Although the incidence of armed conflict has declined in recent years, the number of people killed by armed violence has not. More than 740,000 men, women, and children die each year as a result of armed violence. The majority of these deaths—490,000—occur in countries that are not affected by armed conflict.

The economic impact of armed violence is vast and far-reaching. The cost of lost productivity due to non-conflict armed violence alone is roughly USD 95 billion and could reach up to USD 163 billion annually worldwide. Violence due to armed conflict can decrease the annual growth of a typical economy by approximately two per cent.

The negative effects of armed violence extend well beyond these human and economic costs. Armed violence can trigger forced displacement, erode social capital, and destroy infrastructure. It can impede investment in reconstruction and reconciliation. Armed violence can undermine public institutions, facilitate corruption, and be conducive to a climate of impunity.

Armed violence contributes to and is sustained by transnational crime, including the trafficking of persons, drugs, and arms. When associated with interpersonal and gender-based violence, it unravels the fabric of families and communities and leaves lasting psychological and physical scars on survivors.

The UN Secretary-General and the UN General Assembly have acknowledged the destructive impacts of armed violence on development. The problem of armed violence is today recognized as a serious obstacle to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development highlights how underdevelopment and armed violence are linked.
What is the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development?

In June 2006, Switzerland and UNDP invited several countries, international agencies, and civil society organizations to participate in a Ministerial Summit in Geneva. The goal was to identify concrete measures to prevent and reduce the global scourge of armed violence and to enhance the prospects for sustainable development.

The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development recognizes that armed violence is both a cause and consequence of underdevelopment and constitutes a major obstacle to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Declaration calls on states to achieve measurable reductions of armed violence and improvements in human security by 2015.

The Geneva Declaration has been endorsed by more than 100 states. A Core Group of 14 signatories and affiliated organizations guides the implementation of the Geneva Declaration. To advance armed violence prevention and reduction programmes that are sensitive to national and local realities and needs, the Core Group developed a Framework for implementation that calls for action under three pillars:

1. **Advocacy, Dissemination, and Coordination** to raise global awareness about the negative impact of armed violence on development.
2. **Measurability and Monitoring** to improve the understanding of the scope, scale, and distribution of armed violence and its negative impact on development.
3. **Programming** to promote development by preventing and reducing armed violence in affected countries.

**Core Group states**
- Brazil, Colombia, Finland, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Spain, Switzerland (Chair), Thailand, United Kingdom

**Affiliated organizations**
- UN Development Programme (UNDP)
- Small Arms Survey
- Quaker UN Office (QUNO)

**Summary of Key Actions**

- **Advocacy, Dissemination, and Coordination**
  
1. **Global Burden of Armed Violence**
   - Foreword to the *Global Burden of Armed Violence*
   - The *Global Burden of Armed Violence* report is an important step towards a better understanding of—and more effective responses to—the negative impact of armed violence.

2. **Measurability and Monitoring**
   - Many national governments and development donors are insufficiently aware of how armed violence undermines development and aid effectiveness. Reaching out to states, international organizations, and civil society is therefore critical to raise awareness of the negative interrelation between armed violence and development.

3. **Programming**
   - In order to achieve measurable reductions in armed violence by 2015, it is crucial to enhance the capacities of affected governments and civil society to advance coordinated, coherent, and complementary armed violence prevention and reduction programmes.

The Geneva Declaration process is concentrating on a selection of focus countries and best practice areas in which national and local governments develop and pilot specific armed violence prevention and reduction programmes with the support of UNDP and the international donor community.