



Workshop on the Implementation of ATT Obligations relating to Human Rights and Gender-Based Violence

7 to 8 December 2015, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Workshop Report

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I. Basic Information

From 7 to 8 December 2015, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the African Union Commission - Defence & Security Division (AU) co-organised a workshop on the implementation of Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) obligations relating to human rights and gender-based violence in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The workshop was financed through the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR). Ten Member States of the United Nations, including Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States, had contributed to UNSCAR in 2014 to support the universalisation and implementation of the ATT and the UNPoA.

Workshop participants included representatives of the Governments of Chad; Liberia; Mali; and Togo; as well as UNDP; UN OCHA; UN Women; the AU Directorate of Women, Gender and Development; the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security; the ECOWAS Commission; RECSA; the ICRC; the Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI); Woman in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF); and independent experts.

The overall objective of the workshop was to raise awareness among different stakeholders on the ATT and its human rights and gender-related obligations. Furthermore, the workshop aimed at creating a platform for discussions about the role of different stakeholders in contributing to an effective implementation of the treaty, existing legislative frameworks and implementation measures, challenges inherent in the implementation, as well as the way forward.

II. Workshop Proceedings

The workshop was opened by representatives of the three organisers, UNREC, represented by Ms. Olatokunbo Ige, Director; OHCHR, represented by Mr. Idrissa Oumar Kane, Regional Representative a.i.; and the AU, represented by Dr. Tarek A. Sharif, Head of the Defence and Security Division.

The opening session was followed by presentations and discussions.

In his presentation on 'The Impact of Irresponsible Arms Transfers on Human Rights and Women', the representative of OHCHR illustrated several practical examples and facts to underline that the uncontrolled proliferation of arms negatively impacts human and women's rights in both conflict and non-conflict situations. The presenter further underscored arms proliferation as one of the major obstacles to sustainable peace and development. Presenting the global and regional human and women's rights framework, it was highlighted that ATT obligations relating to human and women's rights do not constitute new obligations, but reiterate and reinforce existing responsibilities under human rights law.



An introduction to the ATT and related arms control instruments was made by UNREC. After elaborating possible consequences of the trade in conventional arms, the presenter gave an overview of existing global and regional instruments and obligations that provide a framework for the control and transfer of conventional arms on the African continent. The presentation focused on the context into which the ATT entered, as well as on the history of the ATT and its obligations. The presenter concluded by outlining the existing implementation status and challenges.

The representatives of the ICRC and EASSI presented the human rights and gender-related obligations inscribed in the ATT, in particular Articles 6 and 7 of the treaty. The ATT negotiation process, meaning and value of human rights and gender-related obligations of the ATT, as well as practical implementation measures were elaborated on.

After the presentations, participants carried out group discussions to identify concrete measures that can foster the ATT's aim to reduce human suffering. The findings were presented and discussed in the plenary.

The organisers concluded the workshop by thanking all participants for their engaging contributions while calling on them to maintain efforts in promoting the ATT.

III. Workshop conclusions and recommendations

Participants were convinced that the ATT can fulfil its objective of reducing human suffering under two crucial conditions:

A. Universalisation of the ATT

Participants noticed with concern that, as at 8 December 2015, only 16 African States had ratified or acceded to the ATT. In order to allow for the African continent to have a stronger voice in global ATT discussions (such as the conferences of States Parties), and to be in a better position to set the thematic focus of those discussions, it is crucial that the number of African States Parties to the treaty increases.

B. Effective implementation of the ATT

Participants agreed that the ATT will only have a positive impact on human security if it is effectively implemented by all States Parties. Three distinct roles of participants attending the workshop were identified:

- Implementation of the ATT by States Parties;
- Assisting States in the implementation of the ATT;
- Lobbying for and monitoring effective implementation of the ATT.

The following recommendations were formulated with a view to fostering the fulfilment of the above-mentioned conditions:



1. In order to foster universalisation, the ATT momentum must be upheld and national stakeholders must be sensitized on its benefits and importance. Partners should seize the opportunity in all appropriate fora to promote the ATT and underline its human rights and gender dimensions.
2. African States should continue to participate in international meetings on disarmament, including the upcoming conference of ATT States Parties and the biennial meetings of States under the UNPoA. Where necessary, international partners should consider providing the financial and technical support to allow for their participation.
3. African States Parties to the ATT should continue to promote universalisation of the ATT. An African State Party and/or REC should be designated to champion the cause for universalisation of the treaty on the continent.
4. The existing potential of civil society organisations in promoting universalisation of the ATT and in monitoring its implementation should be efficiently realised. Enhanced interaction between the AU Peace and Security Cluster and the AU Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOC) could contribute to this effect.
5. Capacity building on the implementation of the ATT is required. Preparation of AU endorsed guidelines and the development of a regional model law would contribute to harmonised implementation of the ATT. National ownership of the guidelines would constitute a crucial factor in that regard.
6. Enhanced incorporation of gender dimensions in SALW control programmes is important. This may relate to, among others, national security plans, legislations, and national commissions, as well as gender-responsive budgeting and collection of gender disaggregated data.
7. In addition to the reporting framework established by the ATT (Article 13), accountability and oversight mechanisms should be created to foster and ensure effective implementation of the ATT. Women should be actively involved in operationalising these mechanisms. Developed proposals include the establishment of a State-to-State peer mechanism and the setting of specific targets/indicators.
8. A study conducted by African field-based research institutions on the impact of arms transfers and arms proliferation on human rights and women in African countries would complement information relevant to the export risk assessment under Article 7 of the ATT, and contribute to enhanced stakeholder understanding of the human rights and gender dimensions of the arms trade. Such a study could be carried out in the framework of the African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the rights of women, as commemorated in 2016.



C. Next steps

Specific next steps proposed by participants include the following:

- UNREC, with guidance from UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), will assist, as appropriate, the ATT Secretariat in the fulfilment of its task to continue promoting universalisation of the ATT;
- UNREC furthermore suggested to continue, together with its partners, exploring the possibility of promoting the ATT in the margins of the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government or a meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the AU;
- Participants suggested continuing efforts in promoting the ATT during the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa, tentatively scheduled to take place in March 2016 in Lomé, Togo.
- Other UN agencies offered to explore how the ATT could be incorporated in their work plans;
- The representative of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Disarmament proposed to include references to the gender-dimension of the ATT in its advocacy work and upcoming meetings;
- Representatives of civil society organisations suggested sharing the workshop outcomes with partner organisations in order to aggregate efforts in promoting universalisation of the ATT and its human rights and gender dimensions;
- The organisers agreed on the need to continue enhancing cooperation, and to further organise pertinent events.



For more information on the workshop please contact: United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), Tel: (+228) 22 53 50 00; E-mail: mail@unrec.org; Web: www.unrec.org