

prevention and reduction to their daily work. A Background Paper on *The Geneva Declaration* will also be circulated this summer at the Biennial Meeting of States in New York.

Programming

Focus Countries

The GD Process is designed to promote the achievement of practical results on the ground. Signatories are committed to demonstrating the impact of armed violence reduction initiatives on development, and vice-versa, through concrete programmes in key focus countries. These countries include Guatemala, Burundi, Jamaica, Kenya and Papua New Guinea. Other countries are actively being considered as focus countries. The aim is to harness existing and planned initiatives by a variety of actors into a coherent collective approach, notably by mainstreaming armed violence prevention and reduction programmes into development strategies.

Partnering with Civil Society

Practical implementation of the goals of *The Geneva Declaration* will not be possible without the active engagement of civil society organizations, which form an integral

part of the GD Process. The GD process commits its members to collaborating with civil society members nationally to tackle problems of armed violence, and in order to ensure effective and focused civil society participation in the GD process, an international NGO Working Group on armed violence and development has been formed.

Resources

The Geneva Declaration Website

Contains in depth information about the GD Process:

www.genevadeclaration.org

The Geneva Declaration Newsletter

Provides regular updates on advocacy events, practical programmes and recent research on integrating armed violence prevention and reduction into development strategies.

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The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development and its follow-up activities are both a diplomatic initiative and a framework for concrete action. While the Declaration is global in nature, its sponsors make determined efforts to test the global objectives through concrete measures such as organizing regional meetings and establishing focus countries in which the GD's objectives are tested on the ground.



The Geneva Declaration Process

Placing the links between armed violence and development on the international agenda

“Armed violence destroys lives and livelihoods, breeds insecurity, fear and terror, and has a profoundly negative impact on human development. Whether in situations of conflict or crime, it imposes enormous costs on states, communities and individuals.”

- Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development

Context

There is growing international consensus that the problem of armed violence constitutes one of the biggest obstacles to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The costs of armed violence are tremendous; ranging from the costs associated with death, injury and damage to property, through the increased burden on the law enforcement and justice sector, and to the disruption of social services, economic opportunities and the undermining of governance structures. At the same time, the context of underdevelopment may itself be conducive to violence and conflict, and the combination of armed violence and underdevelopment may thus constitute a negative spiral that triggers more violence and raises yet further constraints on the development prospects of societies.

In view of this, Switzerland and UNDP invited several countries, international organisations and civil society organisations to attend a Ministerial Summit in Geneva on 7 June 2006 in order “to address effectively the global scourge of armed violence, and thereby to enhance the prospects for sustainable development at global,

regional and national levels.” *The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development* emerged as a result of the summit, and has now garnered the support of over 90 countries from both the global north and south.

The Geneva Declaration advocates for an integrated approach to issues of armed violence and development, and calls upon states to “achieve demonstrable reductions in the global burden of armed violence and improvements in human security by 2015.”

The Geneva Declaration Process (GD Process) is a unique collaboration, involving partnerships between donor and developing states, between civil society and governments and among security, development and human rights organisations. Its participants do not see it as another high-sounding statement of intent, but as a way to create concrete, practical programmes on the ground, where the difference is made in terms of improved lives and livelihoods. Participants have pledged to strengthen their efforts to integrate armed violence reduction and conflict prevention programmes into national, regional and multilateral development frameworks and

strategies, as well as into humanitarian assistance, emergency and crisis management initiatives.

The GD Process, led by a Core Group of 13 States coordinated by Switzerland, has formulated a “*Framework for Implementation*” centred around 3 pillars:

- **Advocacy, Dissemination and Coordination** – to raise global awareness about the negative impact of armed violence and development
- **Measurability and Monitoring** – to improve our collective ability to quantitatively demonstrate the types and extent of the linkages between armed violence and development
- **Programming** – to develop and carry out the commitments enshrined in *The Geneva Declaration* so as to make a measurable difference in the lives of individuals.

Progress made will be reviewed at a ministerial review summit on armed violence and development, which will take place in Geneva in September 2008.

Advocacy, Dissemination and Coordination

Regional Declarations

In order to adequately reflect regional and sub-regional perspectives on armed violence reduction and development, as well as to increase the number of countries endorsing *The Geneva Declaration*, a series of regional meetings is being organized.

To date, such regional meetings on ‘Armed Violence and Development’ have taken place in **Guatemala** (April 2007) for the region of Latin America, in **Nairobi** (October 2007) for the African continent and in **Bangkok** (May 2008) for the Asia-Pacific Region. Each regional meeting has been accompanied by the formulation of a Regional Declaration in order to capture particular regional perspectives. Further meetings are planned for the regions of Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

A UN General Assembly Resolution

One of goals of the GD Process is to place issues regarding the prevention and reduction of armed violence among those items to be considered in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. The Core Group is currently assessing the possibility of introducing a resolution at the plenary meeting of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly (2008) on this issue.

Measurability and Monitoring

The Small Arms Survey, a Geneva-based institute financed by the Swiss Government and ten other governments, will publish this fall the first report on the global burden of armed violence. It will highlight the human and social costs of armed violence and show ways in which armed violence is an obstacle for achieving the millennium development goals. This report is intended to assist policy makers and practitioners to better understand the relevance of armed violence