



**Working Group on Universalization
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Delivered by: Stephen Singo, Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC)

ARMS TRADE TREATY UNIVERSALIZATION IN AFRICA: WHAT CIVIL SOCIETY IS DOING

ATT universalization and effective implementation is key to the reduction of armed violence and insecurity that has pervaded some African countries. There is no doubt about this. South Sudan, Central African Republic, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo are some of the countries currently embroiled in armed conflict, where violence including Gender Based Violence, human rights violations and displacement of populations is on the rise. In other states including my own, Kenya, terrorism has become a serious security threat. Only two weeks ago, a terrorist attack in the heart of Nairobi killed 21 people and injured scores of others. Yet, of these states, only Central African Republic is a state party to the ATT.

The following are four key ways in which Control Arms partners are promoting the Universalization of the ATT in Africa:-

First, the Sprint to 100 Campaign: Control Arms organised a **Sprint to 100** campaign which was launched one hundred days prior to the fourth Conference of States Parties in 2018, and aimed to reach one hundred States Parties by the end of 2018. The campaign raised awareness on social media about the importance of the ATT, and encouraged Signatory and Observer States to take concrete steps towards ATT universalization. It was accompanied by work in capitals with NGO colleagues and parliamentarians meeting with governments, organising roundtables and other targeted awareness-raising activities. In DRC, for example Control Arms contributed to awareness raising efforts, including an advocacy campaign in DRC Parliament as well as radio spots and interviews.

The goal of this campaign was successfully achieved on 14 December 2018 when [Mozambique became the 100th State Party](#) to the Treaty. Guinea Bissau and Suriname were the 98th and 99th States parties earlier during the UNGA First Committee. To coincide with the 100th ratification, Control Arms then launched the **#100ReasonsWhy** campaign, highlighting why the ATT is important and why remaining states should join the Treaty. You can see some highlights from this on the screen behind me.

Second, **research and advocacy around the key drivers of armed violence and insecurity including proliferation of armed groups, radicalization of the youth and the linkage between SALW proliferation, Gender Based Violence, arms diversion and terrorism.** NGOs in Africa have shared findings of such research with governments to influence security policy. NGOs are also directly involved in government security sector reform efforts in various ways including capacity building and training of security personnel on stock pile management, arms marking among others. Indeed, in some of the research projects we have worked with government agencies as partners. To this end, we call on State parties present here to support the work of civil society in their efforts to advocate for Treaty universalization particularly in Eastern Africa where there is very low uptake of the treaty.

Third, Highlighting the link between support to disarmament efforts (including dismantling armed groups) and the implementation of existing peace agreements (for example the South Sudan Peace agreement currently being implemented). Faith-based NGOs are currently working with communities in South Sudan and elsewhere to promote community disarmament and grassroots peacebuilding activities such as awareness creation and training that de-emphasizes the use of weapons in resource based and other conflicts. We call for the creation of a support mechanism for such faith-based NGOs and other grass roots organizations so that they can actively continue with their work.

Fourth, Learning from Best Practices from countries that have already ratified the treaty and using these practices to inform campaign and advocacy efforts. Mozambique and Cameroon, the latest African states to ratify the treaty, provide opportunities for Civil Society Organizations in East Africa to draw from the experiences of these countries and the work of Control Arms and other stakeholders who contributed to the success of the process towards ratification. One of the key lessons we can learn from Cameroon NGOs is on awareness creation about the treaty to the relevant Government agencies including the executive and parliament, and the cohesive approach that these institutions adopted.

The other lesson is the need for international assistance. Cameroon NGOs were able to succeed in their advocacy work on the ATT because of international support, including support from the VTF. Drawing from the Cameroon experience, Kenyan NGOs are organizing to meet with influential personalities in Government and parliament and to bring to their attention the success stories of countries like Mozambique and Cameroon. We call for these countries and other friends of East Africa to continue to use their diplomatic good offices to convince East African states that they have nothing to fear in joining, ratifying and implementing the ATT. We also call for the



expansion of the VTF and more support to civil society organizations including in countries that have not yet joined the treaty.

Last but not least, I would like to highlight the importance of support for NGO representatives to attend these Working Group meetings, and other meetings of the CSP process. Both Belen and myself are here this week because we have been sponsored to attend through the Control Arms Sponsorship Fund. However, this fund is heavily oversubscribed. 44 of our colleagues around the world applied to attend these meetings this week, and there were only 3 funded places available. We have produced a short booklet (hold up booklet) which profiles 20 of these colleagues, so that we could show you the range of skills, knowledge and experience from around the world, all keen to participate and share this with you. We hope this will encourage those of you from donor countries to support more of us to actively participate in these meetings.

We strongly believe that ratification and implementation of the ATT can solidify state efforts to promote peace, security and development, and encourage all states to join the Treaty as soon as possible.

Thank you.