



The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development

An International Newsletter on integrating armed violence prevention and reduction into development strategies

Issue 4, December 2008

Introduction: This e-publication is designed to support the *Geneva Declaration* (GD) process and to encourage activities by governments, international organizations and civil society to link development programming with armed violence prevention and reduction strategies. The GD, which is now endorsed by 102 states worldwide, is committed to translate its objectives into concrete steps based on “**Advocacy**”, “**Measurability and Research**” and “**Programming**” as its three programmatic pillars. (For more information on the *Geneva Declaration* and its activities see the web site: www.genevadeclaration.org)

Opening Words:

“In contemporary times, our gun culture stems from the need of the citizen for protection from lawless elements and comes from a deep distrust of law enforcers. It also is a tool to communicate and perpetuate power whether in traffic accidents, electoral violence or downright assassination. It is a most barbaric and un-Christian way to deal with our anger, our shortcomings and our pride.”

From “Shot through the heart,” Geronimo L. Sy, Manila Times, November 20, 2008
<http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/nov/20/yehey/opinion/20081120opi3.html>

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1. Adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution. On 17 November 2008, the Resolution "Promoting Development through the Reduction and Prevention of Armed Violence" was adopted in the plenary session of the United Nations General Assembly by consensus under the agenda item "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit". The Resolution calls on the Secretary General to seek the views of the member states on the inter-

relation between armed violence and development and to report back to the General Assembly at its 64th session in 2009. The resolution was introduced by Switzerland and sponsored by 56 states. Its adoption came after two years of regional efforts and advocacy and awareness building at the UN by the GD Core Group and civil society. The text of the draft version of the resolution (UN document A/63/L.27) can be found at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A%2F63%2FL.27+&Submit=Search&Lang=E

2. Regional Meeting in Sarajevo. The Meeting on Armed Violence and Development for the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe and the Caucasus was held in Sarajevo, 12-14 November, 2008. The event, which attracted close to 100 representatives from states in the region, international agencies and civil society, was hosted by the governments of Switzerland and Bosnia and Herzegovina with the support of UNDP. This was the fourth such regional meeting organized in the Geneva Declaration process. The agenda featured an exchange of views by states, the presentation of an analytic overview of armed violence in the region and reports on practical programmes to reduce armed violence by states, international and regional agencies and NGOs. At the conclusion of the two-day event the state participants adopted the Sarajevo Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. The next in this series of regional meetings is to be held in the Middle East in early 2009. The background paper analyzing armed violence in the region is available at <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/pdfs/UNDP-Eastern-Europe-Paper.pdf>

3. Strategic Developments for the Geneva Declaration in 2009. Late in November the members of the Geneva Declaration (GD) Core Group of States met in Geneva to review the success of recent activities and to begin considering next steps. The first two years of work in support of the GD process had reached its original goals: over 100 UN member states had formally endorsed the Declaration, four regional meetings had brought many of these states on board, a Review Summit had attracted 85 states along with many agencies and civil society organizations, some 60 NGOs were participating in GD events and a supportive resolution had just been adopted by the UN General Assembly.

With this clear success in mind, what should the next phase of the GD process include? While few formal decisions have been made, it looks like there will be increased attention to work in GD Focus Countries; a growing emphasis on promoting practical, evidence-based programming on the ground; further assessment of the effectiveness of existing approaches; and efforts to build a wider and deeper awareness amongst development actors of the possibility for integrating armed violence reduction into their goals and programmes. All this activity will lead to a Summit Meeting in 2011, by which time the endorsers hope to be able to celebrate a real reduction in the global burden of armed violence

4. Arms Trade Treaty Debated at UN Security Council and UN General Assembly. At least 15 countries endorsed the proposed Arms Trade Treaty on 19 November during a UN Security Council debate on Article 26 of the UN charter. Article 26 calls for States to establish a system to regulate weapons so as to minimize the diversion of the world's human and economic resources to armaments. The debate was convened by Oscar Arias, president of Costa Rica, which chairs the Security Council at present. Statements support-

ing the ATT came from Armenia, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, France, Guatemala, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, Tanzania and the UK. Most states made reference to the UN Programme of Action on small arms, and some also mentioned the Convention on Cluster Munitions or the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. See

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9501.doc.htm>

Earlier on Friday 31 October, the General Assembly's First Committee voted overwhelmingly to move forward with work on an Arms Trade Treaty. 147 states voted for an Open-Ended Working Group which will meet beginning in early 2009. Only two states voted against: Zimbabwe and the US. Eighteen abstained. A huge majority also supported the small arms 'omnibus' resolution: 166 states voted in favour, with only the US against. This resolution sets the schedule of UN small arms meetings for the next 6 years: a Biennial Meeting of States in 2010, an expert meeting in 2011 and a Review Conference in 2012. For more detail see www.iansa.org

5. Editorial in Ghana Highlights Youth Programme. "Over the years WAANSA [West Africa Action Network on Small Arms] has been organizing media briefings, conferences as well as international workshops as ways of sensitizing governments and civil society on the dangers inherent in illegal arms deals. But for the message to really achieve any purpose there must be pragmatic programmes that can occupy the times and the minds of the beneficiaries of this illicit trade. It is gratifying therefore, to note that in the Northern Region of Ghana FOSDA – another NGO that is also actively supporting efforts towards reducing or combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in West Africa – recently donated metal detectors to the Ghana Police Service. It has also targeted the youth and engaged them in cycling competitions as a way of redirecting their energies to healthy sporting competitions. This way, those who would otherwise have been attracted to violence by using small arms and light weapons are now bonding in such a way that they are impacting positively on their peers....Candidly speaking, the collaboration between civil society organizations on one hand, and nationals of the sub-region on the other, is achieving positive results." From *The Statesman* (Ghana), 22/08/2008,

http://www.thestatesmanonline.com/pages/editorial_detail.php?newsid=498§ion=0

6. Programming on the Ground. *The following are a few of the many examples of AVD field programmes that illustrate efforts to reduce armed violence through focused development work. These short descriptions provide ideas for initiatives that can be undertaken by government, civil society and international organizations.*

- **Liberia: Fighters become Farmers.** Landmine Action's Tumutu Agricultural Training Programme (TATP) began in February 2008 in Salala District, Liberia – and the project has nothing to do with landmines. Instead it provides training, rehabilitation and reintegration for groups of ex-combatants that did not take part in Liberia's official DDR process. One of the key differences between this initiative and other DDR programmes has been the attention paid to the integration and reintegration of the trainees after training. The reintegration of each student has been carefully planned, their expectations managed and communities prepared for

their arrival. Prior to completing the course, each student agrees to an individually tailored reintegration plan that details the community they will relocate to, their agricultural goals, and the content of their reintegration package. After graduating each beneficiary heads to their chosen community.

<http://www.comunidadsegura.org/?q=en/STORY-in-liberia-fighters-become-farmers>

- **Burundi: Stability depends on successful reintegration of returnees.** Burundi is facing enormous challenges reintegrating thousands of refugees who spent decades in exile. More than 420,000 Burundians who had fled successive conflicts for refuge in Tanzania have been returning home since January 2002. Many of those who returned in recent months were under pressure to do so from the government of Tanzania despite clear signs that the government of Burundi was not ready to rapidly absorb all the returnees. Alarming, some children and youngsters among the returnees are dropping out of school to join the rebel military group National Liberation Front (FNL) in order to access demobilization benefits. Developing economic opportunities for youth therefore needs to be a priority. See “Fighting for land,” in IRIN News, Oct. 6, 2008, <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=80754>
- **Philippines: Human rights curriculum for military revised.** The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) is revising its human rights curriculum for the military and police. The move aims to make the curriculum more effective in promoting respect for human rights, particularly those of children. CHR Chairperson Leila de Lima noted that the existing curriculum excludes the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and that updating the curricula will help the CHR to promote recognition of children as 'zones of peace.' She expects the revision to further boost the CHR's efforts in mainstreaming human rights education among armed groups and government agencies. <http://news.balita.ph/2008/10/27/chr-revising-human-rights-curricula/> also see related activities in **West Africa:** <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=80974>)
- **India: School Programme on armed violence.** In August 2008, Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI) went to Vasant Valley School, New Delhi and interacted with students belonging to Class XI and XII. This is first of a series of programmes undertaken with young school students. The purpose was to share awareness on the issue of rising gun violence in schools and in our societies and efforts to reduce the same. School shootings in the recent months have shocked the country. CAFI's in-house illustrated comic book "Caught in Cross-fire" was appreciated by students and teachers alike. The documentary film, “Gunning for Control” was also shown to the students. See <http://cafi-online.org/report/comic.pdf>
- **Bosnia: Integrated Development Planning tackles Peacebuilding.** World Vision International (WVI) has been active in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1991

and has coordinated its development and relief activities to build greater capacity for long term peace in the country both directly and indirectly. WVI's Area Development Programme (ADP) is a holistic approach to transformational development through long-term partnership with local populations to improve livelihoods for children and their families. AVP activities in economic development, civil society, community development and spiritual development all provide indirect support for peacebuilding. More directly, WVI's Child-Focused Programmes support children, parents and teachers in developing knowledge, skills and values that would include education on alternatives to violence and conflict prevention and promote awareness on HIV/AIDS, alcohol, smoking, and drug abuse. In addition, WVI's formal Peace-Building Programme, now in 12 schools in Bosnia, aims to increase capacities of civil society organizations and members of the education sector to influence decision-makers to adopt educational programmes, teaching methods and school-based development models that reflect the promotion and protection of human rights and the value of peace. For more information see: <http://meero.worldvision.org/about.php>

- **Jordan: Youth Center Promotes Skills Development and Peacemaking.** Zarqa camp is the oldest Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. An Adolescent-Friendly Learning Center there provides young people with training on children's rights, photography, communication skills and conflict resolution – with the aim of having a long-lasting effect on the youth of the camp. See <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/KKAA-7GC82B?OpenDocument>
- **Jamaica: UNICEF Urges Gun Control to Protect Children, Youth in Jamaica.** The United Nations wants the Jamaican government to institute strict gun control regulations as a means of stemming the heavy inflow of guns and ammunition into the island. In a joint press release issued by UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the Global Week of Action against Gun Violence, the UN urged all stakeholders to increase their efforts to tackle the arms. http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/html/20080607T160000-0500_136490_OBS_UN_TELLS_JAMAICA_TO_CONTROL_THE_GUNS_.asp

7. Publication Notes: *The following are recent publications selected from a variety of sources that describe various aspects of work on armed violence and development issues:*

- ***From Armed Violence to Development.*** This issue of Comunidad Segura Good Practices Magazine (Issue 2, November 2008) focuses on initiatives that would restore the foundations for peace in societies wracked by violence. From Haiti to Liberia, from South Africa to Papua New Guinea, the highlighted projects work with a variety of approaches such as reconciliation, disarmament of bodies and minds, social integration and reintegration, child protection and conflict transformation. Whether in nations officially at war or not, peacemakers around the world are analyzing practices, policies and lessons to pave a way out of armed violence. Each short article in the magazine reflects this concern and highlights a practical

and sometimes groundbreaking programme. Download a copy at <http://www.comunidadese segura.org/?q=en/node/39828>

- ***Creating safer communities: Lessons from South Eastern Europe.*** South Eastern Europe is probably best known internationally for the violent conflicts of the 1990s that accompanied the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. Much less attention has been paid to the challenges that citizens and institutions of each country have faced since then. While some tensions have their roots in past conflicts, the problems that are uppermost in people's minds tend to be those that affect their safety on a daily basis such as poor housing, drug abuse or the widespread availability of small arms. Saferworld and its regional partners have developed an approach to community safety working in four locations in South Eastern Europe. The approach addresses a wide range of day-to-day concerns while also being applicable to a post-conflict setting. These Community Safety Plans allow members of a community to work together to identify, discuss and develop solutions to their problems, which leads to an improvement in the immediate security situation on the ground and also helps the community to resist pressures that lead towards violent conflict. Download in English or local languages at: http://www.saferworld.org.uk/publications.php/236/creating_safer_communities_lessons_from_south_eastern_europe
- ***Security and Post-Conflict Reconstruction.*** This book, edited by Robert Muggah of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, provides a critical analysis of the changing practice of post-conflict security-promoting interventions since the Cold War, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), and security-sector reform (SSR). Although the international aid and security sectors exhibit an expanding appetite for peace-support operations in the 21st Century, the effectiveness of such interventions is largely untested. This book issues a challenge to 'conventional' approaches to security promotion as currently conceived by military and peace-keeping forces, drawing on cutting-edge statistical and qualitative findings from war-torn areas including Afghanistan, Timor Leste, Sudan, Uganda, Colombia and Haiti. Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2008 <http://www.routledgestrategicstudies.com>
- ***The Struggle after Combat: The Role of NGOs in DDR Processes.*** The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants is an imminent challenge in countries emerging from violent conflict. This study by Cordaid explores whether NGOs should contribute to such processes and in what way. Field work was done in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone. The full report consists of the three case studies and a synthesis study. Read the report: [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/OCHA-7L3EPS/\\$file/cordaid-ngos-ddr.pdf?openelement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/OCHA-7L3EPS/$file/cordaid-ngos-ddr.pdf?openelement)
- **New Web Site Highlights Violence Prevention.** The World Health Organization and Liverpool John Moores University's Centre for Public Health have launched

an important new web site highlighting what works to prevent violence. Geared towards policy-makers and violence prevention researchers, practitioners and advocates, the web site marks the first time that information on effective violence prevention programmes is available in a searchable web-based data base. See <http://www.nwph.net/preventviolence/default.aspx>

- ***Peacebuild Newsletter.*** Peacebuild is a diverse network of Canadian non-governmental organizations, institutions, and individuals actively involved in peacebuilding practice and policy development. Peacebuild's working groups bring together members interested in particular thematic areas such as Children and Armed Conflict, Conflict Prevention, Gender and Peacebuilding, Peace Operations, and Small Arms. Additionally, the network works on other peacebuilding-related topics. To subscribe to the Peacebuild email newsletter contact media@peacebuild.ca and see the network's web site at www.peacebuild.ca.
- Also consult www.genevadeclaration.org/resources.html

8. Need for More information: *Do you want to share information about activities that are ongoing in your country and publications that show the interface between armed violence prevention and reduction with development?*

If you have some information about successful projects—previous or ongoing—that you think would be relevant, please share them with our readers. Send suggestions and any relevant web addresses to QUNO at quno1@quno.ch

Please visit <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/context.html> for more information.

To contact the editor regarding the content of this newsletter, send an email message to newsletter@genevadeclaration.org

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