



The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development

An International Newsletter on integrating armed violence prevention and reduction into development strategies

Issue 2, July 2008

Introduction: This is the second issue of the *Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development* (GD) newsletter. This e-publication is designed to support the *Geneva Declaration* process and to encourage activities by governments, international organizations and civil society to link development programming with armed violence prevention and reduction strategies. The GD, which is now endorsed by 92 states worldwide, is committed to translate its objectives into concrete steps based on “**Advocacy**”, “**Measurability and Research**” and “**Programming**” as its three programmatic pillars. (For more information on the *Geneva Declaration* and its activities see the web site: www.genevadeclaration.org)

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1. Asia-Pacific Meeting on Armed Violence and Development: Following regional meetings in 2007 in Guatemala and Kenya, a similar event for the Asia-Pacific region took place on 8-9 May in Bangkok. This meeting brought together countries ranging from North Korea to Australia and from Kyrgyzstan to Fiji, along with a range of international organizations and 12 NGOs from across this vast region. Hosted by the Government of Thailand, together with Switzerland and UNDP, this meeting explored the national experiences of many of the countries present along with examples of ongoing work by governments, international organizations, and NGOs. The spirit of the meeting was candid and engaged. In the end, 27 Asia-Pacific countries (including four “pending confirmation”) adopted the “Asia-Pacific Declaration on Armed Violence and Development”. Through this, the total number of countries having adopted the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development now comes to 92. For the text of the Asia-Pacific Declaration see:

<http://www.genevadeclaration.org/pdfs/Bangkok%20AVD%20Declaration.pdf>

“Civil society” was fully included in the meeting, and nine of the NGOs present made statements to the plenary. In addition, a new “good practices magazine”, entitled “Inspiring Actions, Merging Agendas,” was launched at the meeting. (See the description in *Publication Notes*, below.)

2. Second Summit Set for September: A Review Summit on Armed Violence and Development will take place in Geneva on 12 September. The Summit will be preceded by NGO events on September 11. The Summit will invite all the endorsers of the GD (now totaling 92 states) as well as supportive agencies such as UNDP and UNICEF, and 25 participants from civil society. The purpose of the summit is to review the GD action programme, consider major steps for the future and reaffirm support for the basic aims of the GD. The NGO program on September 11 will include a public meeting to highlight civil society programmes on AVD issues, as well as a briefing on the NGO role at the summit and a consultation on further NGO participation in the GD.

3. UN Secretary General Highlights Importance of AVD: In a report specifically dedicated to the issue of small arms and delivered to the UN Security Council on April 17th, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon says he is “encouraged” by efforts made in the context of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, “in particular because of its focus on the interconnection between small arms, armed violence and development.” He cited the Geneva Declaration’s attempt to introduce the concept of “working towards quantifiable results on the nexus of small arms and development.” The Secretary General mentioned the need to integrate national strategies for reducing armed violence into poverty reduction strategies. Recommendation 3 of the report reads:

Efforts by States and regional and international organizations to curb the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms should be based on the shared acknowledgement that security, development and human rights are interconnected. Integrated responses by States require, where relevant, the integration of national small arms action plans into peacebuilding efforts, broader poverty reduction strategies and human security frameworks.

For the full text of the report, see:

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/303/05/PDF/N0830305.pdf?OpenElement>

4. A New Overview of Armed Violence Prevention and Reduction: A new report developed by the Geneva Declaration Secretariat—“Armed Violence Prevention and Reduction: A Challenge for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals”—is intended to assist policy-makers and practitioners in better understanding the relevance of armed violence prevention and reduction to their daily work. It also highlights the efforts of the Geneva Declaration process. Crucially, the paper also signals a number of ways to engage with the issue of armed violence, especially in the development sector, and offers recommendations to advance the agenda.

The report demonstrates that armed violence prevention and reduction is fundamentally a development issue. Collective and interpersonal violence undermines development programmes, diminishes aid effectiveness, and puts achievement of the MDGs out of reach. Opportunities to prevent and reduce it are frequently overlooked or underfunded. Diplomats and development actors have a constructive role to play in enhancing international and local efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence. Direct and indirect support to national and municipal actors to enable them to take charge of violence reduction will probably generate the most convincing returns. UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral donors, and civil society organizations are aware that it is ultimately cities, villages, and rural communities—together with their local support networks—that are often best equipped to address the direct risks of armed violence in the long term. The international community can support these efforts through the articulation of common goals, support for monitoring and evidence generation, and the fostering of intersectoral partnerships.

Download the full text at:

<http://www.genevadeclaration.org/pdfs/GD%20Background%20Paper.pdf>

5. Programming on the Ground: *The following are a few of the many examples of AVD field programmes that illustrate efforts on the ground both reducing armed violence for a better development and striving at a better development in order reduce armed violence. These short descriptions provide ideas for initiatives that can be undertaken by government, civil society and international organizations.*

• **Peacebuilding and Conflict Reduction in Papua New Guinea:** This programme has been developed by Oxfam New Zealand from its formative engagement in the PNG Highlands since 2004 and from earlier programme experience since 1998 in Bougainville. Oxfam addresses the key structural causes of conflict and human security in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea through its Peacebuilding and Conflict Reduction Programme. Engagement with partners and increasing organizational capacity among community-based organizations who work to reduce conflict underpins the programme. Understanding local realities and triggers of conflict has been integral to Oxfam’s approach, which has meant not driving partners’ security needs and peace building strategies but being driven by them. This is reflected in the programme’s focus on enhancing the rights and participation of women, identifying the most at-risk components in society and involving them in conflict reduction strategies, supporting with livelihood strategies, assisting the community in local governance and conflict resolution, and promoting community-based approaches dealing with armed violence. A solid, community level development experience, combined with cooperation with government structures, gives Oxfam the necessary linkages and credibility required for its national advocacy role. For information contact Rachael Hinton at rachael@oxfampng.org.pg or see www.oxfam.org.nz

• **Civil Society Response to the Kenya Post-election Crisis:** The initiative of the Concerned Citizens for Peace (CCP) in the aftermath of the post-election crisis in Kenya is an inspiring example of civil society peacemaking. CCP was launched on 31 December 2007 by prominent Kenyan civil society peace workers and mediators and immediately emerged as a rallying point for national peace and dialogue. At a time when the country was paralyzed and shocked by violence, CCP occupied a crucial space, recognizing at that early stage that dialogue was the only way out of the crisis. The initial focus was to plead publicly and privately with the political leadership to dialogue, while calling upon Kenyans to stop the violence and wanton destruction of property. In this way, CCP became the voice and space for dialogue and served as the forerunner to the international mediation process. For more information contact Florence Mpaayei at the Nairobi Peace Initiative fmpaayei@npi-africa.org or view the web page: <http://www.gppac.net/page.php?id=1837>

• **Working with young ex-combatants in Northern Uganda:** The NGO Friends of Orphans targets vulnerable youth (ages 12-30), including those who have been afflicted by HIV & AIDS and affected by war, as well as disadvantaged communities and camps for internally displaced people (IDPs). It uses an integrated and multi-sector approach with ex-combatants, offering a combination of education and vocational training to help youth reintegrate productively into society. Given that formal education is not an option for youth who have been out in the “bush” for 6-7 years, the Friends of Orphans’ Atim Kikoma “Let Me Do It Myself” centre provides vocational training, entrepreneurship and income generating skills. In addition, Friends of Orphans works with the communities on peace building. They build on local culture by using a “traditional cleansing ceremony,” led by tribal chiefs, to

facilitate forgiveness for the reintegrating ex-combatants. They also teach them about human rights and how to protect themselves from HIV & AIDS.

http://www.youthenterpriseconference.org/SiteManager/CuteEditor_Files/uploads/2008Docs/MakingCentsInternationalYouthEnterpriseLivelihoodsPublication_02_11_08vF.pdf

- **Brazil: From pre-school to the job market:** Education, job training, professional guidance, social and medical care is a list of services offered by the Mata Escura and Calabetão Association of Parochial Communities (Acopamec), in a geographic area that brings together close to 76 thousand inhabitants in the periphery of Salvador, the capital of Bahia. The area is afflicted with violence and the presence of the drug trade. Youth from the neighborhood have great difficulty getting transportation and gaining a wider experience. In response, Acopamec's programmes open up new possibilities for all the young people involved. The Association provides care directly to approximately 2,500 children and adolescents. Indirectly, its benefits extend to four thousand youths in the community. Acopamec's work is wide ranging. Its preschool, for example, cares for children from age 3 to 24 year-old youths. The Association also offers a series of job training options for youths, including technical skills such as craftwork, hairdressing, computer literacy, bread making and other specialties, as well as classes in Portuguese, calculus, citizenship, art and computer skills. In addition, a job placement partnership program helps to guide these youths towards the work place. For more information see:

<http://www.comunidadessegura.org/?q=en/node/37743>

6. Publication Notes: *The following are recent publications selected from a variety of sources that describe various aspects of work on armed violence and development issues:*

- **Comunidad Segura Good Practices:** The first issue of this magazine, published in May 2008, has the subtitle: "Inspiring Actions, Merging Agendas." The content focuses on local and global examples of practical AVD programming. Some 15 projects from around the world are described in short, easy to read texts that illustrate work on issues such as youth violence, community policing, post-conflict reconstruction, municipal security planning, young offenders and gender research. These projects and many others can also be found on the Comunidad Segura network's web site (www.comunidadsegura.org) To view an internet version of the magazine's first issue see:

<http://www.quno.org/geneva/pdf/disarmament-peace/Good%20Practices%20magazine%20-1-%20WEB.pdf>

- **ssrbulletin**, is the monthly newsletter from the Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform (GFN-SSR), a project funded by the UK Government's Global Conflict Prevention Pool. The project aims to promote better networking and information sharing within the developing field of security sector reform. Each newsletter issue contains reports on recent conferences, overviews of field projects, surveys of work in specific countries, descriptions of relevant training courses and other helpful resources. Versions are available in Arabic, French, Spanish and Portuguese. The newsletter can be accessed at: <http://www.ssrnetwork.net/ssrbulletin/index.php>

- **Implementing community-based policing in Kenya:** This report was released by Saferworld in March 2008 and reflects a growing recognition that, as police forces provide one of the main sources of security, they play a pivotal role in creating conditions for community development. Since 2003, Saferworld, together with its

local partner PeaceNet has developed community-based policing projects, which recognize that “communities are best placed to identify their own safety and security needs and how these can be met.” The report describes the work over the past five years, including the establishment of two CBP pilot projects in Isiolo and Kibera, and illustrates how the concept of community based policing is working in the Kenyan context. It highlights results and challenges, with the aim of deepening understanding of CBP, and offering guidance as to how it could be undertaken.

http://www.saferworld.org.uk/newslist.php/398/new_report_on_community_based_policing

• ***Preventing violence and reducing its consequences: how development agencies can help.*** The introduction to this new report by the World Health Organization emphasizes that “the impact of violence on development too often remains ignored by those who have the possibility to act on it. This document makes the case for increased attention by international development agencies to violence prevention. A key aim is to stimulate dialogue on the role of international development agencies in the prevention of violence globally, and ultimately to increase investment in a commonly agreed set of applied violence prevention strategies.” This document sets out the 10 “best buys” for violence prevention and four “best buys” for reducing the consequences of violence, along with recommendations on the institutional support structures that should also be developed if violence prevention is to be sustainable and integrated into other development activities. This report was officially launched at World Health Assembly in May this year.

http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596589_eng.pdf

• ***Interpreting Violence: Anti-civilian thinking and practice and how to argue against it more effectively:*** This short guide, produced by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue is intended to help anyone concerned with the protection of civilians to recognize anti-civilian ideologies and methods and to negotiate against them more effectively. Most analysis of civilian protection focuses on the experience and needs of the victims. This booklet concentrates instead on the perspective of the perpetrators. It examines why they use civilian suffering as an aim and method of war and how they mobilize others to do so. It tries to interpret the motives, interests and social conditioning of the perpetrators of violence against civilians.

<http://www.hdcentre.org/files/Interpreting%20Violence%20ecopy.pdf>

• Also consult www.genevadeclaration.org/resources.html

7. Need for More information: *Do you want to share information about activities that are ongoing in your country and publications that show the interface between armed violence prevention and reduction with development?*

If you have some information about successful projects—previous or ongoing—that you think would be relevant, please share them with our readers. Send suggestions and any relevant web addresses to QUNO at quno1@quno.ch

Please visit <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/context.html> for more information. To contact the editors regarding the content of this newsletter, send an email message to dljackman@rogers.com

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