

**Second Armed Violence and Development Seminar
Cartagena, Colombia
20-23 April 2009**

Chairperson's Summary

The Second Armed Violence and Development Seminar, which took place between 20-23 April 2009 in the Spanish International Cooperation Agency's International Training Centre in Cartagena, Colombia, 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. The seminar gathered representatives from the Member States of the Central American Integration System (SICA), Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, as well as representatives from UN-Agencies and civil society organizations.

Armed violence represents a constant threat to human security, requiring a comprehensive approach in order to address it. Armed violence in Latin America is primarily urban and exceeds levels of armed violence in many countries that are experiencing violent conflict. Moreover, in Central America, 77 percent of the homicides are committed with firearms, which is a much higher proportion than in other parts of the world¹. It is essential to understand the different forms of armed violence and its multiple causes and contexts accurately in order to be able to develop strategies to prevent and reduce armed violence and promote development.

Based on the commitment contained within both the Geneva and Guatemala Declarations on Armed Violence and Development, the presentations and debates carried out during this seminar, as well as the discussions that took place within the thematic working groups, the Chairperson has prepared the following summary:

1. The participants recognized the strong link between armed violence and development which constitute an obstacle for reaching the Millennium Development Goals;
2. With the aim of increasing interregional cooperation, the participants considered it useful to present a common position on armed violence and development at the Millennium Development Goals Review Summit in 2010;
3. The availability and use of firearms are directly linked to the increase in armed violence in the region. Within this framework, the participants referred to the effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN 2001 PoA), the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA), and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, with a view to contributing to the prevention and reduction of armed violence and the promotion of social and economic development;
4. The participants considered it necessary to develop common and concrete positions, diagnosis, definitions and approaches to assure the successful implementation of programs and measures aimed at promoting sustainable development. The participants concluded that it is a fundamental and shared responsibility among governments, development co-operation agencies, international organizations and civil society in the region to consolidate coordination and cooperation in applying policies, strategies and programs to prevent and reduce armed violence;

¹ *Global Burden of Armed Violence*, Geneva Declaration Secretariat, Geneva 2008.

5. Based on the multidisciplinary approach, the participants pointed out the relevance of widening the spectrum of actors linked to the prevention and reduction of armed violence and of convening other sectors, such as that of education, health and communication, to bridge the existing gap between the security and development sectors;
6. The seminar applied a participatory methodology, comprised of working groups dealing with four different thematic areas with the objective of elaborating road maps for the development of programs and strategies for the prevention and reduction of armed violence (see annexes). These could function as a practical tool to address the challenges posed by the incremented levels of armed violence in the region;
7. The members of working group I: *Male and female youth affected by armed violence* concluded, among other things, that demographically, both the majority of the victims and the perpetrators are male youth between 15 and 29 years old. These youth are particularly vulnerable to exclusion due to the lack of investment in improving their educational and labor conditions;
8. The members of working group II: *Armed violence in border areas* agreed that although armed violence is manifested in multiple ways in different geographical settings, it might be showing one of its most complex sides in border areas. Many times the borders turn into “no man’s land”, whereby criminal gangs dedicated to illicit trafficking of arms and drugs, as well as, human trafficking and money laundering, concentrate a great part of their activities on creating a parallel society outside the law. This harms the social and institutional structure profoundly and compromises development and social order;
9. The members of working group III: *Armed violence and citizen security at the local level*, recognized that citizen security has become an increasing challenge to the States in the region and the direct and indirect human and material costs, in many cases, already constitute an important part of the GDP. Indices of armed violence in Latin America are highly concentrated in urban settings, particularly in marginalized suburbs. The majority of the population lives in urban centers that, in many cases, do not provide the basic services to assure conditions for a dignified life. The lack of coordinated support from the local governments for the development and implementation of public policies focusing on the prevention and reduction of armed violence further aggravate this situation;
10. The members of working group IV: *The role of the security firms and the private sector in armed violence* noted the manner in which the increase in insecurity and the lack of an effective response to this situation have created space for increased participation on the part of private security firms parallel to that of the law enforcement community. These security firms, both formal and informal, offer services that almost always include armed personnel. Although the majority of States have laws that regulate the operation of these firms, there exist no standardized norms for the correct capacity-building of the personnel that use these arms, which poses a risk to the citizens; and
11. The participants recognized the importance and usefulness of this exercise and called for the organizers to continue to strengthen a platform for dialogue and exchange as this could provide the opportunity to evaluate the actions and/or measures developed, such as the impact obtained in the prevention and reduction of armed violence and the promotion of development.