

International cooperation

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Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat. Good afternoon.

Mohandas K. Gandhi once said that destruction is not the law of humans. It is, according to Bertrand Russell, cooperation that will redeem humankind. Implementing projects on small arms control requires cooperation with many different actors, - government ministries, community leaders, faith groups, women's groups, academics and advocates.

There are numerous cooperative activities in the real world that have yielded good results. South Africa's Gun-Free Zones is one success story in the community level. With the creation of gun-free zones and with people respecting the principle by which they were created, death by guns has been dropping since the year 2000.

Brazil's national disarmament campaign is an example of a success story in the national level. Following stronger gun laws in 2003, the government organized a national recollection in 2004 that removed half a million weapons. This recollection scheme involved campaigning by church and women's groups, in addition to police. The Ministry of Health has subsequently monitored the resulting drop in gun deaths, reporting that 24,000 lives had been saved between 2003 and 2006.

Cooperation has also been successful in the regional level. Domestic violence is a major problem in the 7 countries in the Western Balkans, but the link with the many guns kept in homes was not recognized until a landmark 2008 study into the legislation of these countries commissioned by the South East & Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC). Another example is the agreement forged by Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia to share information on matters of crime and law enforcement.

Every year, a Global Week of Action against Gun Violence is commemorated in many parts of the world. From June 2 -8 in 2008, events coordinated across 81 States helped raise awareness of the need for implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA). Over 230 radio, TV and print media organizations worldwide reported the activities during the Week. It was a striking example of how governments, inter-governmental agencies and civil society can work to promote peace and human security.

But even with models like this, the level of assistance provided by States to implement the PoA has been massively inadequate. From 2001-2006, for example, 660 million was allocated in international assistance for the PoA. International assistance in mine action, on the other hand, can be as much as \$300-475 million per year.

What then, do we recommend? First, we call for improved levels of cooperation at community, national, regional and global level.

Second, we call for the widening of the range of potential partners. In addition to ministries of Foreign Affairs or Defense, ministries of Interior or Local Government, Development, Women, Education, Health, and others all deal with aspects of the small arms problem and be part of the discussion and decision-making.

We also call for an active partnership with **Civil society on these efforts.** NGOs have played a vital role in armed conflict prevention, reconstruction and transformation. Their capabilities should be fully explored and utilized.

Research institutes should also be tapped. Action-oriented research is essential to monitor and evaluate methods of reducing small arm violence. This includes baseline studies and continuous monitoring of the hospital and crime data, among others.

Other governments may be tapped as partners, as well. Resource mobilization can be combined with expertise mobilization, since some states have clear successes they can share with others. South African police, for example, have advised Ghanaian police on approaches to register small arms.

Finally, we recommend that donors follow the guidelines of the OECD to fund small arms control projects from Official Development Assistance.

Ladies and gentlemen, Fred Allen, an American radio personality once said “it is probably not love that makes the world go round, but rather those mutually supportive alliances through which partners recognize their dependence on each other for the achievement of shared goals”. Indeed, if cooperation becomes the norm in international relations, numerous lives will be saved. We invite you to take that important step on the issue of small arms, now.

Marami pong salamat. Thank you.