

The Alexandria Declaration

The Alexandria Declaration was adopted at the Regional meeting for the Middle East and North Africa Region and the Horn of Africa organized by the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Swedish Institute Alexandria, meeting in Alexandria, Egypt, on the 26th and 27th of May, 2016.

Parliamentarians from states in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa with presence also from representatives from civil society and international organisation, coming together for a Regional Meeting for the MENA Region and the Horn of Africa, welcome the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16).

The participants are very pleased to find SDG16 within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, as it provides for the first time a sound platform to work on the issue of armed violence and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) proliferation. The adoption of SDG16 signals a consensus within the international community that peace and security is a foundation for development. Target 4 of Goal 16, aims to significantly reduce illicit arms flows, explicitly acknowledging the proliferation and misuse of SALW as an obstacle to development. In the Parliamentary Forum's Policy Statement on SALW-related violence and the Millennium Development Goals from 2012, it was concluded that armed violence severely impeded the implementation of the MDGs. The Policy Statement noted the lack of a specific goal on peace and security, and emphasized the need of the inclusion of such a goal in the post-2015 framework.¹

The participants gathered emphasize the legislative, oversight and awareness raising role of parliaments in transforming the SDGs to enforceable laws and regulations and building national ownership. National specific implementation shall be accountable and inclusive, and adapted to the specific country context by creating national sustainable development plans.

The role of women in armed violence prevention and reduction is imperative for successful lasting peace and security in the region. The participants confirm the necessity of the immediate

¹<http://www.parliamentaryforum.org/sites/default/files/Parlforum%20Policy%20Statement%20on%20SALW%20related%20Violence%20and%20the%20MDGs.pdf>

implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent relevant Resolutions. It is crucial that women strongly participate in Peace and Security issues, and that they actively take part in violence prevention, conflict resolution and peace processes.

The illicit trade and proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) compose a real obstacle to human security and sustainable development in the Middle East, North Africa and the Horn of Africa. The participants express their common concern for the continued threat from extremist groups, which continue to cause death, displacement and increase the illicit proliferation of SALW in several countries in the region. According to international law and UN Security Council resolutions, the chain of supply of weapons needs to be properly investigated and stopped. Increasing the flood of guns to the warring parties is more likely to exacerbate and prolong the conflict than help putting an end to it.

The Sixth Biennial Meeting of States (BMS6) to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA) will take place a week after this meeting, from June 6 to June 10, making this a proper time to recall the importance of its implementation, the full adherence by States and reporting as a tool to measure success and explore opportunities for further development of the UNPoA.

The UNPoA is complementary to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and the ATT has so far been signed by 130 states and ratified by 82 states, among them several of the countries in the MENA and Horn of Africa region. The participants welcome the positive development within the Arms Trade Treaty and emphasize the importance of its universalization and implementation in the region and at a global level. Moreover, the participants recognize the necessity to identify and draw on synergies between the international instruments ATT and UNPoA, and SDG16 within the 2030 Agenda. The participants reiterate the important role of parliamentarians in making this process and all efforts of violence prevention and reduction more successful.

The participants extend their heartfelt gratitude to the Swedish Institute Alexandria and the Parliamentary Forum for Small Arms and Light Weapons for generously hosting the meeting.