



Centre régional des Nations Unies pour la paix et le désarmement en Afrique
United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

**Parliamentary Lusophone Workshop on the Ratification and Implementation of
the Arms Trade Treaty**

Cape Verde, 18 July 2016

Dr. Jiaming Miao

**United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa
(UNREC)**

Mr. Vice President,

Mr. Minister of Interior Affairs,

Distinguished parliamentarians and experts,

Dear colleagues from partner organisations and institutions,

Dear participants,

Thank you very much for this opportunity to be with you.

I am grateful to *Parliamentarians for Global Action* for the initiative. Throughout the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) process, the civil society has been playing an indispensable role with their expert contributions and enthusiastic support.

As a global victory, the ATT represents a historic diplomatic accomplishment. Weapons fuel the flames of conflict. Thousands of people perish every year as a result of conflicts. Millions more are traumatized. Fighters are using unregulated or illegal weapons and diverting legal ones from legitimate uses.

Arms control can help prevent and end conflicts. The ATT and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) can counter the threat of deadly violence. With these legal instruments, it becomes more difficult for deadly weapons to be diverted into the illicit market. These international

agreements will help to keep warlords, pirates, terrorists, criminals and their like from acquiring deadly arms.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament (*UNREC*) is the only United Nations regional entity specialized in disarmament and non-proliferation in the African region. Its main function is to support Member States in translating decisions, instruments and commitments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation into action, at national, sub-regional and regional levels. Due to the specific nature of security issues in Africa, the Centre puts an emphasis on activities linked to the illicit trade of SALW and to support Member States in meeting their disarmament and non-proliferation commitments and obligations. The Centre provides support to African Member States and inter-governmental organizations in these activities. It supports States by strengthening their capacity and providing them with the technical, legal and substantive assistance necessary to achieve sustainable peace and security.

African States have been very engaged in the negotiation process of the ATT. To date, 37 out of 54 African Member States signed the treaty; however, only 14 States, which is 26 percent of the African Member States, ratified or acceded to it. Against this background, UNREC will continue to assist governments and partner organizations in the fight against the diversion of arms and their illicit trafficking.

Dear participants,

The entry into force of the ATT demonstrates that great things can be achieved when governments and people work together through the United Nations. It is in this spirit that the United Nations calls on all governments to join forces with civil society to ensure its full and effective implementation. As we strive to fulfil the great promise of this landmark global instrument, the United Nations will provide its full support.

I now wish us all very fruitful discussion and a successful workshop. I am confident that the outcome of this workshop will contribute to the promotion and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and other instruments in the field of disarmament and arms control.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment.