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Regional Declaration of Guatemala on Armed Violence and Development

Representatives of 12 Latin American and Caribbean States, gathered in Guatemala City on 24-25 April 2007, resolved, in the spirit of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development adopted on June 7 2006, to work to reduce armed violence taking into account an integral and comprehensive perspective on social and economical development issues of the countries of the region.

In that sense, they identified the existence of different scenarios of armed violence, each of them having their own particularities, which require differentiated policies.

They also recognized that sustained socio-economic development and the reduction of existing inequality indexes constitute essential requirements to reduce armed violence levels, and that security matters and development conditions are aspects that mutually reinforce.

They also recognized that Governments have the responsibility of guaranteeing social investment and citizen's security, in order to consolidate the effectiveness of development and poverty reduction policies.

They welcomed the initiatives that have already been launched and implemented at the local, national and regional level in Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to reduce armed violence. Moreover, they committed to the exchange of successful experiences and lessons learned in order to develop effective programs for armed violence reduction and prevention, that are sensitive to the particularities of each country of the region, particularly, those related to organized crime and related activities.

They reaffirmed their support to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and their commitment to the full implementation of its content. In addition, they remembered their common stand on the subject, contained in the Antigua Guatemala Declaration, adopted at the Regional Preparatory Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean States for the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action in May 2006.

They reaffirmed their conviction that the promotion of national and international development policies with equity and the creation of decent work, education and social inclusion constitute important tools for violence prevention.

They also agreed to increase their efforts to integrate programs for the reduction of armed violence and conflict prevention on institutional frameworks, public policies, and national, regional and multilateral development plans and strategies.

They agreed to work individually and together at the national, regional and multilateral levels, in practical measures aimed at:

- Promoting studies that develop the linkage between armed violence and development.
- Promoting sustained economic development and the reduction of the levels of inequality.
- Promoting conflict prevention and its pacific management.
- Combating, preventing and eliminating organized crime activities.
- Stem the uncontrolled circulation, illicit traffic and illegal use of small arms and Light weapons and its ammunition, through initiatives in the areas of trade regulation, acquisition, possession and bearing of small and light arms by the civil population, post-conflict disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, as well as arms transfer control and illicit brokering, in the context of the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and other Related Materials (CIFTA); the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and; the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
- Promoting and protecting human rights, and effective and accountable public security institutions, as well as address a climate of impunity by strengthening the links between security and justice sectors.
- Promoting a comprehensive and inclusive approach to the issues of armed violence reduction and development, notably by promoting the integration of armed violence reduction programmes into national and regional development policies under a human development perspective.
- Ensuring that armed violence prevention and reduction initiatives prioritize risk factor groups, and are linked to programmes providing non-violent alternative livelihoods for individuals and communities.
- Developing and/or strengthening educational policies targeted to youth in risk factor.
- Considering the strong support to new initiatives in the international legal framework, such as the discussions on a possible Arms Trade Treaty initiated by decision of the UN General Assembly Resolution 61/89.
- Advancing in the implementation of existing sub regional initiatives (SICA, CAN, MERCOSUR, UNASUR, CARICOM).
- Developing cooperation mechanisms for the reduction of armed violence.

They further agreed to work in partnership, in a coordinated manner, with the development, peace and security-building, public health, humanitarian, human rights and criminal justice communities, and recognized the important role civil society has to play in reducing armed violence, promoting active partnerships between governments, regional and international organizations.

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- 1. Argentina**
- 2. Brazil**
- 3. Chile**
- 4. Costa Rica**
- 5. Dominican Republic**
- 6. Ecuador**
- 7. El Salvador**
- 8. Guatemala**
- 9. Honduras**
- 10. México**
- 11. Panama**
- 12. Peru**