



**PGA Regional Africa Parliamentary Workshop  
To Promote Ratification and Implementation of the Biological and Toxin  
Weapons Conventions  
Freetown, Sierra Leone**

**27-28 March, 2017**

**By**

**Hon. Sebastian Karupu, MP**

**Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Constitutional  
and Legal Affairs of the Parliament of Namibia**

Director of proceedings,  
Hon. Margarita Stolbizer, President, PGA  
Fellow participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to have been invited to attend and participate in this very important African Regional Workshop to Promote the Ratification and Implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Conventions.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) is the principal multilateral mechanism to prohibit such weapons and to provide for their destruction with the ultimate objective being a global ban on biological weapons.

Directors of proceedings, as we all know the Biological Weapons Convention, the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning the development, production and stockpiling of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, was opened for signature on 10 April 1972 and entered into force on 26 March 1975.

Director of proceedings and fellow participants, I should hasten to state here that although as of November 2016, 178 countries are party to the Convention, the Republic of Namibia is not yet a party to the Convention. Although not a state party to the Convention, the country participated in the EU Joint Action Regional Seminar for Southern and Eastern Africa which took place from 21-22 June 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Director of proceeding, as the

Against this backdrop and in an attempt and compliance with her regional and international obligations, the Government of Namibia is a signatory to a number of regional and international Protocols, Treaties and Declarations on Small Arms and Light Weapons [SALW], and conventional arms including but obviously not limited to:

- The SADC Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials;
- The Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons;
- The UN Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts, Components and Ammunition, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;
- The Arms Trade Treaty [ATT] regulating international trade in conventional arms;
- The United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapon in All Its Aspects etc.

The UNPoA encourages member states to promote and implement important agreements such as the International Tracing Instrument [ITI] to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, the illicit arms and light weapons. Both the UNPoA and ITI seek to strengthen international commitments on marking and record keeping as well as enabling international cooperation in tracing mechanisms.

Moreover, the UNPoA, the AU and the SADC Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and other Related Materials contain in their preambles actions to be taken by member states at national, regional and global levels as well as a provisions on global cooperation. Prominent among these actions to be taken at national level are the establishment of National Focal Point [NFP] as an interagency national implementing support agency of the instruments and mechanisms.

State parties undertake to enact the necessary legislation and take other measures to establish as criminal offences under their national law to prevent,

combat and eradicate, the illicit manufacturing of firearms, ammunition and other related materials and further to sanction criminally, civilly, or administratively under their national law the violation of arms embargoes mandated by the Security Council of the United Nations.

In view of the aforesaid, Namibia has established an interagency functional NFP on SALW, which serves as a national implementing support Division within the structure and establishment of the Namibian Police Force, as the lead agency. Further more, Namibia made a number of progresses in many areas including but obviously not limited to the following:

Reviewed her national law, Arms and ammunition Act, Act 7 of 1996, and came up with a comprehensive amendment Bill so as to provide for certain definitions in the Act, the age of a license holder, renewal of Fire-arms Licenses, devices not regarded as fire-arms, the introduction of competence testing and a competency certificate, loading and reloading of ammunition, fire-arm free-zones, disposal of fire-arms in case of death, inherited fire-arms, disposal of fire-arms at winding up of business, the use of firearms in theatre and cinema, state-owned fire-arms and matters incidental thereto.

The Republic of Namibia through the National Focal Point on SALW seriously observe the provisions of other mechanism on SALW such as the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) to control the proliferation of SALW that enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit arms and light weapons.

It is worth mentioning that, the Government of Namibia continues to be doing well in the area of Marking, Record keeping and tracing, Stockpile management, Collection and destruction, Public education and awareness raising campaign under the theme “Talk, Don’t Shoot”, which aim to encourage the general public not only to surrender illicit firearm but also encouraged responsible use.

The National Focal Point for its Annual Plan of Action for 2016/2017, has planned to carry out the following activities regarding the combating of the illicit use of small arms and light weapons.

- Awareness campaigns through the publication and distribution of materials and bill boards sensitizing the general public about the danger of small arms and light weapons;
- Meeting sessions about the same;
- Carry out inspections of all gun dealers in the regions;
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the campaigns;
- Identify, compile a list of names and facilitate the appointment of a Review Working Committee amongst other steps.

Regarding the domestication of the Arms Trade Treaty, I should point out here that on the 25 September 2014, Namibia became a signatory to the landmark legally binding instrument, the Arms Trade Treaty acronym ATT. The ATT established the highest possible standards for regulating international trade in conventional arms.

To this end, a two [2] day workshop under the theme “*Namibia on the global security agenda to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security*” will take place on 20 – 21 April 2016.

The aim of this workshop is to sensitize relevant Parliamentary Standing Committees and other key Governmental stakeholders toward the ratification of the ATT and fast track the Amendment Bill on Arm and Ammunition.

These and other action steps are not only testimonies of the presence of political will in Namibia, toward her regional and international obligations as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, but also an indicative of her unwavering commitment in observing the international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Article 26 of the United Nations, seeks to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security.

Consequently, we are mindful of the inherent right of all states to individual or collective self-defense as recognized in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Thus, Namibia will never spare time to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the proliferation of Small Arms, Light Weapon and Conventional arms from diversion. Fairly, because we are aware that the problem of the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons as a global problem closely tied to murder; terrorism and other forms of violence; the worldwide drug trafficking, trans-national organized crime such poaching, armed robbery, cattle rustling etc.; mercenary activities, secessionism, the

raise in social violence; promotion of corruption and other criminal that constitute direct threats to peace, security, development, stability and post conflict reconstruction.

Director of ceremony, ladies and gentlemen, the Namibian Government is fully committed to addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and to our collective efforts in preventing the flow of illegal arms be they small or light into conflict and post-conflict areas.

I thank you