



The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development

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

Issue 1, April 2008

Introduction: We are pleased to bring you this first 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 over 70 states worldwide, is committed to translate its objectives into concrete steps based on “**Advocacy**”, “**Measurability and Research**” and “**Programming**” as its three programmatic pillars.

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1. Background: On 7 June 2006, 42 states and 17 international organizations and non-governmental organizations gathered in Geneva, Switzerland for a Ministerial Summit on Armed Violence and Development, which was hosted by Switzerland and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The objectives of the summit were:

- to raise global awareness of the negative impact of armed violence on sustainable development;
- to further support the work of governments, international organizations and civil society organizations that are committed to reducing armed violence within a development perspective; and
- to strengthen efforts to achieve a measurable reduction in the global burden of armed violence and tangible improvements in human security by 2015.

(For more information on the *Geneva Declaration* and its activities see the web site: www.genevadeclaration.org)

2. The Core Group of States committed to promote the implementation of the *Geneva Declaration* through practical measures along the three pillars Advocacy-Measurability-Programming was constituted following the 1st Ministerial Summit in 2006. The Group consists of twelve states representing an equal number of countries of the north and the south (Brazil, Finland, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand and the United Kingdom). The Group with Switzerland as chair, is the political and diplomatic driving force responsible for advancing the implementation of the Geneva Declaration. In July 2007, it adopted a *Framework for the Implementation of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development* based on the three pillars “Advocacy”, “Measurability and Research” and “Programming” as its three programmatic pillars (see www.genevadeclaration.org/activities)

3. Regional Meetings: as part of “advocacy” and in order to promote the principles of the *Geneva Declaration* and of its Framework for Implementation in the different regions of the globe, a series of regional meetings are being organised. The first one took place in Guatemala in April 2007. Twelve states from **Latin America and Caribbean** have agreed on concrete measures to address the issue of armed violence and development in their countries. Those are contained in the *Regional Declaration of Guatemala on Armed Violence and Development*. A regional meeting for the countries of the **African continent** took place in Nairobi on 30 and 31 October 2007. The 29 participating countries adopted the *Africa Declaration on Armed Violence and Development*. A regional meeting for **Asia** will be held in Bangkok on 8 and 9 May 2008. Another regional meeting on armed violence and development for the countries of the **Near and Middle East** is planned. Progress made will be reviewed at a **ministerial review summit** on armed violence and development, which will take place in Geneva on 12 September 2008.

4. Programming on the Ground: The *Geneva Declaration* is tested in chosen focus countries through concrete programmes and projects. Experiences made in focus countries will hopefully provide ideas for initiatives to be taken on the ground by other countries and international organizations that support the objectives of the *Geneva Declaration*. Guatemala, Jamaica and Burundi have accepted to be the first focus countries. Other focus countries will be constituted in the coming months.

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 to reduce armed violence. These short descriptions will be a regular feature in this newsletter. They will hopefully provide ideas on initiatives that can be taken by on the ground undertaken by government, civil society and international organizations.

- **Burundi: the Small Arms Survey** is currently conducting in collaboration with the UNDP, UN-Habitat, the Burundi Technical Commission for Disarmament as well as Burundian and international researchers a study on the impact of armed violence on different aspects of human development. The project relies on methodological tools such as a survey of 1500 households in six provinces; the training of local surveyors and data enterers; field research including fifty key interviews and eleven focus groups in different provinces.
- **Haiti: UNDP Community Security Project (CSP):** In Haiti UNDP is working in nine underprivileged urban areas among the most plagued by violence to strengthen the communities’ capacity to control and reduce armed violence. These communities are currently trapped in a vicious circle where people, faced with violence and finding little to no recourse (legal, medical or social), are left to deal with their trauma, and are therefore too vulnerable to resist the hold of armed elements. The project seeks to break this circle through two avenues: a preventive approach focusing on preventing the emergence of violence and decreasing the vulnerability of potential victims, and a curative approach aiming at setting up a national framework for victim assistance and recovery. Based on a careful study of the patterns of violence and victimization in these areas, the project will help the communities and local authorities develop comprehensive Plans of Violence Reduction, to be implemented by local networks and associations with the support of various NGOs and UN agencies. Community networks, including of women and youth, will also be strengthened through training and institutional support. For information on the progress of the project contact Daniel Ladouceur at daniel.ladouceur@undp.org.
- **Brazil: National Program of Public Security and Citizenship (PRONASCI).** The National Program of Public Security and Citizenship (PRONASCI), launched by President Lula in 2007, attempts to address security and development concerns in Brazil’s eleven metropolitan regions.

The over ninety initiatives of PRONASCI cover wide ranging issues such as the salary increase and training of the police forces, the reform of the penal process, the construction of new penitentiaries for young adults and the preparation of the prison population for their future reintegration into social and economic life as well as development projects of areas most affected by violence. For more information, visit <http://www.comunidadese segura.org/?q=en/node/38640>

5. Publication Notes: The following are some publications coming from different sources that are related to the topic of armed violence and development

- **TIERRAS Project Report:** This document seeks to familiarize development practitioners with integrated land conflict mediation concepts, and is based on the successful TIERRAS "Promoting Peaceful Solutions to Land Conflicts in Alta Verapaz" project that tackled complex and intractable land conflicts in the Guatemalan highlands.
<http://www.mercycorps.org/files/file1183076730.pdf>
- **Human Security for an Urban Century: Local Challenges, Global Perspectives:** With the phenomenal growth of urban populations in the last century, cities have become powerful actors that can profoundly influence human security. This booklet, produced with the support of the Canadian government draws on the work of 40 external contributors who investigate such fields as children and armed conflict, security system reform, small arms and light weapons, stabilization and reconstruction, peacebuilding and democracy promotion.
http://humansecurity-cities.org//sites/hscities/files/Human_Security_for_an_Urban_Century.pdf
- **Encyclopedia of Gangs:** (Greenwood Press, USA, 2007) The co-editor is David Brotherton, Chair of the Department of Sociology at the largest college in criminal justice in the United States. He sees the Encyclopedia as departing from orthodox criminological texts, offering a view of gangs from around the world not to be found in similar publications. Speaking of New York, he adds: "Since the crack trade consumed itself loosening its hold on street posses, street gangs began to function as social movements." For a related interview see <http://www.comunidadese segura.org/?q=en/node/38096>
- Also consult www.genevadeclaration.org/resources.html

6. 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.

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