



The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development

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

Issue 8, November 2009

This e-newsletter supports the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development process. Drawing from practical efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence around the world, it aims to inspire and encourage governments, international organizations and civil society organizations to take action. The initiatives reviewed here can help transfer knowledge and lessons and identify ways of linking development programming with armed violence prevention and reduction strategies. The Geneva Declaration, which is now endorsed by 108 states worldwide, is committed to concrete interventions. The process is organized around three pillars – **Advocacy, Programming and Measurability and Research**.

For more information on the Geneva Declaration and its activities please visit the web site: www.genevadeclaration.org

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Advocacy

To date the Geneva Declaration has been adopted formally by 108 states, Luxemburg being the latest country to sign up. Commitment to the Geneva Declaration requires states to subscribe to measurable reductions in armed violence by 2015. It also means that states are expected to be transparent and open about the character and severity of armed violence within their borders.

UN Releases New Report on Armed Violence and Development. The UN Secretary-General's report on "Promoting development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence" was released on 5 August 2009 in all 5 UN languages as UN Document A/64/228. As mentioned in earlier issues of the GD Newsletter, this report was mandated by a resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2008. More than thirty governments and civil society organizations provided the views that formed the basis for the text. The report takes a very strong position on the links between armed violence and development, analyzes the relationship at some depth and concludes with an extensive list of recommendations for action by many different actors.

The report is on the General Assembly's agenda for 16 November 2009. On that day GD Core Group states will express their support for the report and its recommendations and then go on to outline a road map for action, including the introduction of a new resolution in the GA in spring 2010. The GD Core Group is planning a special briefing at the UN on the same day to highlight the new report and current actions on AVD issues. See the GD website for additional commentary and a link to the UN report and related process: <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/index.html>

Regional Meetings on Armed Violence and Development. The Geneva Declaration process now includes a "Second Generation" of regional meetings which will explore practical programming and research issues. The first seminar in this new series was held in Cartagena, Colombia on 20-23 April 2009. The event was co-organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC) with the support of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. See the GD website for more details, including group reports (in Spanish only) and the Chairperson's summary (English and Spanish): <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/regional-declarations.html>

Other regional meetings in this new series are at an early stage of discussion. Possible events include a meeting to be organized by UN-LiREC in Jamaica for the Caribbean region in early 2010 and a Philippine-hosted meeting in Manila in March 2010 for governments and civil society experts from South East Asia and the Pacific.

Norway Teams Up with UN Development Agency To Reduce Armed Violence. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has teamed up with Norway in a new public drive to try to reduce armed violence. “Together we will work to build a framework for practical action – between governments, international organizations, and civil society – aimed at achieving measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence by 2015,” said UNDP chief Helen Clark, who was in Oslo in October as part of a four-day visit that also included stops in Finland and Sweden.

<http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2009/october/undp-norway-pledge-to-reduce-armed-violence.en>"

One fruit of this intensified interest will be a joint Norway-UNDP **Armed Violence/Development Conference in Oslo** planned for 21 – 22 April, 2010 as part of the GD platform. This high-level event is intended to mobilize political support for addressing armed violence (AV) in the MDG review process. The sessions would highlight the impact of AV on achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (and vice versa) and cover thematic areas such as urban, youth and gender violence, stressing opportunities for national and local programming elements.

West Africa: Governance, Inequitable Development and Exclusion Drive Gun Violence. Liberia’s Foreign Minister, Dr. Olubanke King Akerele, speaking about the causes of small arms proliferation in Liberia, emphasized such factors as: governance and the inequitable distribution of resources which often culminated in coup d’états, ethnic policy and exclusionary practices such as those relating to citizenship, human rights violation and institutional corruption, among others. Akerele also pointed out that ECOWAS, of which Liberia is a member, supports the view that conflict prevention, democracy and good governance are closely related and as such, there is a need to establish mechanisms to prevent conflict. The Minister’s comments were made during an Inter-Agency Synergy Retreat for government and civil society, organized by the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms in collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and with support from the United Nations Development Program. <http://www.liberianobserver.com/node/1411>

Programming

The Geneva Declaration process encourages all UN member states and NGOs to adopt a proactive and comprehensive approach to armed violence prevention and reduction on the ground. Fortunately, there are literally thousands of efforts underway around the world that aim to reduce violence. Many of these explicitly draw on “developmental” approaches to day-to-day violence. The selection included below only scrape the surface of what is going on every day in affected communities. To encourage learning and to improve practice, the Geneva Declaration Core Group is supporting a number of “focus countries” plan, design, implement and evaluate violence reduction activities. Information on these activities is available at www.genevadeclaration.org.

Action within the GD Focus Countries Framework. This programming is currently conducted in six host countries by a wide range of donor governments, international agencies and civil society. For example in **Jamaica** the government and UNDP have de-

veloped an armed violence and sustainable peace programme which is developing a policy on community security; establishing an observatory on armed violence in four communities and looking at other support including alternative livelihoods. In **Papua New Guinea** actions are taken within a nation-building for development programme, which includes stands of work on peacebuilding/community security, gender and other themes. In **Kenya** the activities are conducted in the framework of the post-conflict coordination group of donors, which includes donor, government, civil society and research institute representatives. The Kenyan programmes are very diverse including creating an infrastructure for peace (e.g., local peace committees); training for parliamentarians and senior civil servants on conflict management, resolution and peacebuilding and working in pastoral areas on addressing the drivers of violence, e.g. environmental, social and economic factors.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Community Justice in the Eastern Congo. Amid the chaos and lawlessness of Eastern Congo, a local organization has developed an innovative approach to settling disputes and promoting justice, one community at a time. Arche d'Alliance, a partner of The Advocacy Project in Uvira, has created Comites de Mediation et Conciliation (CMCs), or conflict resolution committees, in 24 communities across South Kivu. The CMCs function as alternative “courts” for disputes involving property, debts, inheritances, and domestic quarrels, and take pressure off the overburdened Congolese justice system. They also provide an important source of legal help for refugees and internally displaced persons in underserved rural areas. Local CMCs also act as distribution centers for information on public health, security, the constitution, and refugee land rights and reintegration. The CMC in Luvungi has been in existence since 2006, and it attracts villagers from as far as 30 km away.

<http://advocacynet.org/resource/1259>

Danish Aid Agency Adopts Focus on Community Security. The development NGO DanChurchAid (DCA) has established a new policy on Armed Violence Prevention and Reduction. This new direction builds on an earlier human security theme but with a focus on community security. DCA will adapt its existing programmes or start new ones that will tackle the wide range of risk factors for armed violence. Activities will include: reintegrating ex-combatants, improving police-community relations, highlighting the dangers of weapons possession; helping young people find alternatives to gang membership, enhancing weapons storage facilities of state-owned weapons, and increasing access to justice so that perpetrators of armed violence are identified and tried. See www.danchurchaid.org for more information.

Conference on the Rehabilitation and Re-integration of War-affected Children. In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international interdisciplinary conference on rehabilitation and reintegration of war-affected children (RRWAC) took place on 22-23 October 2009, in Brussels. Two perspectives were central to the conference: a more individual-oriented approach through psychosocial support to war-affected children and a more society oriented perspective focused on transitional justice. Children’s rights provided the overarching framework. [More information available](#)

Pakistan: Tackling Armed Violence and Development at Community level. The deteriorating law and order situation in most parts of Pakistan has halted the process of development, especially in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Frustrated tribal youth, who have been living in a closed and conservative society, have taken up arms and are vulnerable to recruitment by *Jihadi* armed groups. The Pakistani NGO Community Appraisal and Motivation Programme (CAMP) has been working closely with local communities and youth groups in the remote areas of FATA through various development and conflict prevention projects emphasizing the involvement of local leadership. The programmes focus on enhancing the technical capacity of youth groups and local leadership in the fields of conflict prevention, conflict transformation, advocacy and lobbying, and the management of participatory development in their respective areas or villages. In a complementary effort aimed at reducing the availability and demand for small arms, CAMP engages civil society, government officials and parliamentarians in support of the international campaign for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). More information at www.camp.org.pk

Measurability and Research:

A central pillar of solid advocacy and programming is evidence. Good evidence is based on solid research. The Geneva Declaration process is committed to supporting national and local-level research to inform interventions, but also to promote awareness and understanding of the risks and dangers posed by armed violence and underdevelopment. The following are examples of innovative and path-breaking research that shed light on the interconnections of armed violence and development.

OECD Armed Violence Reduction (AVR) meeting. The OECD's International Network on Conflict and Fragility held its regular six-monthly Armed Violence Reduction Advisory Panel meeting on 24 September at OECD Headquarters in Paris. The Panel, co-chaired by the UK and UNDP, brought together leading Armed Violence Reduction donors and experts to advise on the development of OECD products and policies in this sector. Several forthcoming products will include: an AV Reduction study mapping interventions in 6 different settings, as well as AVR programming notes on urban armed violence, youth armed violence and SSR/AVR inter-linkages. Efforts are being made to assure that these developments are fully coherent with the Geneva Declaration process. For donor policy and approach to Armed Violence Reduction please see *Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development*, OECD DAC 2009, available at: http://www.oecd.org/document/21/0,3343,en_2649_33693550_42281877_1_1_1_1,00.html

WHO hosts Milestone Meeting on Violence prevention. On 18-19 September the World Health Organization (WHO) played host to the 4th Milestone of a Global Campaign for Violence Prevention Meeting. The almost 200 attendees included academics, health care professionals, members of the criminal justice system, representatives from various governments and the WHO. The two-day conference treated violence as a systemic health risk that can be attributed to causal risk factors and countered by pre-

ventative resilience factors. Researchers described numerous ways that empirical evidence can be used to better understand violence and inform policy, for example through geographical mapping and the profiling of victims and perpetrators. A number of practitioners offered examples successful violence prevention programmes built from a strong evidence base. The participants agreed that further success would depend on reaching out to policy makers and enhancing collaboration between the public health and criminal justice/public safety sectors. The conference launched *Violence prevention: the evidence*, an eight-part series of briefings on interventions to prevent interpersonal and self-directed violence:

http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/4th_milestones_meeting/publications/en/index.html. The presentations, meeting report and list of participants for the meeting are now available on the website:

http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/4th_milestones_meeting/en/index.html

Papua New Guinea: Public Health Research Focuses on Armed Violence. New Zealand medical students are conducting action-oriented research to prevent gun violence in the Pacific. The students, members of the New Zealand Branch of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), are currently assessing the success of the UN-supervised disarmament programme in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (PNG). This research project uses retrospective analysis of hospital records which has proven to help identify groups at risk of injury. Once these risk factors have been identified, interventions can be designed to prevent further injuries and deaths. Another project assessed the public health consequences of tribal wars in the highlands of PNG as a contribution to civil society campaigns like the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence PNG (which includes Oxfam and UNDP). <http://www.ippnw.org/Programs/AFP/index.html>

Our world. Views from the field: The impact of conflicts and armed violence on civilians. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) commissioned quantitative (statistical) research surveys to measure the impact of armed conflict on the civilian population in eight of the most troubled places in the world, which are either experiencing armed conflict or suffering its aftermath. The countries chosen were: Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia and the Philippines. In each country, a broadly representative sample of the adult general public was interviewed, either in person or by telephone. The questions covered people's personal experience of armed conflict and violence, the specific impact that it has on them, views on the acceptable conduct of combatants, the effectiveness and desired actions of related organizations and third parties, awareness of the Geneva Conventions, and the role of health workers during armed conflict. [Full report](#)

Publications:

Aid and Violence: Development Policies and Conflict in Nepal. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) launched its "People's War" in 1996. At the same time, foreign aid has been a fixture of Nepal's development efforts since the 1950s and the donor community has been the key partner in Nepal's development successes and failures. How did these

two realities—the insurgency and foreign aid—interact? This report, published by the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University in the USA, looks at the underlying causes of the Maoist success story and at donors' policies and activities in Nepal and at their interplay with the conflict environment. It shows that the aid community did not fully grasp the nature of caste, class and ethnic discrimination in rural Nepal nor that “development” was not benefiting the most disadvantaged groups. Development failure can thus be construed as a contributing factor to the insurgency. [Download here.](#)

Agricultural Policies and Local Grievances in Rural Rwanda. Chris Huggins, a consultant and former researcher for Human Rights Watch, has written this analysis of the way that economic development policies can threaten to undermine security in a developing country. Many observers have identified land scarcity and rural poverty as contributing factors to the Rwandan genocide, and potential sources of future instability and conflict in Rwanda. While Rwanda's economic growth has been impressive, inequality is steadily increasing, and the benefits of investment have been felt largely in Kigali. The Government of Rwanda appears to have recognized these dangers, and has embarked on an ambitious program of land and agricultural reforms. However, fieldwork suggests that the reforms themselves pose grave risks to the stability of the country, due to both the nature of the ultimate policy goals, and the repressive ways in which they are likely to be implemented. See *Peace Review*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Fall 2009).

www.usfca.edu/peacereview/PRHome.html

Security Promotion in Fragile States: Can Local Meet National? Exploring the Connections between Community Security and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). This August 2009 report from the Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’ reviews the existing literature on the link between community security and DDR processes. The text examines the current state of affairs with regard to community security and DDR policies and programmes, whether initiated from above by state or multilateral agencies or from below by NGOs and communities. The following stages of project work and reports will be based on field work in Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan. They will describe context-specific approaches for community-based DDR that can enhance the human security of populations affected by conflict and can help prevent the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. [View the full document](#)

Also consult www.genevadeclaration.org/resources.html

We want your feedback

Need for More information: Do you want to share information about activities that are ongoing in your country? Do you have any relevant publications that show the connections 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. To contact the editor, send an email to newsletter@genevadeclaration.org

This newsletter is edited and distributed by the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva in order to build awareness on issues relating to development and armed violence and to increase engagement with the Geneva Declaration process. QUNO is mandated by the Geneva Declaration Core Group of states to inform civil society about the Geneva Declaration process.