



## **Caribbean Round Table**

### **Civil Society Response to Crime and Violence in the Caribbean: Building Peaceful Communities**

**4-5 September 2006**  
**University of the West Indies**  
**St Augustine**  
**Trinidad and Tobago**

#### **Statement on the formation of a Caribbean Civil Society Organisation for the alleviation of violent crime and the promotion of peace**

On September 05, 2006 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from eight Caribbean countries and one regional organisation agreed to form a Caribbean civil society organization to mobilise citizens and organisations across the region to envision, plan and implement initiatives to alleviate violent crime and promote peace.

The coalition intends to raise awareness about the socio-economic impact of the violence; identify best practices; and influence public policy in the region.

The decision followed two days of discussions on the human cost of violent crime in the region at the St Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies in Trinidad attended by civil society actors involved in advocacy, research, policy formulation, peacebuilding, campaigning and the social sciences.

The meeting agreed that the escalating violence in the region has introduced a level of fear and insecurity never before experienced. This violence has resulted in families being traumatised and communities being under siege. Law enforcement has been seriously challenged by the new wave of rapid and senseless killing.

The meeting also agreed that the rage demonstrated by youth, especially male youth, has given rise to internecine fighting among groups of young men resulting in the loss of life at phenomenal rates.

The meeting noted that studies indicate that violent crime is undermining development in other regions. Further, that violent crime is fuelled by the proliferation of illegal weapons and is perpetrated by young males.

The meeting agreed that this rapidly growing phenomenon threatens to do the same in the Caribbean.

The meeting decided that there is a role for CSOs in this era of gun crime in the region.

The meeting decided that as the keepers of the peace and guardians of truth and justice, Caribbean CSOs have the capacity and responsibility to actively pursue violence prevention, intervention, peacebuilding and justice for all.

The meeting decided that the coalition of Caribbean CSOs will be committed to cooperating with State and Non State Actors to analyse the current situation impacting Caribbean way of life and to the formulation of policies and programmes designed for prevention, intervention and resolution.

The meeting decided that the Coalition will also engage in research to further understand and unearth all dimensions of the problem with the intention of recommending viable State and Non State responses.

The meeting decided that the Coalition will mobilise CSOs and citizens of the region with the intention of soliciting and utilising the collective genius residing in the region.

The meeting decided that the Coalition will formulate and implement relevant programmes and projects to build sustainable peace in communities in cooperation with State and Non State Actors.

The meeting decided that the Coalition will collaborate with hemispheric and international organisations and individuals to develop strategies for conflict prevention and resolution; and peacebuilding in order to promote peaceful co-existence and justice in communities.

The meeting decided that the Coalition will become a voice for justice and peace in the region.

The meeting decided that the Coalition will affirm citizens' rights to live free from fear and the legitimate expectation of protection from the State.

The meeting decided that the Coalition will promote alternative ways of thinking and doing with regard to preventing violent crime and building peaceful communities by advocating for global principles to regulate the transfer of all arms.

The meeting decided that the Coalition will work with Caribbean governments to secure measures within the UN system for an Arms Trade Treaty which all States will be guided by.

The meeting was hosted by:

Women's Institute for Alternative Development (**WINAD**)

Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (**CAFRA**)

*The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) provided support to the meeting through its Dialogues and Exchanges Program which is supported by Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED).*

WINAD is the Convenor for the Coalition.

CAFRA is the Secretary for the Coalition.

Founding members of the Coalition are:

<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION/INDIVIDUAL</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>
Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD)	Trinidad and Tobago
Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)	CARIBBEAN
L'OFAT de l'Organisation de Femmes pour le Développement de Thomonde (OFAT)	Haiti
Voluntary Youth Corps (VYC)	Guyana
Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)	
National Union of Public Workers	Barbados
Proyect Caribeno de Justicia y Paz	Puerto Rico
Woman Inc	Jamaica
Committee for the Development of Women (CDW)	St Vincent and the Grenadines
Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)	
Helen De'Ann Brodie (Psychologist)	Antigua and Barbuda

Contact: Women's Institute for Alternative Development (**WINAD**)

E-mail: [winad@desarme.org](mailto:winad@desarme.org)