To all Signatory States of the
Geneva Declaration on
Armed Violence and Development

Bern and New York, 1st of December 2015

Agenda 2030 and Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development

Dear Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

An important milestone was reached this year in September with the adoption of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. For the first time, the dimension of peace and security is incorporated into a universal development agenda. Global recognition is given to the awareness that there can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development. Concrete targets have been set and the international community is committed to act.

Since 2006, when Switzerland and UNDP launched the “Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development” (GD), we had been working towards this goal together with our partners of the Core Group and the signatory states of the GD. We have striven to underline the interlinkages between armed violence and development and advocated in favour of the inclusion of this issue into the development agenda, both at multilateral and national levels. In particular, in 2014, the five Regional Review Conferences organised by the GD in and with Guatemala, Switzerland, the Philippines, Morocco and Kenya offered an opportunity for depoliticised discussions on armed violence, peace and security. These conferences contributed to generate broader support for the integration of Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies into the new sustainable development goals.

With the inclusion of Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies into the new Agenda 2030, the process of the GD has now accomplished its main mission and is therefore coming to an end, as agreed among the members of the Core Group. Switzerland and UNDP would like to congratulate you on this achievement and thank you for your commitment during the past nine years. The legacy of the GD in terms of technical expertise and knowledge will be preserved and valorized within the Maison de la Paix in Geneva.
As to the future, Switzerland and UNDP remain committed to working on the issue of armed violence, and promoting peace and sustainable development. With regard to Goal 16, we believe that the most effective way to implement it will be to work within the new framework of the Agenda 2030. Strong commitment by the international community will indeed be necessary to effectively implement its goals and targets and transform our world for the better by substantially improving the lives of all.

We strongly hope that our common work, cooperation and accomplishments during the last decade in the framework of the GD will pave the way towards a sustainably peaceful future.

Yours sincerely,

Didier Burkhalter
Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland

Helen Clark
Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme UNDP