

**Second Ministerial Review Conference
of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development
Geneva, 31 October-1 November 2011**

**Address by State Secretary for Political Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
Republic of Croatia
Mario Nobile, PhD**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to thank the Government of the Swiss Confederation for hosting the Second Ministerial Review Conference. Our appreciation goes to the continuing commitment of the Core Group for galvanizing global effort for the implementation of the Geneva Declaration, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Small Arms Survey, Geneva Declaration Secretariat and, last but not least, civil society through the Quaker UN Office.

Acknowledging the fact that development, peace, security and human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, the Geneva Declaration has rightly identified that for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals armed violence, in all its forms, remains one of the most challenging impediments and therefore requires our prompt and effective actions.

Allow me to share with you the highlights of my country's efforts in the efficient implementation of the Geneva Declaration.

Croatia signed the Geneva Declaration in 2008 and has ever since been committed to its effective implementation and promotion on a national, regional and international level.

During the past 20 years of independence, Croatia has gained the unique experience in the complex field of peace building. One of its major aspects includes lessons learned in the suppression of illicit possession and efficient control of small arms and light weapons. This issue is of a particular significance for Croatia due to a relatively large amount of small arms and light weapons accumulated during the Homeland War. Recognizing the seriousness of the problem and the need for an efficient and coordinated policy in this regard, **Croatia adopted in 2009 - the National Strategy for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and its Action Plan.**

On a regional level, as a preparation to this Second Ministerial Conference, **Croatia was honoured to host the Regional Seminar on Best and Promising Practices in Reducing Armed Violence in Europe**, held on 13 and 14 September this year in Zagreb, jointly organized by the Croatian MFA, UNDP Office in Croatia, Geneva Declaration Secretariat, with the financial support from the Swiss Government.

This event brought together nearly 100 law enforcement experts and civil society representatives from across Southeast Europe enabling them to share the experiences in preventing and reducing armed violence, as well as to jointly assess progress of countries in the region in achieving goals set in the Geneva Declaration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Unfortunately, we continue to witness many extreme outbursts of armed violence around the world, just in the course of this year alone. We can not only stand by and hope that these events would not eventually spiral out of control. We need to actively

contribute that they actually lead to the establishment of democratic societies, rule of law and respect of human rights – all preconditions for development.

Croatia stands ready to share its first-hand knowledge of the multi-layered linkages and challenging steps between the cessation of armed violence and development. With this motivation, I am pleased to inform you of **Croatia's candidature for the second term in the UN Peace Building Commission, from 2013 to 2015.**

All of these aforementioned activities manifest Croatia's firm and continuous commitment to achieving Geneva Declaration's key goal of the significant and measurable reduction in armed violence. I can assure you that my country will spare no effort to keep working in that direction with all our valuable partners.

Thank you for your kind attention.