

## **Parliaments and civil society as relevant stakeholders for universalization and implementation of the ATT: the (West) African Experience**

**13 September 2017, 13:15 – 14:45**

**Centre International de Conférences Genève (CICG), Room 6**

Despite the relatively fast pace of ratifications of the Arms Trade Treaty, universalization in certain regions and implementation is still a pending task. Parliaments still have to review and adapt local legislation, allocate budgets and increase oversight regarding government compliance with the ATT.

In Africa, countries are severely affected by the uncontrolled proliferation and trafficking of SALW. Conflict, proxy wars, and inter-communal strife characterize many regions in Africa. According to a recent Oxfam study (“The Human Cost of Uncontrolled Arms in Africa”), the concentration of most of Africa’s estimated 100 million uncontrolled small arms and light weapons is found in crisis zones and other security-challenged environments having devastating consequences for the security of women, men, girls and boys. Most conflicts in Africa involve non-state actors who use uncontrolled arms. Since non-state actors (such as militias, warlords and extremist groups) have no legal authority to purchase or bear arms, they resort to illicit means of arms acquisition – mainly through diversion from state stockpiles, black markets and trafficking, as well as locally produced arms.

Following an international conference jointly organized by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Parliamentary Forum on “Promoting Stakeholder and Parliamentary Dialogue on the Arms Trade Treaty” in June this year, this side event will discuss implementation and universalization of the ATT looking at the (West) African experience. The discussion will highlight importance of civil society and parliaments in this process, the role of Regional Economic Communities in ensuring universalization as well as the importance of national strategies linked to national political priorities and relevant international frameworks such as the Agenda 2030 and the UNPOA.

### **Panelists:**

- ❖ H.E. Yvette Stevens, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, Vice-President of CSP3
- ❖ Karin Olofsson, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Sweden
- ❖ Sylvère Tchédoh Koffi, President of the Action Network on Small Arms in Western Africa (RASALAO), Cote d’Ivoire

### **Moderation:**

- ❖ Alexander Geiger, Program Coordinator on Disarmament, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Germany

*Light refreshments will be served from 12:45*