



**SMALL ARMS
WORKING GROUP**

**ARMED VIOLENCE REDUCTION AND
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING:
THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE AND STATUS**

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About this Paper

This paper was prepared for the Small Arms Working Group of Peacebuild. The paper is part of a series that explores key policy areas for Canadian government attention at the July 2008 United Nations Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the PoA (programme of action on small arms and light weapons). The papers were first presented at a meeting between SAWG and Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada in April 2008. The support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is gratefully acknowledged.

The Small Arms Working Group (SAWG)

SAWG seeks to engage the Canadian peace, disarmament, human rights and development NGO communities in the development and promotion of national and international policies and measures to reverse the diffusion and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Project Ploughshares is the coordinating agency of the working group.

Through meetings, workshops and roundtables on small arms, the Working Group provides a forum, which encourages members to exchange information, share lessons learned and explore specific areas of collaboration and serves as a link between the NGO community and the Canadian government by engaging in small arms policy dialogue with relevant departments.

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Armed Violence Reduction and Development Programming: The Canadian Experience and Status

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“The International Community has acknowledged that armed violence and conflict impede the realization of the Millennium Development Goals...”

—The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, 2006

After the end of the Cold War, in which there was a merger of development and security concerns, Canada was a leading proponent of concepts such as peacebuilding and human security. In this changing global strategic environment, the Canadian government and likeminded states stressed the threat to individuals and communities of underdevelopment and conflict. Documents as far back as the *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* (Boutros-Ghali 1995) and UNGA Resolution 51/45 (1996) made the link between small arms, security, and development, while introducing the concept of micro-disarmament.¹ The 2001 United Nations Programme of Action (PoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects recognized in its preamble “the implications that poverty and underdevelopment may have for the illicit trade in small arms” and “that the illicit trade in small arms...in all its aspects is multi-faceted and involves, inter alia, security, conflict prevention, and resolution, crime prevention, humanitarian, health and development dimensions.” The PoA was recognized for its attempts to restrict the supply of small arms in circulation by addressing issues of manufacturing, tracing, trafficking, brokering, trading, financing of weapons, as well as their collection and destruction.

Many multilateral statements have placed a growing emphasis on the negative impact of armed violence from small arms on sustainable development. These effects include direct casualties (particularly of young men), disruption to economic activity, the internal displacement of people and the creation of refugees, the interruption of trade and service delivery by state and non-state agencies, the loss or depletion of livelihoods, the weakening of social support structures, and the creation of exploitative parallel economies (Cliffe, Godnick & Turner 2005). More recent statements on the effects of armed violence on poverty and development have included, among others, the UN Secretary-General’s March 2005 report, *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights*, the Millennium Declaration of the World Summit of September 2005, and the January 2006 UN General Assembly Resolution 60/68, “Addressing the Negative Humanitarian and Development Impact of the Illicit Manufacture, Transfer and Circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and their excessive accumulation.”

These diplomatic statements reflected a growing acknowledgement within the development, small arms, and security communities of their shared challenges—on the one hand, to ensure the sustainability of development programs threatened by gun violence and armed conflict and, on the other hand, to address the destabilizing proliferation and misuse of small arms through supportive development strategies. Although the three policy communities do not always use the same vocabulary, increasingly their shared focus is on developing a “comprehensive approach” to the reduction of armed violence by balancing supply and demand factors to ensure effective and sustainable development and security (Batchelor &

Demetriou 2005; Bourne & Greene 2004; Cliffe, Godnick & Turner 2005; Ginifer, Bourne & Greene 2004; Jackman 2007; Thurin 2007).

Since the initial United Nations Conference in 2001, greater emphasis has been placed on the role of demand factors and the motivations and means of acquiring firearms (Atwood, Glatz & Muggah 2006; QUNO 2007; Thurin 2006). The Government of Canada (GoC) was one of the 42 original signatories to the 2006 Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. In this document, the signatories pledged to integrate armed violence reduction and conflict prevention programs into their humanitarian and development policy frameworks and programming. Some of the practical measures for demand-related programming agreed to include targeting specific risk factors and groups (including youth and women); providing non-violent livelihood options; fostering good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights; promoting conflict prevention, resolution, reconciliation; and the support for peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction activities. This document was a political commitment by Canada to formally integrate many of the peacebuilding and post-conflict activities it had long promoted. However, the GoC's recent silence on the promotion of armed violence reduction and development (AVD) as a Core Group State to the Geneva Declaration has caused some Canadian development and arms control advocates to question whether a discreet change of government policy has occurred. It should be noted, though, that Canada has been active in promoting armed violence reduction in another initiative, the current process of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) to develop broad guidelines on AVD for bilateral donors.²

Canadian Government-funded programs

The Canadian government, through its Global Peace and Security Fund, The Fund for Africa, and the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force, has long been actively involved in financing projects related to armed violence reduction. Over the years, Canada has invested a great deal in supporting the generation of knowledge on small arms and their impacts on local communities, by funding large international research programs such as the Small Arms Survey and the Armed Violence Prevention Programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Both programs aim to provide disaggregate data on the nature of armed violence and small arms use at the local and national levels, and to inform international policy discussions on demand- and supply-side aspects of small arms and the root causes of armed violence.

In the past two years, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), through the Glyn Berry Program for Peace and Security, has also financed some smaller, practitioner-oriented initiatives such as the "Negotiating Disarmament" project of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, which produced a publication providing practical guidance on weapons control and disarmament issues for those in the arms control communities and those involved in peace negotiations. Through Viva Rio, a Brazilian NGO, DFAIT funded the "Latin America Watch on Small Arms" to provide regional policymakers with data on epidemiology, licit and illicit manufacture, trade, transit, and holdings of small arms, to reduce weapons-related violence. DFAIT has additionally supported the Quaker Service–American Friends Service Committee for their project "Research in Action:

Alternative Community Security Assessment Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Security in the Middle East and North Africa.” This small project sought to train local NGOs in Gaza, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria to conduct conflict analyses and to identify strategies for community intervention. NGOs in Canada have also received some funding through Peacebuild, the national coalition of NGOs involved in peace and conflict issues; however, to continue to build capacity and raise awareness domestically, it is essential that support be maintained to develop Canadian research, policy analysis, and programming on armed violence reduction and development.

In addition, the Canadian government has provided significant funding to UN agencies to implement programs linked to arms reduction and/or armed violence reduction. For example, in 2003–4, through the UNDP, the GoC supported the Somalia Small Arms Control project, which aimed to increase the capacity for arms control in Somaliland, to help with stockpile management of security force weapons, and to build peace through small arms control practices in Somalia. It was hoped that these activities would “reduce the recourse to armed violence in Somali society, thereby contributing concretely to peacebuilding and development processes in Somalia as a whole” (OECD 2007, p. 18). More recently, the Canada Fund for Africa provided major funding for the voluntary community weapons collection program in Sierra Leone (2004–2007) implemented by the UNDP. In this arms-for-development program, the communities received communal rewards such as schools, a health clinic, and a marketplace in exchange for the surrender of weapons. Other GoC-funded projects include a UNICEF initiative in Colombia (2005–2008) to assist minors who are the victims of armed conflict by addressing issues of gender equality and primary school education, to prevent their recruitment as child soldiers; and the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre’s West African Police Project (2005–2008) to train and deploy civilian police and gendarmes in peace support operations in the region. The Canadian government has also pledged \$7-million over four years (2005–2009) to the “Disbandment of Illegal Armed Group” initiative of the Afghan government. This program seeks the demobilization of illegal armed groups on the basis of voluntary compliance through community development incentives, such as infrastructure projects or local programs on good governance.

Although the Canadian government has financed several projects on small arms reduction, it has been less successful at mainstreaming the concept of armed violence reduction into its own development programming. Currently, no policy guidelines exist for government departments like DFAIT or the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to integrate AVD in a crosscutting way into either country development strategies or thematic programming.³ It is not clear if the GoC has long-term plans on how to incorporate small arms objectives into bilateral and multilateral donor plans such as the Country Development Programming Frameworks (CDPFs) or the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). And despite a Whole-of-Government approach to foreign policy priorities, which incorporate defence, development, and diplomacy, no coherent and multidimensional program integrating small arms control, armed violence reduction, and development across government departments has emerged (Epps 2007, pp. 14, 34). Rather, the coordination process has been mostly informal in the development of small arms policy—for example, during the negotiation and implementation process for the UN PoA (Epps 2007, p. 33).

As AVD is a hybrid field between arms control and development programming, without a formal structure to engage the various stakeholders within government, there is the risk that momentum could be lost in developing joint programming on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. DFAIT carries the lead on developing policy on small arms and light weapons, as well as negotiating related international agreements on, for example, marking and tracing, brokering, and stockpile destruction. However, small arms issues also fall within the purview of other government departments and agencies, such as the Department of National Defence (DND), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and CIDA. On the issue of armed violence reduction, it is currently unclear whether DFAIT or CIDA is the 'leading' department in policy development and programming. Some Canadian civil society organizations have expressed concern that the GoC appears less engaged in AVD and the Framework for the Implementation of the Geneva Declaration, than was previously the case on the PoA and other small arms initiatives.⁴

Nonetheless, activities surrounding the Geneva Declaration continue. Further meetings are planned later in 2008 for the Core Group of States to prepare for the Ministerial Review Summit on armed violence and development in September, as well as the submission of a resolution on AVD to the UN General Assembly in November–December 2008. This is in addition to a variety of regional and subregional meetings and global activities, which could afford the Canadian government many opportunities to lead, along with the other 12 states of the Core Group.⁵ Meanwhile, members of Canadian civil society participated in the NGO expert meeting on AVD issues in January 2008 and continue to be engaged in the process of developing an international NGO working group on armed violence reduction and development.⁶

Although there is a high level of participation from a few members of Canadian civil society in the Geneva Declaration implementation process, there are very few examples of Canadian NGOs explicitly programming in the areas of armed violence reduction and development. One example is the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI).

CECI's Subregional Program in West Africa

In April 2005, CECI, in cooperation with Oxfam GB, launched a \$2-million program over two-and-a-half years for an arms-for-development project in the Gambia, Guinea Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal. The porous nature of the borders, as well as the frequent movement of people and goods across the four West African states, meant that conflict, insecurity, and small arms proliferation in this area were not easily contained. The Sub-Regional Programme–Small Arms Light Weapons (SRP-SALW) was funded by the Canada Fund for Africa (CIDA and DFAIT). This project was part of the West Africa Peace and Security Initiative, which aimed to assist regional, national, and local organizations in the region in building safer communities by strengthening their capacity to carry out peace support operations and address the proliferation of SALW. By working through the four National Focal Points on SALW, as well as their National Commissions on small arms and local committees, the SRP-SALW built capacity and improved knowledge-sharing on small arms issues among civil society organizations in each country.

Part of the capacity building of the national-level partners, which mostly included NGOs focused on development and/or small arms, included an exchange visit to a well established weapons reduction program in Mali, and working in conjunction with regional actors such as Interpol, ECOWAS (the subregional organization of 15 West African States), and WAANSA (the regional network on small arms control). The sharing of information was also facilitated by several regional meetings and a comparative study of national legislation on SALW. Through participatory methods, including the training of female facilitators and implementers, the Focal Points and Steering Committees developed 'Culture of Peace' sensitization programs and eventually arms collection programs in local communities. The campaigns particularly sought to raise awareness of small arms issues among targeted groups, including youth; women; administrative, religious, and customary authorities; as well as security forces. In exchange for the voluntary surrender of weapons, funding was provided for a variety of micro-development projects, such as cattle breeding, establishing a dairy, developing small-scale agriculture, and providing equipment for a local radio station (CECI & Oxfam GB 2007).

Although the number of weapons collected (438 plus ammunition) from the programs in the four countries was less than might have been expected (CECI & Oxfam GB, p. 43), many local communities were reached by the sensitization campaigns through the existing small arms and development networks, which were reinforced by the SRP-SALW. Women also had the opportunity to participate fully in the discussions on security issues and the prioritization of micro-development projects in their communities, many for the first time. Furthermore, cooperation between state and civil society organizations had positive spill-over effects; in particular, confidence-building occurred between security forces and local communities, and residents of project-recipient communities reported improved perceptions of security. These are the true benefits of a locally driven armed violence reduction and development program. They are difficult to quantify, require a longer timeframe to achieve than most donors may like, and are less media-friendly, but perhaps more sustainable, than the surrender of large caches of weapons.

CECI has stressed the fact that sustainable AVD programming requires an understanding that attitudinal changes and confidence-building among stakeholders is a slow, but necessary process. Furthermore, armed violence reduction programming may entail extra time for participatory action research during the project to understand and evaluate conditions of success. Because the SRP-SALW was a pilot project, the initial partners are now designing a subsequent project with the broader themes of "Security and Development," continuing with an integrated methodology (Jackman 2007, p. 5). It is intended that the second phase of this project will move beyond an arms-for-development model, in the recognition that a successful arms reduction strategy should focus on the motivations for gun use and alternative livelihood projects. This understanding of a greater need to address personal and community demand factors in the CECI project has largely mirrored the learning process of the small arms policy communities in the formulation of a comprehensive armed violence reduction and development approach to SALW controls.⁷

Some Lessons Learned from Disarmament Programs

As programs for armed violence reduction and development are relatively new, perhaps some of the experiences drawn from disarmament programs could be useful in the advancement of AVD strategies.

In the first instance, surprisingly, many weapons reduction activities do not have clearly defined criteria of what would constitute a successful or failed program. “Although lacking a doctrine or even minimum standards” (Muggah 2005, p. 243), the success of such programs continues to be based on the number of weapons collected, irrespective of their condition or the relative numbers of weapons in circulation, and the attitudes of gun users after the disarmament programs.⁸ Small arms researcher Robert Muggah argues that this demonstrates a ‘disarmament bias’ by donors and governments, whereby the absolute numbers of arms collected are prioritized, despite growing evidence that this does not necessarily contribute to improved security or even the building of confidence among parties to a conflict (Muggah 2005, p. 246). Moreover, the objectives of what disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and practical disarmament activities are supposed to achieve in the short, medium, and long term tend to be ambiguous, because the objectives and motives of the various stakeholders can be divergent and even at odds. Examples range from gaining a strategic advantage for one party to the conflict, to improving conditions for development according to international donors. Increasingly, some donors, such as Canada, are aiming to link arms reduction activities to their general poverty reduction initiatives in the post-conflict period (DFAIT 2000; DFID/FCO/MOD 2002; Short 1999, pp. 7-8).

In general, the implementers and advocates of weapons collection programs have tended to “adopt objectives and ‘criteria’ of success that far exceed what they can rationally or realistically achieve” (Muggah 2005, p. 246). Donors must be aware that this can lead to false expectations and, in extreme cases, can result in violence among the target population of the programs if expectations are not met or if public information strategies regarding the programs are poor (*New York Times* 2003; UHRC & HRDP-DANIDA 2002). Where arms reduction is an ongoing strategy, rather than a one-off activity, people’s attitudes and experiences of past programs affect their participation in future attempts at disarmament. If weapons collection programs have gone off-track, the reduction of small arms in circulation has proven easily reversible (Yeung 2006).

Fundamentally, many arms reduction programs lack a conceptual framework to disarm the minds of gun users, especially young men, by changing community attitudes towards weapons possession and use. Much more research needs to be conducted on masculinities—in particular, hyper-masculinity and cultures of violence (Cukier 2000; Farr & Gebrewold 2002; Farr, Schnabel & Schroeder 2005; Newhouse & Schroeder 2004). Some scholars have argued that, in certain circumstances, arms control, not collection, initially may be the most appropriate course of action. Researcher Joanna Spear (1999, p. 3) cautions that “the process of disarmament is rendered more complex by the integral role which weaponry has come to play in the society.” Understanding the pre-conflict socio-cultural role of the gun as, for example, a symbol of masculinity or prestige, or as a form of currency to acquire a wife, land, or material goods, will greatly improve the likelihood of any arms reduction initiative. This cultural sensitivity distinguishes between ‘gun cultures’, in which the possession of firearms

is widespread and accepted, although use is controlled by traditional values, social norms, and governmental legislation and ‘cultures of violence’, in which weapons become a means of achieving objectives such as social standing, property, and political power through non-peaceful methods (Lodgaard 2001, pp. 29-30; Spear 1999).

Despite the fact that weapons reduction programs have evolved to incorporate developmental concerns, there is still insufficient attention paid to the local context of the programs. Much of the peacebuilding literature considers weapons reduction programs to be technical, apolitical programs; however, the timing and reasons for these activities are often steeped in political meaning and are dependent on the context of the conflict. Depending on the needs and demands of the local population, arms control (rather than disarmament) may be the most appropriate first step toward achieving a reduction in armed violence, until tangible gains can be made in terms of alternative livelihoods for gun users and the provision of security (by the state). These enforceable regulations regarding the limited possession and use of firearms could serve as confidence-building measures between the community and the state institutions charged with providing security (e.g., police, military). They would concentrate on re-introducing traditional values, social norms, and governmental regulations regarding weapons that may have been disregarded during periods of social conflict. The arms control measures could also reinforce a “culture of peace,” aiming to disarm the mind of gun users, before attempting weapons collection in a subsequent phase.

As in many other pastoralist societies, “small arms have always constituted in the psyche of Djiboutians a symbol of virility, richness and sometimes were used as a part of the dowry in the custom of marriage” (Assowe 2001, p. 2). However, the Republic of Djibouti only allows members of the various security forces, such as the Gendarmerie, the Police, and Armed Forces, the right to bear arms at all times. Civilian possession is regulated by gun licenses and societal norms. “The normality of arms in Djiboutian society is such that, when an individual comes into the city or village to do their shopping, their guns are taken by officials and left in border zones around the urban area, until the individual has done their business and returns to collect their gun” (Assowe 2001, p. 2). The Djibouti example demonstrates that innovative and culturally sensitive arms control measures could include restrictions on the types of firearms and ammunition allowed for civilian possession, limiting ownership to one gun per person, banning the concealment or public display of weapons, and creating gun-free zones (DFAIT 1998, pp. 20-21). Other options include the legalization of illicit arms through community control of weapons formerly owned by individuals—for example, clan ownership in ethnic Somali areas or the formation of community-based security initiatives.

Largely because of a negative association between arms, insecurity, and underdevelopment that is due to their own normative interpretations of the utility and impact of small arms and light weapons, donors and disarmament pundits have not explored these possibilities. One pundit observed, “The normative vacuum of arms control in peace implementation is partially due to the slow regional and international progress in codifying norms in the field of small arms” (Tanner 2000, p. 61). Even the UN Secretary-General (UNSC 2001), in his *Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict*, highlighted the lack of a normative framework for small arms, including disarmament. No normative framework exists to guide donors on questions about who should have the right to bear arms (i.e., non-state actors, community-based security initiatives) and under what conditions (i.e., when the state is unable to provide security to its citizens, as part of arms control measures, etc.) (Cukier 1998; IRIN 2006; Spear 1999, p. 3). These issues were not directly addressed during the 2001 UN Conferences

on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,⁹ avoiding the difficult questions surrounding when and why a gun is illegal.

Nevertheless, the challenge of armed violence reduction and development is how to achieve the subjective state of ‘feeling secure’ through objective actions such as arms reduction and peacebuilding programs. It is conceivable that, because of factors such as culture, objective realities (e.g., state incapacity to provide security to its citizens, lack of socio-economic opportunities), and subjective interpretations (e.g., historical precedence of failed attempts at disarmament, state unwillingness to provide security), keeping weapons may be preferable to surrendering them to the state or another third party.¹⁰ The lessons learned from many years of disarmament programming are that, without integrating the demand factors for small arms and security concerns of stakeholders, the extent to which arms reduction programs have a sustainable effect on the long-term socio-economic development of the affected communities is questionable. Thus, due to the failures of some previous arms reduction programs, donors and practitioners should consider and accommodate differing points of view in armed violence reduction programming. To achieve sustainability, local communities should be involved in the planning of targets and criteria of success, as well as the implementation of such programs.

More broadly, state-centric security interventions such as micro-disarmament programs need to be harmonized with wider trends in overseas development policy. “Development actors have emphasized that effective and sustainable weapons reduction should nurture local ownership of discrete interventions and be undertaken within the context of meaningful Security Sector Reform” (Muggah 2005, p. 245). However, researchers such as Mats Berdal (1996, pp. 66-68) and Robert Muggah (2005, p. 247) suggest that it is not unusual for DDR and weapons reduction programs to be under-funded or for funding to be shared disproportionately among the various activities. Donors tend to focus on short-term, ‘high impact’ activities such as disarmament and demobilization, and less on the onerous processes of providing security, the reintegration of combatants, or the creation of sustainable livelihoods. Greater consideration of these contradictions in funding and a better researched conception of small arms initiatives that is actually grounded in an analysis of demand would go a long way toward improving the results of such initiatives. The beneficiaries will include not only the local stakeholders and the state, but also donors and other international actors who are interested in supporting this type of security sector reform with its potential benefits for political and economic development.

Conceptual Challenges of Armed Violence Reduction

According to the OECD/DAC guidelines, measures to control, prevent, and reduce the proliferation of small arms and light weapons can be financed through Official Developmental Assistance (ODA). However, other measures to increase the security of individuals and communities during and after disarmament are not considered relevant to weapons reduction activities, despite the fact that the OECD/DAC (2001, p. 43) recognizes that “international support for disarmament processes often does not achieve the expected success *due to the absence of a climate of security* [emphasis added] following the termination of armed conflict.” Examples of such measures include “military reforms and training and sensitising military forces in areas such as human rights” (p. 40). These “expenditure items

within the security sector itself” (p. 40) including the “supply, or financing of military equipment or services and use of military personnel” do not qualify for ODA (OECD 2005). Thus, in some cases, problems exist in ensuring individual and group security, because donors and advocates of micro-disarmament hesitate to address and engage with the more difficult and complex question of ‘how to provide security’. Perhaps most significantly, there is resistance—from both development NGOs and partner states—to the idea of SALW programming being covered by ODA. This issue needs to be recognized and addressed by both the development and arms control communities.

Although many NGOs working on small arms issues accept that development assistance may need to include security-related programming, some elements of Canadian civil society have advocated a more cautious approach to the expansion of criteria for ODA. The Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), in particular, has published several documents questioning Security Sector Reform (SSR) programming, “both in terms of [its] relevance to the anti-poverty agenda, and impact on development and human rights” (Simpson 2005, p. 18).¹¹ While organizations such as CCIC recognize the value of SSR in addressing governance and human rights issues, they have pointed to the tendency of peacebuilding activities in failed and failing states to be “state-centric,” thus reinforcing the state institutions, irrespective of state-society relations (Vandergrift & Simpson 2006, pp. 2-3). The aim of peacebuilding/statebuilding activities is to return the monopoly of the use of force to a ‘democratized’ state—one which is directed by the principles of good governance (Abrahamsen & Williams 2006). Those who support the ‘peacebuilding orthodoxy’ believe that reinforcing the state is the best means of ensuring the human security of citizens. In practice, the implementation of these statebuilding activities in a comprehensive, consistent and timely manner has been problematic because of the circular nature of the orthodoxy’s logic. For example, the successful implementation of a micro-disarmament program sensitive to human security depends on the concurrent effectiveness of related reforms within the realms of democratization, the establishment of the rule of law, and good governance. However, it is simultaneously expected by international actors that weapons collection should also contribute to the achievement of these objectives.

This critique of current peacebuilding strategies is applicable to the challenges faced by new approaches to armed violence reduction, namely that sustainable AVD will require not only a reduction of arms, security sector reform activities, or development projects; it will also require a transformation of civil-military, state-society, intercommunal, and particularly gender relations. Planners must keep in mind that at all levels of society, there are those who profit and benefit from armed violence and unequal relations, and thus have a ‘rationale’ for possessing and using weapons. Therefore, armed violence reduction and development programs will require transformative thinking, concentrating less on the weapons themselves and focusing more on who is to be securitized and how. In essence, the interventions will need to de-legitimize the individual, communal, and state motivations for the recourse to armed violence, rendering the use of a firearm unnecessary.

To be successful, AVD programming must also recognize that in fragile, failing, or failed states, individual and community interests often may be at odds with those of the state (Jägerskog 2004). This was recognized recently in *Human Security Now* (Commission on Human Security 2003, p. 3), which declared that “the state must provide various protections to its citizens. But individuals also require protection from the arbitrary power of the state,

through the rule of law and emphasis on civil and political rights as well as socio-economic rights.” Despite assumptions in contemporary peacebuilding literature that arms reduction enhances the security situation of the target society and thus increases opportunities for development through a strategy of ‘Security First’, this is not always the case.¹² Weapons collection programs, as an *independent* activity, do not automatically improve the security or socio-economic situation for various members of the society (such as women or young men), nor for the community as a whole. Recent research in the field of small arms studies has demonstrated that the creation of a strong centralized state, through standardized peacebuilding activities such as micro-disarmament, does not necessarily guarantee a safer environment for citizens (Yeung 2006). This is why armed violence reduction strategies will require long-term, multifaceted approaches to development, including the transformation of social relations, the opportunity to access alternative livelihoods, and security sector reform. Furthermore, armed violence reduction should not be equated solely to supply-side interventions such as weapons collection programs. Clearly, a more flexible approach by the relevant policy communities and practitioners will be required if AVR is to be conducted appropriately. The development, disarmament, and arms control communities should strive to increase understanding and dialogue about why AVR is an integral part of development in many countries and, thus, why armed violence reduction programming, particularly strategies to improve individual and community security, should qualify for ODA under the OECD/DAC guidelines.

Conclusion

For many years, the government of Canada, through the adoption of human security in its foreign policy, has promoted and developed a comprehensive approach to small arms proliferation, as advocated in the Geneva Declaration. With likeminded countries, it supported the adoption of armed violence reduction vocabulary into multilateral statements and has long financed forward thinking research at home and abroad on issues of small arms, development, and security. Furthermore, the GoC has already funded supply- and demand-oriented initiatives in its programming for overseas assistance. However, the full mainstreaming of armed violence reduction into development planning and programming by the GoC in a formal manner is not a given, despite political commitments to the Geneva Declaration as a signatory and as a Core State promoting the document. Although few Canadian NGOs have explicitly planned AVD projects, many already possess the capacity to program in this area or have expressed an interest in information-sharing with other civil society organizations. A promising pilot project co-managed by CECI and Oxfam GB in West Africa made significant inroads in sensitizing their communities and building local capacity for a sustained approach to AVD. Canadian civil society could also provide support through much needed research on evaluating the effectiveness of AVD approaches and applying lessons learned from earlier strategies of arms reduction. With many international activities planned for the coming year on the Geneva Declaration, what is missing now is a clear indication from the Canadian government on how it will implement its political commitment to AVD, and whether it will once again rise to the occasion to provide international leadership on small arms issues.

Notes

1. The term “micro-disarmament” will be used interchangeably in this paper with the terms “practical disarmament,” and “weapons collection programs.” Arms reduction programs include both micro-disarmament and arms control initiatives.
2. Personal communication with a representative of CIDA, March 10, 2008.
3. CIDA has prioritized gender equality, governance, health, education, private sector development, and environmental sustainability as crosscutting issues directly related to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (personal communication with a representative from CIDA, January 31, 2008).
4. It was noted that GoC did not send representation to the 5th Core Group Meeting of the Geneva Declaration in January 2008 (personal communication with representatives from Canadian civil society organizations, February 2 and 26, 2008).
5. Brazil, Canada, Guatemala, Finland, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom. See Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development 2007.
6. Personal communication with a representative from a Canadian civil society organization, January 23, 2008.
7. Personal communication with a member of an international civil society organization, March 14, 2008.
8. “The UNDP will support the Government of Uganda and other development partners to increase human security in Karamoja, Uganda, by linking voluntary disarmament initiatives with longer-term development plans.” “Programme Aim: Reduction of illicit small arms and light weapons in circulation. Indicator (of programme success): Number of SALW destroyed. Target: 40, 000 guns destroyed” (UNDP & UNFPA 2005, pp. 5, 10).
9. Nor were these issues discussed at the 2006 United Nations Programme of Action review conference, although the 2006 review conference was largely derailed by an international pro-gun agenda.
10. Many of these factors in the decision to retain weapons may be similar to the factors for acquiring small arms in the first instance.
11. See also CCIC 2006.
12. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer recently commented about the situation in Afghanistan “There is no security without development and the pre-condition for development is security” (BBC 2006). See also Di Chiaro & Faltas 2001; Kuhne 1998; Laurance 1999; Marchal & Messiant 1997.

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