

**International Conference  
“Promoting Stakeholder and Parliamentary Dialogue on the Arms Trade  
Treaty”**

**June 13-14 2017, Dakar, Senegal.**

**Final Report**



## **Executive Summary**

During June 13 and 14, the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, in cooperation with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Berlin and the FES Peace and Security Competence Centre for Sub-Saharan Africa, organised an international conference in Dakar, Senegal. Around 40 persons participated in the seminar, among them twelve Parliamentarians from 10 countries: Cameroon, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Palestine, Serbia, Tanzania, Togo, Uruguay and Zimbabwe, members of the ECOWAS Parliament, representatives of international organizations, experts from the civil society and research organisations in the region, as well as government representatives. The seminar compiled conclusions in the form of a Parliamentary Action Plan, including concrete recommendations for universalisation and implementation in Africa, to be presented at the Third Conference of State Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty(CSP3) in September 2017 in Geneva.

## **Opening**

The opening of the conference was made by Mr. Holger Grimm, Director of the FES Peace and Security Competence Centre for Sub-Saharan Africa, Ms. Karin Olofsson, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons. H.E. Ambassador Yvette Stevens, from Sierra Leone, Vice-president of the Third Conference of States Parties, provided a keynote speech on the current status ahead of the CSP3, the challenges and the achievements in the period before the CSP3.

## **Session 1: State of play of the ATT: What has been accomplished globally and what are the next steps?**

Mr. Ali Arbia, Small Arms Survey, Geneva

Mr. Denis Jacqmin, The Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security (GRIP), Brussels

Hon. Daisy Tourné, Senator of Uruguay and President of PFSALW, Montevideo

Hon. James Agalga, Member of the Ghanaian Parliament, Accra

Mr. Ali Arbia highlighted some important points regarding the ATT. First, the existence of the Voluntary Trust Fund and its significance for universalisation and implementation. Second, the creation of working groups on universalisation, implementation and transparency and reporting. Third, the issue of universalisation has to be highlighted again, as the ATT is a powerful tool that could allow dealing with the illicit arms trade.

Mr. Denis Jacqmin shared some pending tasks of the ATT, for instance, the three major weapons exporters are not part of the Treaty, that amounts to 60% of the volume of the international arms trade. Additionally, focused efforts have to take place in advancing universalisation and implementation, as different states and regions have different realities that have to be taken into account when supporting universalisation and implementation initiatives. Finally, he highlighted the responsibility of arms exporting countries, for example the case of the United Kingdom selling weapons to Saudi Arabia, as this is setting a problematic precedent and sending the wrong signals, since this is one of the states that is supposed to have one of the best arms trade control systems in place, but violations still occur to the Treaty in spite of the concluding evidence.

Hon. Daisy Tourné emphasized the importance of including parliamentarians in national delegations that participate in international processes and negotiations such as the ATT, the need to work towards transparency away from the concept that SALW is an issue of the defence sector only and hence requires secrecy. Finally, Tourné highlighted the importance of involving more parliamentarians in the SALW-related work as part of achieving peace and security and to adapt international instruments to enforceable laws according to the national needs.

Hon. James Agalga explained the challenges faced by Ghana after ratification, in terms of implementation, linked to the political process of the most recent election, an aspect that has hindered the work on several issues linked to implementation. He highlighted pending tasks, such as regularising the local underground industry who manufacture SALW, deciding on the division of responsibilities in terms of end user certificates, which ministry should be in charge of procurement of arms and deciding also which authority would be the focal point in matters of the ATT. For this last point, Hon. Agalga is putting forward a proposal to expand the mandate of the SALW Commission, as to become the focal point on the ATT, to make use of already existing structures.

The final discussion and conclusions focused on the importance of streamlining reporting templates, the role of parliamentarians in this work as to enhance transparency and accountability, the need of an increased awareness raising and capacity building of MPs as to facilitate universalisation and implementation efforts, as well as the importance that the remaining major arms exporting states become states parties to the Treaty, and for the ones that have ratified, strict compliance.

## **Session 2: National Parliamentary experiences on ATT universalisation and implementation**

Hon. Aguisa Seydou Touré, Member of the Parliament of Mali, Bamako

Hon. Lilian Timveos, Member of the Zimbabwean Parliament, Harare

Mr. Jacques Seckène Ndour, Regional Coordinator of the Firearms Project, United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), Dakar

Hon. Aguisa Seydou Touré presented the current state of affairs in Mali in terms of SALW proliferation, recalling the long and difficult process after jihadists seized parts of the country. Arms are pouring in the country from its different borders, and land often in the hands of criminal groups, jihadists and civilians. Additionally, many weapons were stolen or diverted from security forces, making difficult the task of controlling SALW proliferation. Mali was one of the first countries to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty in the region, and the ratification process faced no opposition. However, to facilitate implementation, it is necessary that capacity building efforts at the national level take place, with a mid and long-term perspective.

Hon. Lilian Timveos gave an overview of the legislation and the institutional arrangements that are in charge of controlling arms in the country. She also explained the signature process of the Arms Trade Treaty by Zimbabwe, finalised in 2014, sharing her experiences on her current efforts towards ratification. She highlighted the difficulty of reaching out to the government and convince them on the importance of sending the ratification bill to the parliament, however, Timveos, together with other 10 parliamentarians, are constantly in consultation with the vice-president and other cabinet members to secure the process takes place. Finally, she highlighted the importance of

counting with collective parliamentary efforts, national capacity building and awareness raising initiatives, as to facilitate the ratification process and subsequent implementation of the ATT.

Mr. Jacques Seckène gave an overview of the work done by UNODC, highlighting the importance of linking the ATT to the UN Firearms Protocol and the Palermo Convention, as the ATT and the Firearms Protocol reinforce each other mutually and are legally binding, with the difference that the UN Firearms Protocol contains specific penalties in terms of illicit traffic of SALW. He further explained the importance of working on solid data collection, as to facilitate efforts to reduce illicit flows of firearms and capital in the region.

The conclusions of the discussion referred to the importance of considering diverse challenges such as terrorism, long term capacity building both at the parliamentary and ministerial level given the turnout after elections, working towards a more effective and expedite implementation and finally facilitating the synergies between different stakeholders at the national, regional and international level.

### **Session 3: The status of proliferation of small arms and light weapons – the ATT as a new robust control regime for SALW?**

Mr. Honoré-Georges Ndiaye, Executive Director of the Movement against Light weapons in West Africa (MALAO), Dakar

Mr. Jiaming Miao – Political Affairs Officer, United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), Lomé

Hon. Chief Paul Tumasang, Member of the Parliament of Cameroon, Yaoundé

Hon. Edson Macuacua, Member of the Parliament of Mozambique, Maputo

Mr. Honoré-Georges Ndiaye gave an overview of the social and economic context of Senegal, and its relation to the proliferation of SALW. He highlighted that although Senegal is less affected by armed violence, the country is not spared from security concerns, such as cross border criminality, cattle theft and other crimes fuelled by SALW proliferation. Although the country is politically and institutionally stable, uncontrolled SALW-proliferation affects the security of the country. Mr. Ndiaye further shared different studies done by MALAO, using data from law enforcement and official sources, where the situation of security and SALW proliferation was explained at different points in time in the country and in certain regions.

Mr. Jiaming Mao from UNREC presented issues and common trends on the countries in the Sahel region. He mentioned the geographical challenges in terms of capacity to control territories and borders, as illegal SALW come from within and outside the different countries alike. This is a result of the difficulty to control the porous borders, lack of national action plans on physical security and stockpile management, a weak multisector approach and harmonised legal framework on SALW management. Mr. Jiaming further emphasized other challenges such as lack of human resources, resources for securing weapons, ammunitions and storage sites, as well as databases and systems at the national level. He finalised by highlighting the importance of the already existing regional and international instruments, such as the UN Firearms Protocol, the ECOWAS convention and the Kinshasa convention.

Hon. Chief Paul Tumasang expressed how worrisome SALW is for his country and region, as the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW is a complex phenomenon related also to terrorist groups,

criminal groups and influx of refugees. Given their physical characteristics, SALW are easy to conceal and transport. He also elaborated on the efforts at the parliamentary level related to SALW control. In November 2016 a law was published, adapting the legal framework to deal with weapons, ammunitions, its possession and use. The law domesticated international conventions to which Cameroon is party, including aspects of the ATT and issues such as WMD materials, such as chemical and biological. He finally mentioned the importance that parliamentarians take part in international processes and negotiations, such as Conference of State Parties.

Hon. Edson Macuacua from Mozambique explained some of the steps he considers fundamental to deal with SALW proliferation and armed violence. First, the ratification of relevant United Nations instruments; second the adoption of legislative and administrative measures to regulate arms trade; third, close cooperation between government, opposition, civil society and the private sector in the disarming of citizens, as well as the approval of legislation to regulate SALW in all its aspects and the creation of an inter-ministerial commission to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit firearms; fourth, create alternative opportunities for economic and social inclusion; fifth, international cooperation among relevant stakeholders.

The conclusions of the session were focused on the importance of the oversight mechanisms of the parliaments and how parliamentarians can work more decisively in the use of such mechanisms, especially when it comes to issues of uncontrolled SALW proliferation and domestication of instruments such as the ATT. It was also emphasized the important role of regional organisations such as ECOWAS, contributing to ownership, awareness-raising, harmonisation and collective action in terms of international instruments such as the ATT and the efforts to tackle illicit proliferation of SALW. The fact that only two countries within ECOWAS still need to ratify the Treaty is a signal of the importance of regional organisations in the universalisation and implementation of such instruments.

#### **Session 4: Strengthening stakeholder cooperation: synergising Parliamentary, civil society and government action on ATT, UNPOA and SDG 16.4**

Mr. Edward Kingston Jombla – Regional Analyst at the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Accra

Mr. Ali Arbia, Small Arms Survey, Geneva

Hon. Sampson Ahi, Member of the ECOWAS Parliament and Member of the Ghanaian Parliament, Accra

Hon. Raphael Chegeni, Member of the Tanzanian Parliament, Dodoma

Hon. Marko Djuricic, Member of the Serbian Parliament, Belgrade

Mr. Edward Kingston Jombla gave an overview of the situation in terms of peace and security in the region, putting emphasis on the need of concerted action in the different peacebuilding efforts, relating to the work of control of illicit SALW. Mr. Jombla also explained different programmes and areas of action within ECOWAS, highlighting the existence of mechanisms where the civil society can contribute and have a more active role, contributing to implementation.

Mr. Ali Arbia, from the Small Arms Survey, shared concrete challenges of strengthening stakeholder cooperation. He mentioned the limited data available in developed countries, the lack of coordination in certain departments of the government, a need to better synergise complementary instruments, the divide between implementation policies and election cycles, the

existence of organised interest groups that do not support the disarmament agenda and the lack of capacity in countries that are situated in fragile contexts. Mr. Arbia emphasised the importance of the 2030 Agenda, as a guideline to work through different interdependent goals that are universally accepted. Progress is being made in how to draw on synergies between relevant international policy frameworks.

Hon. Sampson Ahi briefed on his initiatives within ECOWAS Parliament, where the Committee on Political Affairs, Peace and Security has been asked to follow up on the situation in Mali with subsequent workshops. As there are many security actors that are not regulated, with their own interest and objectives, it was also proposed to work towards better inclusion in the analysis, and where feasible, regularisation of such groups. He also mentioned the fact that there are duplications in the systems in the region, so the parliament should make use of their mandate, be strengthened, as to avoid such duplications and better contribute to support implementation of instruments such as the ATT, and the need for a closer dialogue with the government and the civil society.

Hon. Raphael Chegeni commented on the issue of responsibility of parliamentarians, especially taking into account the high turnover rates, for instance, in his parliament, the last election 70% of the members changed, so continuity in training of parliamentarians is an issue that requires special attention. Additionally, he highlighted the regional aspect and how parliamentarians can learn from each other across countries. This, combined with closer stakeholder cooperation, can contribute decisively in the prevention and reduction of illicit SALW, implement the ATT, the UNPOA and the 2030 Agenda.

Hon. Marko Djuric provided insights on the issues of ATT implementation and SALW regulation in his country, Serbia. He shared the Arms Export Annual Report for 2015, specifying that 300 million dollars, around 1% of the GDP, was exported in conventional weapons. The government is planning to invest nearly 50 million euros in the arms industry, looking at raising the exports. He mentioned the limited presence of the civil society in his country, however, the press is still an important actor, discovering that machine guns that were originally sold to Bulgaria ended up in the hands of rebel forces in Syria, even though the end user was Saudi Arabia. He further highlighted the difficulties in holding the government accountable in terms of ATT compliance, emphasizing the need for a stronger civil society and research groups that support the work of parliamentarians.

The final discussion elaborated on the role of the civil society in the implementation of the different relevant instruments, and how the perception of it as an opponent rather than an actor for change has to be modified. The issue of the importance to have report compliance and standardised reporting was highlighted, where the ATT can have a role in helping countries to report in a unique fashion that would facilitate transparency in comparing imports and exports. The point of co-responsibility was also raised, since the countries that represent 60% of the volume of the global arms trade are not part of the ATT, whereas the rest of the countries who are state parties have to ensure compliance in consideration of the consequences of the irresponsible arms trade, such as regional instability or refugee flows due to armed violence and wars. Finally, the role of parliamentarians is highlighted as an actor to tackle corruption, build bridges between the population and the government, and multiplying the efforts done by different stakeholders in the implementation of the Agenda 2030, the ATT and the UNPOA.

## **Session 5 and 6: Parallel working groups, discussion and approval of the Parliamentary Action Plan**

The session 5 was divided in two working groups, one working in identifying challenges and needs for the ATT implementation process, the other group working on ATT universalization. The conclusions of both working groups were condensed and incorporated in a Parliamentary Action Plan, which will be presented at the Third Conference of State Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty. Once the discussions finished, it proceeded to session 6, to a final discussion and approval in consensus of the following Parliamentary Action Plan.

### **Parliamentary Action Plan**

#### **The main conclusions in terms of universalisation were the following:**

- \* Establish understanding of the rationale that prevents ratification by a specific country, and adopt a strategy according to the findings
- \* Enable awareness raising efforts in coordination with civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders, organise trainings with parliamentarians and civil society
- \* Clarify the role of defence and security actors and ensure their participation
- \* Identify national authorities and responsible focal points, based on multi-stakeholder national commissions in interinstitutional coordination
- \* Ensure the support of regional organisations, such as the Regional Economic Communities (REC) in the facilitation of outreach, reporting and other relevant efforts
- \* Ensure donor coordination and funding, enabling a base for international exchange for parliamentarians at the national, regional and international level

#### **The main conclusions in terms of implementation were the following:**

- \* Increase context specific capacity building initiatives, including awareness raising between parliamentarians and civil society, shadow reporting mechanisms and establish a roster of experts
- \* Clarify leadership on the national level, e.g. National Commissions on SALW, and ensure coordination with existing regional structures, such as the Regional Economic Communities (REC)
- \* Include parliamentarians in national delegations to the Conference of State Parties, based on stakeholder involvement and interinstitutional arrangement
- \* Elaborate a national strategy linked to national political priorities and relevant international frameworks such as the Agenda 2030 and the UNPOA
- \* Ensure domestication of the Arms Trade Treaty, that is to adapt national legislation to the Treaty's commitments

\* Strive for streamlining and compliance of reporting

## **Closing**

The conference was concluded by a message from Ms. Karin Olofsson, Mr. Holger Grimm, and Mr. Alexander Geiger, thanking their participants for their engagement, highlighting the importance of the regional approach of the seminar, the valuable inputs of stakeholders present and emphasizing the importance of continued concerted actions towards ATT implementation and the 2030 Agenda, as well as the upcoming steps looking at the CSP3.

**Annexes:** [Parliamentary Action Plan](#)