



## Workshop Report

# Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse: Towards a Caribbean Plan of Action

March 5-6, 2008

**Hosted by**

**Project Ploughshares, Canada**

**Women's Institute for Alternative Development,  
Trinidad and Tobago**

## About this Report

On March 5-6, 2008, the Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD) and Project Ploughshares hosted a workshop in Port of Spain, Trinidad, on "Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse: Towards a Caribbean Plan of Action." The workshop brought together civil society organizations, academics, government officials, and parliamentarians from several Caribbean countries to discuss potential responses by states and civil society to small arms-related violence in the Caribbean region.

Project Ploughshares and WINAD are grateful for the financial support received for the international workshop from the Glyn Berry Program for Peace and Security of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. We also wish to thank the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of National Security for assistance with the organization of the workshop.



The Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD), based in Trinidad, was founded in 1999. WINAD works in gender and development, leadership, HIV/AIDS, and arms control. It advocates for gender equality, respect for one's right to choice, the State to accept and execute its obligation to protect and provide satisfactorily for all citizens, citizen participation in decision making, and community mobilisation to ensure safer communities.

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Project Ploughshares is the ecumenical peace centre of The Canadian Council of Churches established to work with churches and related organizations, as well as governments and nongovernmental organizations, in Canada and internationally, to identify, develop, and advance approaches that build peace and prevent war. Project Ploughshares is affiliated with the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo.

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## Table of Contents

Final Workshop Report **3**

Appendices

1. Participants list **18**
2. Agenda **20**
3. Port of Spain Declaration **23**
4. CARICOM Commitments **26**

# FINAL WORKSHOP REPORT

## Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse: Towards a Caribbean Plan of Action

### Introduction and Summary

The Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD), based in Trinidad and Tobago, and Project Ploughshares (PP), based in Canada, hosted a workshop in Port of Spain on March 5-6, 2008 to discuss potential responses by states and civil society to small arms-related violence in the Caribbean region. Participants were drawn from several Caribbean countries representing civil society organizations, academics, government officials, and parliamentarians (see **Appendix 1** for a Participants List).

A background paper prepared by WINAD and PP was distributed to participants prior to and during the workshop. The agenda (see **Appendix 2**) was structured to encourage discussion of the particular experience of gun violence in participants' countries and to consider a Caribbean regional response.

The stated workshop objectives were:

1. To review the impact of, and responses to, small arms diffusion and violence in the Caribbean;
2. To hear from other affected regions (Horn of Africa and Mercosur) on their approaches to gun violence;
3. To explore a CARICOM instrument to support implementation of the UN Programme of Action on small arms; and
4. To develop a Caribbean research agenda on small arms violence.

The workshop heard from experts and activists in the Caribbean region and beyond. Several presentations described the impacts of, and responses to, small arms diffusion and gun violence in the Caribbean states of Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Two experts from the subregions of Mercosur in Latin America and the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region of Africa detailed subregional work on gun control and groundbreaking subregional instruments on small arms, respectively. Other speakers explored the gender dimensions of small arms violence, focusing particularly on young men, as well as the record of CARICOM implementation of multilateral small arms commitments. The plenary discussions in each session were rich and lively and raised several recurring themes. A final session of three working groups working on the questions "What should a CARICOM instrument contain?" "What should be the priority areas for research?" and "What should be the working agenda for a CARICOM Working Group?" reported back with recommendations.

A declaration statement (see **Appendix 3**) was adopted by consensus at the close of the workshop. The workshop received favourable coverage in print and electronic media. The organizers and

participants are grateful for financial support for the workshop from the Glyn Berry Program for Peace and Security of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

## The Problem: Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse

The proliferation of illegal small arms threatens the ability of Caribbean states to meet their Millennium Development Goals. In a 2007 report the World Bank notes that murder rates in the Caribbean – at 30 per 100,000 population annually – are higher than for any other region of the world. The World Bank also stated that “high rates of crime and violence in the Caribbean are undermining growth, threatening human welfare, and impeding social development.”

A major factor in the surge of gun-related criminality is the trafficking of narcotics. Illicit drugs are transshipped through the region from South America to North America and Europe. There is a related movement of illegal weapons from North America to several destinations in the Caribbean. The rising crime rate has been accompanied by the increased use of more powerful weapons, resulting in higher mortality levels.

Youth, especially male youth, are disproportionately represented in the incidence and severity of gun violence, both as victims and as perpetrators, and violent crimes increasingly are being committed at younger ages. The situation illustrates how the lives of Caribbean men and women are influenced by the gender disparities and structural inequalities that persist in many facets of Caribbean life.

## A CARICOM Instrument on Small Arms?

The deadly impact of illicit firearms use in the Caribbean argues for a shared regional response. A CARICOM instrument on small arms could be a declaration, political agreement, or even a treaty, according to the perceived urgency and level of commitment of Caribbean states. Regardless of its form, there are basic elements necessary to an effective and comprehensive instrument. These elements should be based on the specifics of the illicit firearms problem in the Caribbean region and on the existing commitments of CARICOM member states, as well as informed by the experiences of other regions.

Given the central role now played by the UN Programme of Action in the international response to small arms proliferation and misuse, implementation of the PoA should be central to any Caribbean instrument on small arms. A CARICOM instrument also would need to set out commitments for small arms control that reflect the particular conditions, concerns, and capacities of member states. These could include a coordinated agenda for action with civil society, including a research agenda, a working group on small arms issues, and the harmonization of relevant national legislation and action plans. (See **Appendix 4** on current CARICOM international commitments on small arms, as well as a description of subregional small arms instruments in Mercusor states in Latin America and East Africa.)

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2008

### Welcome and Opening Statements

On behalf of WINAD, Folade Mutota welcomed the workshop participants and reiterated the purpose for gathering. The *Small Arms Survey 2007* estimates there are over 875 million small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the world today. Three-quarters of these arms are in the hands of civilians, the majority male. The workshop was to explore the gender implications of SALW and the relationship between narco-trafficking and SALW in the Caribbean in the context of human security. Inequalities in societies need to be addressed and fundamental needs of people must be met. Small, vulnerable economies of Caribbean countries are inordinately affected by armed violence. The Caribbean has creative people and the natural resources to address these issues, but can also learn from partners in Kenya, Brazil, and Canada.

John Siebert, Executive Director of Project Ploughshares, thanked the organizers for the warm welcome and acknowledged the financial support of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs for the workshop.

### **Session 1: Reports on gun violence in selected Caribbean states**

**Moderator: Deborah McFee, WINAD**

#### **Roxanne Myers – Guyana**

Ms. Myers is a member of the Peace Builders Network in Guyana, which has been active since 2005.

- In Guyana murder rates are increasing. In the past month there have been two slaughters by still unknown assailants in Lusignan, where 11 persons, including five children, were murdered in a village rampage and in Bartica where 12 persons were killed, including police officers.
- It is not known how the majority of arms are entering Guyana. The border with Brazil is not patrolled on the Guyana side. Guyana's coast is effectively unpatrolled. Drug traffickers, smugglers, and gangs have left citizens feeling they need to buy guns to protect themselves in the absence of the provision of adequate security by the state. There are also domestic gun killings involving domestic partners.
- Social factors in gun prevalence include: declining standards of education leading to high dropout rates, inadequate technical and vocational training opportunities, high levels of abuse in the home and sometimes in schools, high incidence of unemployment or underemployment, loss of the primary earner in the homes from emigration, and HIV/AIDS.
- Perpetrators of gun violence have better weapons than the police and other security forces. There is some nepotism in gun license access. The response of the state has been militaristic.

- Civil society has responded with advocacy for more effective gun control and licensing. Community dialogues and cross-community contacts are being organized for women to share their experiences.
- Further research is required with disaggregated data. More effective gun licensing is required as well as strategies to get the guns off the street. Guyana's national policy also must be in line with CARICOM's security framework, and coordinated with its neighbours.

### **Senator Cemephise Gilles – Haiti**

- Haiti has experienced a series of socio-political crises since 1986 when the Duvalier regime ended. These crises have spawned paramilitary groups supporting various political factions. UN multilateral forces have intervened and the armed forces have been effectively disbanded. As a result of these upheavals, many arms are entering Haiti.
- Drug trafficking has been largely unchecked. Haiti's borders are mostly unpatrolled.
- The Haitian Parliament is working with the Government to regularize the discussion on controlling arms. There is still a requirement to control and guard the borders to confront drug trafficking. There is a reluctance to reinstate national armed forces or a national police force.
- Haiti needs the assistance of the UN, and has a right to this help, but it also wants to preserve its sovereignty. NGOs can assist by showing solidarity with Haiti, which has fought for freedom for two centuries.

### **Discussion – Session 1**

- Common themes emerged from the presenters, including control of borders; social apathy; racial divides; drug trafficking; the response of and respect for police forces; and the role of social, political, and economic inequalities in small arms presence and use.
- Many disturbing questions remain about the motives of the two slaughters in Guyana. Were the same weapons used? Were race, politics, robbery involved? A large cache of government arms was at Bartica for distribution to the hinterlands, so there may have been a leak of information within the police force.
- There needs to be a larger and better qualified national force in Haiti to deal with border and drug trafficking issues. It costs money to carry out necessary security tasks. The Haitian constitution contains provision for the military and for police forces. Currently there is only a police force.

### **Session 2: Review of relevant multilateral agreements**

**Moderator: Folade Mutota, WINAD**

**Ken Epps, Project Ploughshares - Canada**

- The UN Programme of Action on small arms (UN PoA), agreed to in 2001, is the touchstone for multilateral work on small arms reduction and control. It has a comprehensive list of provisions. These recognize that the small arms problem is a complex issue requiring cooperation between states and civil society.
- The record of CARICOM states in implementing the UN PoA is “somewhat mixed.” Just under half of states have a point of contact. Only one state, Haiti, has a national coordination mechanism. (During the workshop Trinidad and Tobago officials confirmed that T&T has appointed a national coordination agency.) Only a third of the states have produced national reports. CARICOM states have played only a small role in the UN PoA process. For example, Jamaica was on the Group of Governmental Experts for marking and tracing.
- CIFTA, the OAS convention, predates the UN PoA by three years. As a legally binding treaty, it is stronger than the UN PoA and its provisions are consistent with the UN PoA. Model regulations produced by CICAD have been effective and useful attachments to CIFTA. Most CARICOM states have signed and ratified CIFTA but implementation is weak.
- The Antigua Guatemala Declaration, arising from a meeting of Latin American and Caribbean states in advance of the 2006 Review Conference on the UN PoA, reaffirmed the fundamentals of the UN PoA. The Declaration goes further by calling for legally binding instruments on marking and on brokering, common criteria on transfers of SALW, and regulations on civilian possession of small arms.
- The 2002 report of the CARICOM Task Force on Crime and Security makes important and relevant recommendations related to illegal firearms.

### **Antonio Rangel Bandeira, Viva Rio - Brazil**

- Latin America has 14 per cent of the world’s population, but 42 per cent of the world’s homicides by firearms. Brazil has 100 deaths by firearms each day, 36,000 each year. Although Brazil is not at war, these figures are worse than those of many countries in which violent conflicts are taking place.
- In Sao Paulo the number of guns has been reduced by 46 per cent in the last 5 years. Gun violence has been reduced by 12 per cent. So there is hope. How did this happen? It involved democratic control of the police, a gun buyback taking in 500,000 guns, and a prohibition on carrying guns in the streets.
- Accurate information on guns is required to have control of guns. Why is it so difficult to access information on guns? The world of guns is a secret universe. When you have a secret universe without scientific data you have myths and misinformation.
- Traditionally guns were related to war, which was a matter for the armed forces. In the Cold War the military was generally in charge of guns. There is a movement now in Latin America

to give responsibility to the police to control guns because the guns are being used by criminals, including organized crime.

- The interest of civil society has been viewed with suspicion. Gun control has traditionally been seen as a matter for the police and military, which were resistant to experts from civil society assisting them with gun control. When the civil society expert was a woman, there was even more resistance. Most of the international experts on gun control are women.
- The military and commerce do not have the legitimacy to control guns. The Brazilian Parliament was able to force the Brazilian gun and ammunition producers to provide information on guns.
- Many people are poor and not violent. Many drug producers are not violent. What makes the difference in Latin America is organized crime working with corrupt police. Viva Rio is working with the good police (they are heroes) who face a very difficult situation. They must respond to the criminals as well as their colleagues who sell the guns to criminals who use them to kill police.
- That guns provide self-protection is a myth. Three out of four people who react to an assault by using a gun end up dead.
- Allies in gun control are the churches, which are for peace, and the women of Brazil. Forty per cent of women killed by their intimate partners are killed with guns.
- No single country can solve the problem alone. The international community must control exports. For example, if the gun manufacturers in Brazil are controlled, then the border issue with Guyana may be largely solved.

## **Discussion – Session 2**

- Two common themes were the need for cooperation and research for sound information to inform policy and legislation, and networking within civil society and between civil society and the state.
- Control of police weapons is required, including while the police are off duty.
- We must confront the people who use guns and change their mentality. If a man takes up a gun to prove his masculinity, then there is a problem before he has the gun that needs to be addressed. Women are also starting to take on this masculine character to address disputes by using violence, including guns. At the same time, women are pressuring men to give away their guns in buyback programs. In Brazil the slogan was “Choose between the guns and me.”
- “Demand” issues are conspicuous by their absence in most multilateral agreements. Regional and subregional agreements offer an opportunity for addressing this.

- Gun violence is counterproductive from an economic vantage point. If Haiti and Jamaica were able to reduce their violence to the level of Costa Rica then their GNP would rise 5.4 per cent.
- We need to change the syllogism to: “Guns don’t kill. People with guns kill.”
- Ammunition must be controlled as well. Ammunition has been put on the international agenda by Latin American and Caribbean countries. Marking ammunition allows it be traced to where it was sold. It is easier to trace ammunition, because the casings are left behind, but the gun may be kept and used for years without tracing.
- Not much has changed between the youth of today and yesterday, but now there are guns and that makes the difference. Youth must have alternatives and opportunities for education and employment.
- The specifics of the problem in the Caribbean must be discussed and understood. Education is not enough, but education is very important. A Princeton study shows 38 causes of violence. Inequality is more important than poverty. The common background among most violent criminals is the violence witnessed in their childhood homes. Children, when they see violence used to achieve a goal, replicate that behaviour.

**Session 3 - Voices of advocates: male analysis of small arms proliferation and misuse in the region, and approaches from a grassroots perspective**

**Moderator: Kerwyn Aigle, Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs**

**Lawman Lynch, Safe School Ambassadors – Jamaica**

- Kofi Annan – “We have the means and capacity to deal with our problems. If only we can find the political will.” Gun violence is crippling the development process in Jamaica. We need politicians with political will to tackle the problem at a time when some politicians benefit from this gun culture.
- Uneducated, unemployed young men can’t function without a gun. Social programs must be vastly improved and local government must be improved to replace illegitimate “governments.” In Jamaica, over 1,000 people are murdered annually, with the age group from 21-25 representing the most perpetrators and victims. The reasons include reprisals, drugs/gangs, and partisan politics.
- The music industry is used to launder drug money, as politicians understand and know.

**Ravi Lutchman, Trinidad Youth Council – Trinidad and Tobago**

Ravi Lutchman is a teacher and community activist.

- Young people are under stress, killing themselves and being killed. The Caribbean is at the forefront of the world in murder rates. Young men are more at risk since they don’t have the

same opportunities to exercise their masculinity and power as providers. Deviance and crime become an easy temptation. Why do they want to have a gun? Access to power.

- The good things done by young people are not being acknowledged. They are only being seen in a negative light. Youth seek validation from others. Positive spaces for youth are needed in communities. Job and entrepreneurship training is also required as well as matching youth with mentors.
- The Youth Council is providing an online employment agency where youth can post their résumés and view job vacancies. It is running an assistance fund for youth who have lost a parent to crime and offers counselling to deal with trauma. It also provides financial assistance to youth to stay in school until 18.

### **Gary Grant, Laventille – Trinidad and Tobago**

Gary Grant is a community activist from the Laventille suburb of Port of Spain, which has been heavily affected by gun violence.

- Problems of gun violence exist across the region and across the world. Gary grew up on both sides of the fence. He was involved in gun crime and is now involved in the solution. Many friends died from gun violence. Why did they die?
- There is a lack of parenting skills in Laventille, a lack of communication, and no one to supervise children. Growing up among gangs will likely mean becoming a gang member. The youth feel they are being deprived. Because there are no services or infrastructure and the government is not doing its job, they will deal with it in their own way.
- Street theatre allows people to see themselves. We need to put people in different communities for training and to experience a new culture and possibilities. Youth need to go on outings, be exposed to cultural activities, meet other youth from outside their communities to allow them to imagine a different way of life. We need to implement the recommendations from this meeting so that there is real change.

### **Clifton Simpson, Trade Unionist – Trinidad and Tobago**

- There is nothing we can do to change the environment we live in unless we change the character of our people. We need to reflect on the good character of our neighbours and acknowledge it. We only pay attention to those who offer negative examples. We must encourage and demonstrate good social interaction.
- Thomas Edison said that man can build many things but needs character to hold them in balance.
- There are young people coming into the workplace from this culture who are losing their jobs because they don't know how to work or have the opportunity to learn positive work attitudes.

- Our humanity must be shown to each other. Provide the resources to allow youth to feel wanted and needed.

### **Discussion – Session 3**

The discussion produced questions and suggestions.

- The questions included:
  - How secure is a community where there are illegal small arms and ammunition?
  - How does economics come into play in this situation? For example, businessmen have become targets if they don't contribute through "indirect taxes" or support activities in the community. Crime is an economy. There is also a link between international political agendas and crime.
  - How well are police doing their job? Vigilante patrols by young men in some neighbourhoods make police work more difficult. Sometimes police kill these young men, raising questions of police brutality.
- The suggestions included:
  - Some perpetrators are desperate. We need to be both proactive and reactive with citizenship education and youth sports activities.
  - We need to find the resources for gun amnesties.
  - We need to ensure politicians have the political will to disarm their own supporters, who might be contributing to their campaigns. The delinquents have to be disciplined by the state. Checks and balances on power are required in the political system of a pluralistic society. Some in Trinidad and Tobago are talking about a "war on guns," thereby contributing to a police state mentality.
  - We need to reflect on our paradigms of violence and how we view violence in society. There must be peace with justice. Some things happen by deliberate construct, making it more difficult to address crime.
  - We must address the issue of ethnic diversity. Leadership must recognize diversity in these societies, and understand these subcultures.
- There is evidence in Guyana of a link between the political parties, not necessarily politicians, and gun violence. Informal armies are associated with two parties. There is a massive disaffection among the intelligentsia and the working poor. There is an economic element to the disbanding of the armed reserves. Arms are disappearing and then turning up in the commission of crimes.

## THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2008

John Siebert, Project Ploughshares, provided a brief summary of the deliberations from the previous day. He noted:

**The key issues from Day One of the workshop were:**

- ❖ **The proliferation of small arms is a worldwide phenomenon.**
- ❖ **In the region there are 'hot-spots,' e.g., Brazil, Jamaica, Haiti.**
- ❖ **There is a correlation between the drug and small arms trade.**
- ❖ **Because research on the issue is lacking, a well planned response is difficult.**
- ❖ **There needs to be a deeper look into the gender implications of small arms violence.**
- ❖ **There is a central role for grassroots organizations in gun control.**

### **Session 4 – Learning from the good practices of other regions**

**Moderator: James Philbert, Deputy Commissioner of Police - Trinidad and Tobago**

- 75 per cent of murders in Trinidad and Tobago are committed with firearms. If Trinidad and Tobago had better shooters the number of murders would raise dramatically.
- There are no firearms produced in the Caribbean. Shipments have come from Venezuela, UK, USA, and Grenada. We need to identify firearms in their fullest sense. Hand grenades have been brought into Trinidad and Tobago and a police officer has been killed with one.
- Anyone who owns a firearm should be of a certain quality and physically fit. Anyone who cannot use a firearm properly should not be licensed to have one. The police need to be able to respond to the presence of firearms in lawful ways.

### **Ambassador Ochieng' Adala, Africa Peace Forum (APFO) - Kenya**

- The Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa region is prone to conflict. As a result, over the past 50 years many conventional arms have been introduced into the region. They have a long shelf life. Newer arms that have been brought into the subregion have caused a devastating loss of life; fuelled conflict and abetted terrorism, cattle rustling, and the commission of serious crimes.
- In the Bamako Declaration the Organization of African Unity (OAU) indicated an African common position on the proliferation of illicit small arms. The Nairobi Declaration was signed in March 2000 when Foreign Ministers met. It is a political agreement with the following embedded principles: civil society must work with governments; adequate laws and institutions are required in each country; and regional cooperation must be facilitated and promoted.

- Civil society, including APFO with support from the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, plays a key role in building public awareness. Information is shared between civil society and National Focal Points. Civil society also has been instrumental in assisting police in collecting illicit arms, which have been publicly destroyed.
- The Nairobi Protocol is a legally binding instrument, and nine of 11 states have ratified it. Best Practice Guidelines have been developed to support implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and Protocol.
- Unique solutions are required for each state.

**The Seven Pillars of the Nairobi Declaration:**

- 1) an institutional framework,
- 2) establishing a secretariat to promote regional cooperation,
- 3) legislative measures to maintain harmonization and minimum standards,
- 4) operational and capacity building,
- 5) control, seizure, and destruction of SALW in states' possession,
- 6) information exchange and record keeping,
- 7) promoting public awareness.

**Ken Epps, Project Ploughshares - Canada**

- The potential elements of a CARICOM instrument on small arms are outlined in Table 3 of the background paper provided to workshop participants. The most significant work must be done at the national level. There are similarities between subregions, but the uniqueness of CARICOM conditions must be taken into account.
- The instrument should take account of other international instruments and state commitments already made, including the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.

**DISCUSSION**

- The Caribbean may be prone to further violent conflicts if we do not do something. The use of SALW is an extension of ongoing conflicts. There is a drift of conflict from areas such as Laventille to others. It can fuel political unrest. We can't be complacent.

- The Caribbean is a gateway in a longer chain. The Caribbean needs to unite to combat the trade in illegal small arms. Political leaders also have a responsibility to act. The UN needs to take reinforcing measures.
- Do industrialized countries such as USA, France, have clear positions on these issues? Yes, but there is a problem of implementation. There is an obligation for NGOs such as Project Ploughshares to make countries such as Canada meet its commitments. For example, Canada has not met the standards for export of SALW it has agreed to. It is also worth noting that the agreements on SALW are political agreements, not legally binding. In the developing countries legally binding instruments are being adopted, but then not implemented. Civil society organizations must keep pressure on governments to meet their obligations. Civil society needs to do its part in addressing the issues of demand and not necessarily wait for the developed countries to assist in combating SALW.
- Is the public destruction of arms and ammunition legislated or a matter of policy in East Africa?  
The police armoury is used to collect weapons and then they are destroyed when ordered by a Magistrate, but it is not always clear that this is accomplished by the police. Civil society took up the issue in Kenya about destruction of confiscated weapons. Civil society organizations are being persistent in Kenya in getting Parliamentarians to attend to these issues, but there are obstacles.
- No one size fits all. Some mechanisms work in some circumstances but not in others.
- The CARICOM Task Force was a temporary body that made recommendations. A regional framework for SALW and crime and security is there. The Council of Ministers is dealing with some of the elements of a regional agreement. Security is a pillar of CARICOM now. The CARICOM Secretariat is working on these issues and perhaps a public sensitization campaign is required.
- In response to the apparent lack of political will, we can prepare draft legislation to be distributed to all CARICOM states for passing similar measures, and this group can maintain pressure for passing this legislation and putting it in force.
- This is a meeting of civil society organizations and parliamentarians by design to encourage collaboration with government. This is the first time WINAD has invited government directly to a meeting. The Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of National Security has partnered with WINAD and provided support and participation.

### **Session 5: Literature Review of Caribbean Studies on Small Arms Proliferation and Impact**

**Keron King, Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus – Trinidad and Tobago**

- There is a need for information and research and disaggregated data. The data available demonstrates there is a problem, but is not very helpful in implementing a response. What exactly is the Caribbean problem? It is related directly to the illegal drug trade. Research

shows the path to policy. We require a deep understanding of who the gun users are and why they want the guns if we are to fashion effective policies and program responses.

- In Trinidad and Tobago, 74 per cent of murders resulted from firearms misuse in 2006. In 2000, the figure was 53 per cent. Woundings from firearms were 53 per cent in 2000 but went down to 40 per cent in 2005. Guns have become more lethal so fewer survive wounds.
- At the moment we need to beg and cajole the authorities for the data. If the UN can get the statistics, they should be made available to the public. The police service has a data collection service. This raw data needs to be made available in a timely fashion.
- Is SALW a disease and if so, is it an epidemic or pandemic?
  1. A plan of action should focus on research.
  2. It should examine the Boston Gun Project (1996).
  3. It should validate the view of international collaboration as a solution and not just for governments but for civil society as well.
- Illegal guns from the USA come to the Caribbean. Virtually all guns in the USA start as legal and then get diverted.
- No country is immune. The international community must be part of the solution.
- There is a low level of detection and conviction for gun-related violence in the Caribbean.

## **DISCUSSION**

- What is the relationship between decriminalization of drugs and gun use?
- With respect to woundings and killings, there is more ammunition to shoot a victim multiple times, and to become more accurate through practicing with targets.
- How do we put more pressure on the producers to provide manufacturing numbers? Currently, as academic researchers we can't get that information.
- There is a lack of transparency even in states that are relatively good in releasing information, e.g., Canada. Existing state standards and practices make the researchers' job very difficult.

## **GROUP DISCUSSION TIME**

Participants divided into three smaller groups to discuss three specific questions for future work. Each group appointed a rapporteur to provide a summary of the group discussions to the final plenary session.

### **GROUP 1: What should a CARICOM instrument contain?**

This group used Table 3 of the workshop paper as a guide.

- For an instrument preamble:
  - The difficulties of civil society groups in gaining support from governments were highlighted.
  - It should include the role of the drug trade in the escalation of SALW proliferation.
  - The role of ammunition is crucial.
  - There is a need for research to guide policy formation.
  
- For the operative part, there was a level of consensus in the group on the following:
  - There should be recognition of, or creation of, a national point of contact for SALW in all states. The form may vary from one jurisdiction to another, but it should be responsible for the compilation of information, policy, allocation of resources, and diagnosis of the problem.
  - There should be sharing of information within a state and between states.
  - Capacity building is required.
  - The positive stories of combating SALW proliferation should be publicized. Public awareness should be done in collaboration with civil society.
  - Create national databases of firearms registration. All firearms entering the country should be required by law to be test fired and the ballistics information registered in a national database.
  - There must be shared responsibility between countries for interdiction. National rivalries may exist to blame one country or another on the source of weapons. All countries are affected and all should take responsibility for the problem.
  - Collective negotiation is required to seek funding and technical assistance from international bodies.

**GROUP 2: What should be the priority areas for research?**

- It would be useful to know why SALW are used in the region.
- A database on SALW and ammunition should be developed that maps the domestic and international sources, suppliers, and distributors; and determines how weapons enter communities and how the weapons are used—for leisure or protection of family and property.
  
- A common legal framework for firearm licensing is needed.
  
- Comparative data analysis on gun violence is needed from the police and from the public and private health institutions. This analysis should include the types of weapons used, calibre, types of wounds, who the victims are, where the crimes are located, and the source of guns used.
  
- Cost of gun violence—social and economic costs. What does it cost to treat victims, penalize and try perpetrators? What is the cost to the business community of the tenuous nature of police security? Who is benefiting from gun violence?
  
- What are the causes of the violence and the impact of the violence? What is the link between parenting and gun violence? What is happening in the mind of the perpetrator who resorts to gun violence?

- Ethnographic approach may be helpful—qualitative study may give a different view from quantitative data on victims and perpetrators.
- The relationship between deportees and gun violence—how much is true and how much myth?
- The gender dimension of gun violence—how do men and women experience violence, the same or different?
- We need to work cooperatively across sectors to establish a common agenda for research.

**GROUP 3: What should be the working agenda for a CARICOM Working Group?**

- It should be based on the foundation of the need to involve civil society in all security issues and there should be transparency in security matters.
- Decisions made at this workshop should be tabled at the CARICOM level and information forwarded to CARICOM members of the Security Committee. We should review the 2002 CARICOM report on Crime and Security and Section 4 on Firearms should be reviewed for gaps and updated.
- Connect the work on Security to the Human and Social Development pillar of CARICOM to provide a human security framework for SALW control and reduction, and the impact of SALW on the community and family.
- Reintroduction and legitimization of community policing throughout the region. This may require re-education of police services so community policing is not looked down on.
- Networking among workshop participants after this meeting should be facilitated by WINAD for information sharing and dissemination.

**Closing**

A statement was presented to the group as a consensus document from the participants at the workshop. **(See Appendix 3.)** WINAD and PP will prepare the report of the meeting, drawing on assistance from workshop participants as needed.

**From the working group reports we can identify the following elements for a Caribbean response to small arms proliferation and misuse:**

- **Thorough and transparent data acquisition at all points along the small arms chain;**
- **Policy-oriented research and analysis of causes and costs of gun violence;**
- **Harmonized control standards across the region;**
- **Collaboration among states and sectors, especially civil society;**
- **Attention to pertinent issues such as ammunition, gender, and ethnicity.**
- **Use of CARICOM structures and frameworks.**

## APPENDIX 1

Participants in international workshop, "Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse: Towards a Caribbean Plan of Action,"

March 5-6, 2008, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

	Name	Organization	E-mail
<b>Parliamentarians</b>			
1.	Senator Cemephise Gilles	Senate, Haiti	<a href="mailto:cemephise@voila.fr">cemephise@voila.fr</a>
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8.	Melissa Charles	Ministry of National Security, T & T	
9.	Magistrate Lucina Cardenas Ragoonan	Trinidad and Tobago	
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## APPENDIX 2



**WINAD AND PROJECT PLOUGHSHARES**  
**SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATION AND MISUSE: Toward a Caribbean Plan of Action**  
**March 5-6, 2008**  
**CROWNE PLAZA, PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

### **WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:**

1. To review the impacts of and responses to small arms diffusion and violence in the Caribbean;
2. To learn from the good practices in other affected regions that have developed regional approaches to gun violence;
3. To explore development of a CARICOM instrument to support implementation of the UN Programme of Action on small arms;
4. To develop a Caribbean research agenda.

### **Expected Outcomes**

1. Working Groups consisting of State agencies, parliamentarians, and civil society;
2. Draft CARICOM instrument on implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms;
3. Challenges and opportunities of regional instruments for implementation of the UN PoA explored and analyzed.

### **WORKSHOP AGENDA:**

#### **DAY ONE: 5 MARCH**

8:30            Registration  
                  Welcome and opening statement – WINAD

9:00 – 11:00 **Session 1**

Objective:    To review the impacts of and responses to small arms diffusion and violence in the Caribbean.

Reviewing the phenomenon: Gun violence in Caribbean  
- Roxanne Myers (Guyana)

- Senator Cemephise Gilles (Haiti)
- Moderator: Deborah McFee

Plenary discussion

**11:00 – 11:20 BREAK**

11:20 – 1:00 **Session 2**

Objective: To analyze the impact that regional and hemispheric agreements have on strengthening cooperation between States.

Review of relevant multilateral agreements and implementation

- Civil society analysis – CIFTA, CICAD Model Regulations, Antigua Declaration – Ken Epps (Project Ploughshares)
- Strengthening the regional approach – experience of Mercosur – Rangel Antonio Banderas (Viva Rio)
- Moderator: Folade Mutota

Plenary discussion

**1:00 – 2:30 LUNCH**

2:30 – 4:00 **Session 3**

Objective: To introduce grassroots approaches to violence prevention and a gender analysis of the violence.

Voices of Advocates

- Gary Grant (Laventille)
- Lawman Lynch (Jamaica)
- Ravi Lutchman (Trinidad Youth Council)
- Moderator: Kerwyn Aigle

Plenary discussion

**CLOSING FOR DAY**

**DAY TWO: 6 MARCH**

9:00 – 9:20 Welcome and Recap

9:20 – 11:00 **Session 4**

Objective: To learn from the good practices in other affected regions that have developed regional approaches to gun violence.

International and regional approaches

- A milestone regional process – the Nairobi Declaration and Protocol – Ochieng’ Adala (Africa Peace Forum)
- Key elements of regional approaches – Ken Epps (Project Ploughshares)
- Moderator: James Philbert, Ag Deputy Commissioner of Police

Plenary discussion

**11:00 – 11:20 BREAK**

Literature review of Caribbean studies on small arms proliferation and impact

- Keron King (Center for Criminology, UWI)

- Moderator: Folade Mutota

Plenary discussion

**1:00 – 2:30 LUNCH**

2:30 – 4:45

**Session 5**

Objective:

To explore development of a CARICOM instrument to support implementation of the UN Programme of Action on small arms.

Working groups

What should a CARICOM instrument contain?

What should be the priority areas for research?

What should be the working agenda for a CARICOM Working Group?

Group presentations and resolution

**4:45 – 5:00 CLOSING**

### APPENDIX 3

Port of Spain Declaration of the Regional Meeting of Civil Society Organisations and  
Parliamentarians on Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse:  
Towards a Caribbean Plan of Action  
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago  
March 5-6, 2008

Civil Society Organisations and Parliamentarians from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Brazil, Canada, Kenya, and Trinidad and Tobago met in Port of Spain, Trinidad to review the impacts of and responses to small arms diffusion and violence in the Caribbean; learn from the good practices in other affected regions that have developed regional approaches to gun violence; explore development of a CARICOM instrument to support 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; and develop a Caribbean research agenda.

Reaffirming that CARICOM Member States have recognized the value of the UN Programme of Action on Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons;

Recognising that CARICOM Member States are signatories to other multilateral instruments such as the 1997 CIFTA convention on firearms, the 2006 Antigua Guatemala Declaration of the Regional Preparatory Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean States and the 2006 Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development;

Applauding the establishment of the CARICOM Task Force on Crime and Security, now the CARICOM Implementation Agency on Crime and Security (IMPACS), and the 2002 report of the Task Force;

Taking note that the proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons threatens the ability of Caribbean states to meet their Millennium Development Goals;

Recognising that youth violence is a high-priority, high-visibility concern across the Caribbean;

Acknowledging that youth are disproportionately represented in the incidence and severity of gun violence, especially young men, both as victims and as perpetrators of violent crimes;

Stressing that the impacts of illicit small arms and light weapons use in the Caribbean argue for a shared regional response;

Recognising that the equality of men and women is a de jure reality and that actual experience is different;

Stressing that CARICOM Member States could boost annual economic growth per capita if they were to bring their homicide rates down;

Recognising that not only have levels of crime and violence increased, but so too has the use of small arms in criminal acts;

Acknowledging that the most common crimes perpetrated by minors are petty theft, use of drugs, and assault and that arrests for homicide and illegal small arms have experienced the most consistent growth;

Stressing that gender must be central to the analysis undertaken since the lives of Caribbean men and women are influenced by the gender disparities and structural inequalities that persist in many facets of Caribbean life;

Acknowledging that such inequalities act as vectors for many of the social ills that challenge regional development, and that such inequity and inequality are manifest in several social ills that are exacerbated by crosscutting factors such as race and class;

Bearing in mind that a CARICOM declaration should contain a concrete and coordinated agenda for action to promote human security;

Recalling the centrality of ammunition in small arms misuse in the region;

Stressing the need for adequate laws, regulations, and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the manufacturing, possession, import, export, and transshipment of small arms and light weapons and ammunition;

Recognizing the paucity of information on the proliferation and impact of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects;

Acknowledging the importance of reducing the demand for small arms and light weapons;

Recalling that civilian possession of small arms increases proliferation and misuse and that civilians should not have access to military-style weapons of any kind;

Acknowledging the important role that women play as change agents in community, national, and regional efforts to reduce small arms proliferation and to promote violence prevention;

Commit to collaboration between parliamentarians and civil society to respond to the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons;

Encourage CARICOM Member States to cooperate with international governments and civil society organisations to implement their commitments under all multilateral instruments relevant to the control and reduction in the misuse of small arms and light weapons;

Encourage CARICOM Member States to include ammunition in their small arms programming;

Call upon CARICOM Member States to develop an agreement to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects;

Express recognition and gratitude to the Women's Institute for Alternative Development and Project Ploughshares for their initiative in hosting this meeting;

Express recognition and gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Government of Canada for their technical and financial assistance in carrying out the meeting.

## APPENDIX 4

### CARICOM International Commitments on Small Arms MERCUSOR Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol

#### Caribbean International Commitments on Small Arms

CARICOM member states are signatories to the 2001 *United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects* (UN PoA), which identifies initiatives and activities required at the national, regional, and global levels. Yet, since 2001 only a third of CARICOM members have provided a national report on implementation of the PoA to the Office of Disarmament Affairs and only one state, Trinidad and Tobago, has provided more than one report.

A 2004 report by Trinidad and Tobago describes “regional efforts geared towards reducing crime” through two mechanisms: the CARICOM Task Force on Crime and Security and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS). The CARICOM Task Force report in 2002 contained 113 recommendations on research, collaboration between government and civil society, strategic interventions based on training and capacity-building, and a financing strategy for sustained funding. Many Task Force recommendations coincide with commitments arising from the UN Programme of Action.

CARICOM, as member states of the OAS, have obligations under the 1997 *Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing Of and Trafficking In Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials* (CIFTA). With the exception of Montserrat, all CARICOM members have since signed CIFTA. All but Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname have ratified the treaty, but only three of the 10 CARICOM states parties have reported a “Point of Contact” for cooperation and information exchange. Much remains to be done for CARICOM members to even minimally meet current obligations under agreed international instruments.

#### **Learning from Other Subregional Agreements on Small Arms**

In keeping with the UN PoA, a number of subregions affected by small arms violence have taken steps to advance regional action on small arms. These regions include the MERCOSUR states of Latin America and the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa Region of East Africa. CARICOM states could benefit from the experience and lessons learned of such subregions.

#### MERCOSUR

The MERCOSUR subregion contains states with some of the highest rates of gun violence in the world. A recent report has noted factors that are relevant to the issue of gun violence in MERCOSUR: the volume of legal imports into the region is high; the region’s geography is characterized by porous borders; and there is a high demand for arms as a result of gangs, drug dealers, and other illicit actors with large financial resources. Many countries in the subregion have legal systems not adequately equipped to deal with these problems and additionally often lack

enough judges, police officers, and professionals in the judicial and security sectors to enforce the laws that do exist.

The MERCOSUR region has produced its own instruments of small arms control. The *MERCOSUR Joint Mechanism for Registering Buyers and Sellers of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Related Materials* was the first subregional agreement on firearms. Since 2000, the *MERCOSUR Working Group on Firearms* has met every few months to strengthen regional cooperation on firearms issues and to harmonize relevant legislation across the region.

### The Nairobi Declaration

In East Africa the 2000 *Nairobi Declaration* on illicit small arms calls for a “concrete and co-ordinated agenda for action” in the subregion to promote human security. It is worth noting that the declaration gives particular attention to the *civilian possession* of small arms and light weapons, an important concern that was regrettably omitted from the UN Programme of Action. The declaration also emphasizes the need for control of the *transfer* of small arms and light weapons. Given the history of the subregion, this largely means effective control of arms transfers by supplier states outside the region. The declaration notes that “source countries” should ensure that all manufacturers, traders, and brokers are subject to regulation through licensing.

The *Nairobi Protocol*, in contrast to the Nairobi Declaration, is a legally binding subregional agreement that was subsequent to the UN Programme of Action. Signed in 2004 by 11 states, the Nairobi Protocol is a stronger instrument than both the Nairobi Declaration and the UN Programme of Action, not least because it is a legally binding commitment rather than a political agreement. It includes key provisions omitted from the UN Programme of Action, such as important measures to control civilian possession of small arms and light weapons, including explicit prohibition of civilian possession of semi-automatic and automatic rifles and machine guns and all light weapons. The *Best Practice Guidelines* for implementation of the Nairobi Protocol cover five major areas of work related to the prevention and amelioration of armed violence: stockpile management and disposal, small arms transfer controls, tracing and brokering of weapons, public awareness and education, and legislative measures and assistance.