



# **UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

Geneva Declaration on  
Armed Violence and Development

Regional Review Conference  
for Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

Geneva, 8-9<sup>th</sup> July 2014

Mme Chair,

First, I would like to reiterate UK support to the Geneva Declaration to tackle the burden of armed violence across the globe, and in particular, its devastating impact on the poorer and marginalised sections of society.

Second, I want to highlight that this is a critical time to bring armed violence to the attention of the international community. The current discussions on post-2015 present a really important moment for shaping the future of development.

As our Secretary for International Development highlighted in a speech last night (7<sup>th</sup> July), now is the time to build on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals, and to end poverty for good, for everyone, everywhere. For this to be possible, we must focus on the building blocks that help societies, economies, and countries develop. Building blocks like peaceful institutions, accountable and transparent governance, the rule of law including property rights, an independent judiciary, free and fair trade and inclusive access to markets. Or if you prefer, “peace, jobs and justice”.

There seems to be agreement that effective and inclusive institutions and peaceful societies are integral to economic, social, environmental pillars of sustainable economic development, for example, “Rule of law” is stated 3 times in the Rio plus 20 document. Paragraph 8 of Rio+20 underlines “the importance of freedom, peace and security, and respect for human rights...the rule of law, gender equality, the empowerment of women and the overall commitment to just and democratic societies for development.”

However, we are not yet agreed that these critical building blocks should be part of the post-2015 development framework. This is where the Geneva Declaration has an important role to play in connecting the dots – and making clear that peace and safety are important to everyone.

A goal on “stable and peaceful societies” is not about the international security apparatus. Nor is it about the securitisation of aid. It is about issues that matter to individual citizens – feeling safe, protecting themselves, their families, their homes, and their possessions, and therefore about national level action, supported where necessary by international cooperation, to tackle the drivers of conflict and promote sustainable and non-violent development.

It links directly to the concerns that we all have here about armed violence and its consequences. The commitments made by this group go to the heart of what the new development framework should be about – what truly matters for social and economic development, and what truly matters to people across the globe. It is very encouraging that the latest draft of the UN Open Working Group report includes targets on reducing levels of violence, on eliminating violence against women and creating safe urban spaces. I would call on this group to lend its support to keeping these in as we go forward. If the final framework does include these targets, there would be no prescription on how such targets should be met and international support must reinforce national ownership. The measurement and best practice gathered by the Geneva Declaration will help to make progress a reality.

Thank you for your attention.