



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

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Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons

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August 30 – September 3, 2021

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour to greet you on behalf of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons. My name is Karin Olofsson, I am the Secretary General of the Forum.

I would like to express heartfelt gratitude to the President of CSP 7, His Excellency Lansana Gberie, for his restless efforts towards the ATT, *working to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and ensure efficient stockpile management*, which is the thematic focus of this ATT Presidency.

Armed conflicts and violence, independent of their scale, are perpetuated by the uncontrolled availability of SALW, highlighting the need for concise and effective steps to tackle its proliferation. According to the Small Arms Survey, more than 1 billion SALW are circulating worldwide causing the death of over 223 300 people every year.

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrate that the widespread availability of SALW hinders efforts to provide humanitarian and development support to the most vulnerable. The UN has stated an increase in domestic violence of approximately 30% since the outbreak of the pandemic. The Institute for Economics and Peace estimated that more than 400 million young people lived in violent contexts. This underscores the interconnectedness of societal challenges and the importance of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS), and the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agendas in disarmament processes.

MPs play a central role in preventing SALW-related violence given their legislative, oversight and awareness-raising roles, holding governments accountable and in bridging the gap between international arms control instruments and the regional and national level. This allows MPs to enhance universalisation efforts, ownership and implementation of the ATT.

We are pleased to learn about the efforts of the ATT Presidency and the IPU to engage MPs in the universalisation of the Treaty. PFSALW has also implemented projects including MPs efforts in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and MENA on universalisation and implementation since its inception, and remains committed to further support parliamentary action. The Forum is hosting a side event precisely on the issue, on September 3. Furthermore, the Forum, as co-sponsor and publishing partner contributes to the process of the parliamentary handbook:

“Assuring our Common Future” to support the vital UN Secretary-General’s Disarmament Agenda.

Actively including women and young MPs in ATT universalisation and implementation processes is essential for policies to reflect adequately the realities of those affected by illicit arms transfers. Therefore, we encourage all states to consider parliamentary involvement, as well as understanding the national realities faced by MPs in the implementation of the Treaty.

The pandemic and its consequences have demonstrated how crucial it is for the world to come together, to prevent the uncontrolled availability of SALW, for the security, rights and well-being of every child, woman and man, to reduce human suffering. Thank you!