



United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made In the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects

UNDP Statement

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNDP is pleased to be able to participate in this Conference to Review Progress in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects.

Living free from the threat of armed violence is a basic human need and a precondition for the achievement of sustainable development. By addressing armed violence, and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons which fuels this violence, UNDP seeks to help make the world safe for development.

UNDP is fully committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Over the last five years we have provided more than \$50 million worth of technical and financial assistance to more than 40 partner countries to address different aspects of the small arms problem. This assistance has included:

- national small arms/armed violence baseline assessments
- support for the establishment of national small arms commissions
- voluntary weapons collection programmes (weapons for development) -
destruction of surplus weapons and ammunition
- stockpile management and security
- public awareness campaigns
- disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of ex-combatants, including programmes that address the needs of women and children
- security sector reform (including building the capacity of customs, border guards to combat small arms trafficking)
- armed violence prevention and reduction strategies (particularly at community level)

Much of this assistance has been developed within the framework of national small arms action plans. In some cases these action plans have been integrated into national development frameworks such as UN Development Assistance Frameworks, or Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Some of our work at country level is undertaken in the framework of the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) in partnership with other UN departments, funds and programmes such as UNDDA, DESA, UNODC, UNICEF and WHO.

In addition to our work at country level, UNDP also supports a number of regional small arms projects in West Africa, Central America and South-eastern Europe.

UNDP, UNDDA and UNIDIR, together with the Small Arms Survey, since 2003 have been implementing a joint project - Capacity Development for Reporting to the UN Programme of Action. This project has played a significant role in assisting states to identify their needs and challenges in implementing the Programme of Action. Just yesterday the project partners launched a new publication: "Five Years of Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons; Regional Analysis of National Reports".

UNDP and UNDDA, together with the governments of Canada, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, have initiated a sponsorship programme to support the attendance of members of national coordinating agencies (national commissions) at this Review Conference. Together with the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Parliamentarians for Global Action, we are also supporting the attendance of parliamentarians from Africa, Latin America and Europe/CIS at this review conference. Through these activities we are committed to building national capacities to support the implementation of the Programme of Action.

At the global level we are working with the World Health Organisation on an Armed Violence Prevention Programme, which seeks to promote effective responses to armed violence through the development of an international policy dialogue founded on a clear understanding of the causes, nature and impacts of armed violence. In the context of this programme we are also evaluating best practices generated from armed violence reduction and prevention initiatives in countries such as Brazil and El Salvador.

We have recently signed an MOU with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to provide support for the implementation of small arms projects in the OSCE region.

In all of our work, UNDP's primary concern is to help countries find effective solutions to reducing armed violence, while at the same time providing people and communities with alternative livelihoods and the chance to live free from fear and from want. Our work includes a focus on the supply and availability of small arms and light weapons, the impact of weapons-related violence on human development, and the demand factors that prompt people to acquire these weapons.

Based on our experience it is clear that we will never be able to effectively prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons without addressing supply, impact and demand at the same time. The multidimensional nature of the small arms issue, and the factors driving the illicit trade in small arms, require a comprehensive response.

UNDP believes that this Review Conference should not be simply limited to reviewing current efforts to implement the Programme of Action. If this Review Conference is to be judged a success, if it is to make a tangible difference in reducing gun violence worldwide, we must identify and put in place mechanisms to address obstacles to full implementation in the years ahead. This will require additional financial and technical resources, and UNDP stands ready to assist states to support implementation of the Programme of Action. Furthermore, the world has not stood still since the Programme of Action was negotiated in 2001. Over the last five years, our knowledge and understanding about the nature and impacts of armed violence on individuals, communities and societies around the world has improved considerably. We know that controlling the supply and availability of small arms is not sufficient to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The outcome of the Review Conference must reflect this better understanding of the small arms issue. If not, it risks becoming irrelevant to the millions of peoples around the world who live in the shadow of gun violence every day of every year.

Over the last 5 years our understanding about the impacts of armed violence on human development has also improved. We now know with more certainty than ever that armed violence, facilitated by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, can undermine a country's development prospects and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The link between small arms and development, and the negative effects on development, peace and security, and human rights posed *by inter alia* the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, has been strongly affirmed in the outcome document of the World Summit (Resolution 60/1).

Further, Resolution 60/68 adopted at the 60th UN General Assembly highlights the linkages between small arms proliferation and poverty, and calls on States to explore ways to more effectively address the humanitarian and development impact of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons.

In short, in recent years the international community has come to recognise that a development-oriented approach is needed if we are to address the negative impacts of armed violence, including the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The fullest expression of this new approach was presented earlier this month, when 42 countries adopted the **Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development**. UNDP was proud to cohost, with the government of Switzerland, the ministerial summit that led to the adoption of the Geneva Declaration. Switzerland introduced the Geneva Declaration for our consideration at this Review Conference earlier in the week.

The Geneva Declaration is notable for committing governments to a range of concrete actions to achieve measurable reductions in armed violence by 2015.

States endorsing the Geneva Declaration agree *inter alia* to:

- adopt measures to stem the proliferation, illegal trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons and ammunition,
- integrate armed violence reduction and conflict prevention programmes into national, regional and multilateral development frameworks, institutions and strategies, as well as into humanitarian assistance, emergency, and crisis management initiatives
- enhance the financial, technical, and human resources devoted to addressing armed violence issues in a cooperative, comprehensive and coordinated manner.

Among the Geneva Declaration's many important features is the aim to achieve *measurable* reductions in the global burden of armed violence-requiring the development of appropriate indicators with which to measure not only the impacts of armed violence, but interventions designed to reduce those impacts.

As mentioned, the full text of the Declaration has already been distributed to all delegations. I urge you to review it carefully, as it has particular relevance for our discussions here during the Review Conference. I would also like to mention that the Geneva Declaration remains open for endorsement by States that have not yet done so.

Although the Programme of Action makes limited references to the development dimensions of the small arms issue, the new global consensus on the links between armed violence and development means that the outcome document of this review conference should contain commitments that more fully reflect this new consensus - i.e. that the further implementation of the Programme of Action will only be achieved through a comprehensive, development-oriented approach.

In conclusion, UNDP believes that the growing knowledge and new initiatives in the area of armed violence and development must be reflected in the outcome document of this Review Conference. Doing so will keep the Programme of Action relevant and forward-looking, and allow it to make an even greater contribution to reducing the devastating impacts of small arms and light weapons on human development.

Let us not waste this precious opportunity - we cannot accept that armed violence is a routine feature of life in many countries, and that our hands are tied. On the contrary, we are here today because we recognise that enhancing human security is key to our collective efforts to reduce global poverty and promote sustainable human development