and accountability of any action and reporting related to armed violence prevention and reduction. 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 and hold their governments accountable to comply with their international obligations under the ATT, their commitments under the UNPOA and the accomplishment of the SDG 16.4.

Institutional arrangements

- Work closely with the executive, endeavour to secure that the necessary agencies, instruments and budget are in place for compliance with the SDG 16.4, ATT and UNPOA. Promote inter-agency coordination, avoid duplication of efforts and harmonise with international efforts;
- Consider introducing steps whereby parliamentary consultation and approval should be sought in decisions pertaining arms exports to conflict and post-conflict zones, as well as providing an annual public report on arms exports and purchases;
- Encourage governments to include health professional representation on National Commissions on Small Arms, and collaboration with the World Health Organization's focal points on violence prevention at Ministries of Health that exist in more than 100 countries;
- Hold regular meetings between cross-party groups of legislators and the ministers responsible to discuss, inter alia, national positions ahead of the United Nations negotiations and, post-negotiations, to discuss outcomes and implications for national legislation and policy;
- Ensure parliamentary inclusion in UN processes, and insist on parliamentary participation as part of delegations to relevant meetings and conferences.

Effective reporting

- Promote and implement systematized national data collection on firearm-related deaths and injuries to help inform armed violence prevention policies;

- The UNPOA State reporting template should include requests for national progress on programs and policies on SDG 16, including the four targets 16.1 and 16.4⁶;
- Seek advice and information from civil society organisations and research institutes in order to stay informed on issues related to government compliance with ATT and UNPOA;
- Make systematic follow up on national reports related to ATT, UNPOA and SDG 16 and ensure these meet or exceed set requirements;
- For those countries where reporting is slow or delayed, parliamentarians should identify the reasons: e.g. lack of political will, administrative red tape, and lack of technical capacity / trained personnel to deal with reporting issues.

Financial sustainability

- Secure sufficient funding for effective implementation through state budget or external sources e.g. the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund;
- Secure the allocation of the necessary budgets to allow state agencies to collect statistics relevant that facilitated the evaluation of implementation of SDG 16.4, ATT and UNPOA;
- Increase support for survivor assistance programs that include comprehensive follow-up to ensure productive reintegration of individuals into society.
- Seek support specifically for parliamentary involvement relevant in UN processes, e.g. from the Parliamentary Forum on SALW or other organisations listed in this Plan.

Continuously identify areas of improvement and pay special attention to areas of implementation already identified as often unfulfilled, such as;

- Women as victims rather than as active agents
- Inadequate stockpile management
- Illicit manufacture, or craft production
- Marking of small arms on import

Part 3 – Partnerships and resources⁷

The efforts of parliamentarians and the Parliamentary Forum in promoting increased or solid 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 unique efforts 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 \(IPU\)](#)

[Euro-Latin America Parliamentary Assembly \(EuroLat\)](#)

⁶ Target 16.1 – “Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere”, Target 16.4 - “By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime - <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/>

⁷ 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.

[Latin American and Caribbean Parliament \(Parlatino\)](#)
[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 Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean \(UNLIREC\)](#)
[United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#)

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
[Pacific Small Arms Action Group \(PSAAG\)](#) – ATT and UNPOA regional expertise
[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 \(SIPRI\)](#)

Other sources

[The Arms Trade Treaty](#)
[The UNPoA](#)
[UNCOMTRADE](#)
[NISAT](#)
[UNROCA](#)