

Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse

Toward a Caribbean Plan of Action

A JOINT PUBLICATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
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Women's Institute for Alternative Development
11 Meyler Street
Belmont
Trinidad and Tobago, W.I.
Ph/Fax:(868) 621-2495



Project Ploughshares
57 Erb Street West
Waterloo, Ontario / Canada N2L 6C2
(519) 888-6541 / Fax: (519) 888-0018
plough@ploughshares.ca / www.ploughshares.ca

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Executive Summary

Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse

In a 2007 report, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank note that murder rates in the Caribbean—at 30 per 100,000 population annually—are higher than for any other region of the world. Understandably, mounting fatalities from illegal weapons worry Caribbean policymakers and citizens alike. In the last two years, at least six Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Member States have held general elections in which crime and security were central issues.

The proliferation of illegal small arms threatens the ability of Caribbean states to meet their Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As the World Bank (2007) states, “high rates of crime and violence in the Caribbean are undermining growth, threatening human welfare, and impeding social development.” Crime and violence have become development issues in the Caribbean.

A major factor in the surge of gun-related criminality is the trafficking of narcotics. Illicit drugs are transhipped through the region from South America to North America and there is a linked movement of illegal weapons from North America to several destinations in the Caribbean. At the same time, the rise of crime has been characterized by the increased use of more powerful weapons, resulting in higher mortality levels. Caribbean countries exhibit crime patterns similar to those of other countries where low economic growth has coincided with large populations of young men.

The Latin America and Caribbean region boasts the highest homicide rate of men between the ages of 15 and 29 in the world, more than three times greater than the global average. Indeed, youth violence is a high-priority, high-visibility concern across the Caribbean. Youth are disproportionately represented in the incidence and severity of gun violence, both as victims and perpetrators, and violent crimes are being committed at younger ages in many countries.

A wide variety of risk factors contribute to the prevalence of youth violence, including poverty, youth unemployment, large-scale migration to urban areas, drug trafficking, a weak education system, ineffective policing, the widespread availability of weapons, drug and alcohol use,

and the presence of organized gangs. Deaths and injuries from youth violence constitute a major public health, social, and economic problem across the Caribbean.

Much of the work that seeks to reveal the use and impact of small arms and light weapons in the region has highlighted the masculine perpetrator and victim. Although this is a legitimate sphere of inquiry, it is important to recognize that a more integrated approach is required. The lives of Caribbean men and women are influenced by the gender disparities and structural inequalities that persist in many facets of Caribbean life. In a post-“structurally adjusted” Caribbean region, and as a result of shifting trading arrangements, there remains the persistent challenge of positioning the economies of the region to address the growing levels of poverty. Over the years, the larger economic shifts have seen the growth of the commoditization of violence, which speaks to the fact that an increasing number of citizens have had to rely on criminal violence of various kinds to survive.

Toward a Caribbean Plan of Action

CARICOM member states are politically bound by 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 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 UN Office of Disarmament Affairs and only one state, Trinidad and Tobago, has provided more than one report.

The 2004 report by Trinidad and Tobago describes “regional efforts geared towards reducing crime” through two mechanisms: the CARICOM Taskforce on Crime and Security and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS). The CARICOM Taskforce 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 Taskforce recommendations coincide with commitments arising from the UN Programme of Action.

CARICOM member states are also members of the Organization of American States. In 1997 the OAS adopted the 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.

In keeping with the UN PoA, which encourages regional initiatives, 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 South 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.

The MERCOSUR subregion contains states with some of the highest rates of gun violence in the world. A recent report (Dreyfus et al 2003) 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 that are not adequately equipped to deal with these problems and also 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.

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, regrettably, was omitted from the

UN PoA. 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 PoA. Signed in 2004 by 11 states, the Nairobi Protocol is a stronger instrument than either the Nairobi Declaration or the PoA. 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. 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.

The 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, some elements are necessary in an effective and comprehensive instrument. These elements should be based on the specifics of the illicit firearms problem in the Caribbean region, on the existing commitments of CARICOM member states, and on the experiences of other regions.

The instrument should reference Caribbean issues and concerns with respect to illicit trafficking and use of small arms that give rise to the need for a regional response. 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. Other multilateral agreements and instruments signed by Caribbean states are also pertinent. Finally, a CARICOM instrument would need to set out commitments for small arms control that reflect the particular conditions, concerns, and capacities of Caribbean states. These could include a coordinated agenda for action with civil society, a working group on small arms issues, and the harmonization of relevant national legislation and action plans.

The Caribbean, Small Arms, and Gun Violence

Caribbean societies have the distinction of receiving illegal small arms at a rate that has consistently increased over the last decade, despite numerous costly and varied interventions by governments. The uniqueness of the Caribbean situation is linked to the twinning of narcotics and illegal guns. The situation that exists between Jamaica and Haiti, in which illegal drugs are traded for illegal weapons, is a worrying development for law enforcement agencies, since the precedent could encourage other interregional trading in drugs and guns.

Supplies of illicit small arms and drugs are made available by the porous borders of the region. The established supply routes are well known but not well patrolled because of resource constraints suffered by all countries. A recent report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank, *Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean* (2007, ch. 9), refers to Haiti and Jamaica as the regional distribution sources that move illicit weapons southwards throughout the Caribbean; and Suriname, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago as the distribution points that provide routes in the opposite direction. St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Martinique are yet another grouping, while St. Vincent, Antigua, and St. Marten form an eastern Caribbean arrangement.

The UNODC/World Bank report also notes that small arms are manufactured legally in several Latin American countries and smuggled from countries such as Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic into the archipelago. Weapons from the United States and Canada also are transported southward following the sale of the illegal drugs that make their way through the Caribbean from South and Central America to North America.

Mounting fatalities from illegal weapons, especially among young men, worry Caribbean policymakers and citizens alike. In the last two years, at least six CARICOM Member States have held general elections. Crime and security were priorities in each of these elections; some analysts suggest that these issues were key to the demise of several governments. The illicit trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons are widespread in the region and have taken a development toll.

Small Arms and Development

In the Caribbean, the proliferation of illegal small arms threatens the region's ability to meet its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Failure to meet these goals will impose intractable difficulties related to high levels of social and economic decay and recalcitrant populations. The combination of small arms availability and demand in the region presents a discouraging scenario for a region characterized by vitality and creativity. As then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (1999) said,

The proliferation of small arms, and munitions and explosives has also aggravated the violence associated with terrorism and organized crime. Even in societies not beset by civil war, the easy availability of small arms has in many cases contributed to violence and political instability. These, in turn, have damaged development prospects and imperilled human security in every way.

In June 2006, government ministers and representatives from 42 countries representing all regions of the world agreed to The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. Jamaica represented the Caribbean region. The meeting agreed to promote active partnerships among governments, international organizations, and civil society. The Declaration signatories “will strive to achieve, by 2015, measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence and tangible improvements in human security worldwide” (p. 2).

The Geneva Declaration approach, linking armed violence and development, is relevant to the Caribbean, where crime and violence are development issues. This position has been articulated in several regional discussions at the government and civil society levels and was reinforced in the 2007 UNODC/World Bank report. Caroline Anstey, World Bank Director for the Caribbean, noted, “The report clearly shows that crime and violence are development issues” (World Bank 2007). It also reveals that “high rates of crime and violence in the Caribbean are undermining growth, threatening human welfare, and impeding social development” (World Bank 2007).

Because CARICOM views security in the region as a multidimensional phenomenon, it has been designated a fourth pillar of the Community. At the 2007 “Conference on the Caribbean: 2020 Vision” held in

Washington, DC, CARICOM governments and the Caribbean Diaspora Community identified crime and violence as barriers to economic development in the region:

Growing rates of crime and gun violence are a substantial barrier to economic development in the Caribbean, and one of the factors leading to high emigration of skilled persons from the Region. Intense collaborative efforts should be made with the US Government to limit the drug trade, to decrease export of guns from the US to the Caribbean, and to develop programmes in the Caribbean to address rising crime and violence. These efforts should include promotion of poverty reduction, greater family cohesion, and more effective methods to promote competency-based education and to reduction of delinquency. (Harris 2007, p. 8)

The UNODC/World Bank report (p. viii) also notes:

The impact of crime on overall economic growth can also be estimated using cross-country panel data. Results from this kind of analysis suggest very large potential gains from reduction in violence for Haiti and Jamaica. Both countries could boost annual economic growth per capita by 5.4 percent if they were to bring their homicide rates down to the levels of Costa Rica. Guyana and the Dominican Republic would also benefit substantially, with potential growth rate increases of 1.7 percent and 1.8 percent, respectively.

Small Arms and Crime

In a 2007 report, UN-Habitat (p. vi) claims that, in the 20 years from 1980 to 2000, world crime rates increased by about 30 per cent, from 2,300 to over 3,000 crimes per 100,000 people. “Over the past five years, 60 per cent of all urban residents in developing countries have been victims of crime.”

The fear of crime and violence is pervasive in both developed and developing countries.

According to the UNODC and World Bank (2007, p. iv), murder rates in the Caribbean—at 30 per 100,000 population annually—are higher than for any other region of the world and have risen in recent years for many

of the region’s countries. Assault rates, at least based on assaults reported to police, are also significantly above the world average. “The data for several countries shows that not only have levels of crime and violence increased, but so too has the use of weapons in criminal acts. The profile of these incidents has also changed, with increased use of more powerful weapons resulting in higher mortality levels” (UNODC & World Bank 2007, pp. viii-ix). The escalating violence in the region has introduced a level of fear and insecurity never before experienced. This violence has resulted in traumatized families and communities in a state of siege. Law enforcement has been seriously challenged by the new wave of rapid and senseless killing.

A most disturbing reality is that young people are also disproportionately represented in the incidence and severity of this trend, both as victims and as perpetrators. Moreover, violent crimes are being committed at younger ages in many countries.

During the last decade, a number of Caribbean countries have experienced a steady increase in gun use in the commission of violent crimes. This problem is particularly acute in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana, but is not restricted to these countries. The September 2002 report of the CARICOM Task Force on Crime and Security on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Caribbean “identified three levels of SALW proliferation in the region: countries with *established* high levels and patterns of armed crime (Jamaica), countries with *emerging* high levels of armed and organized criminality (Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago), and countries with *indications of increased use* and availability of small arms (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) (UNODC/World Bank 2007. p. ix).

While this section aims to provide an overview of the extent of violence—in particular armed violence—in the region, data for all states is not available. Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, for which data is available, are used as examples.

Jamaica

Jamaica has a current population of less than 3 million. During the five-year period 2003-2007, there were 7,034 murders, 5,325 of which were committed with the use of firearms. This means that 76 per cent of murder victims were killed with guns. During the same period, there were

9,630 robberies; guns were used in 6,932 of these crimes, or in 72 per cent of the robberies. In comparison, in 1999, guns were used in 549 of the 849 murders (65 per cent) and in 1,634 of the 2,392 robberies (68 per cent).¹

The 2004 data for accused perpetrators and victims of gun murders reveals the demographic and gender concentration of gun violence in Jamaica. Figures 1 and 2 (UNODC 2008) illustrate gender and age numbers per 100,000 population for arrestees and victims of gun murders respectively. In both cases, the overwhelming majority of those at both ends of the gun are male and young, between the ages of 15 and 40.

Figure 1

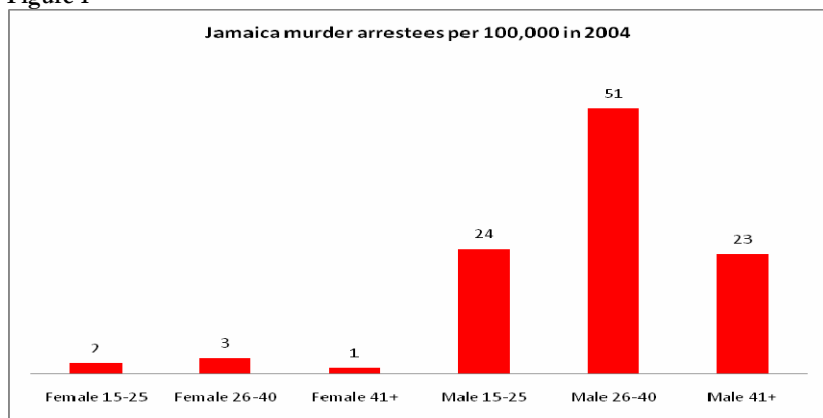
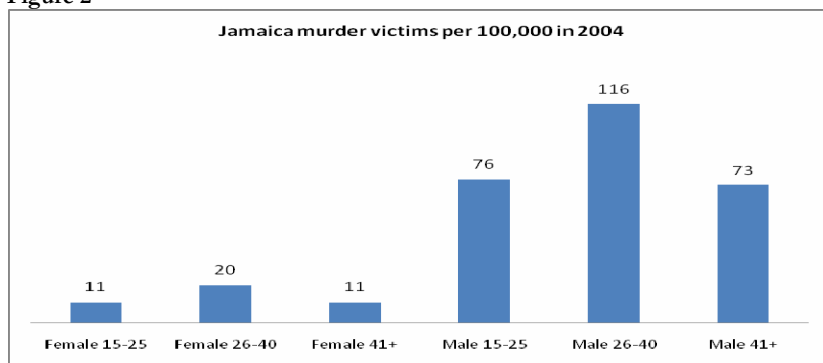


Figure 2



In 2007 in Jamaica 1,574 people were murdered, an average of four murders each day. Access to weapons (mainly guns) and poor conflict

resolution skills play major roles in many of the murders and violence-related injuries.

In an effort to stem the tide of violence caused by the easy availability and accessibility of firearms, the Jamaican authorities focus their efforts on tracing the sources of the illegal arms that have been seized, mount interdiction efforts on areas used as conduits, and pay special attention to the local markets and gang activities in Jamaica.

According to figures from the Jamaica Constabulary Force, on average, 631 firearms have been recovered in each of the last five years. Weapons are concealed in open areas/grounds, in houses and other premises, and in a variety of vehicles. Authorities note the existence of a thriving “gun for drugs trade” between Jamaica and the following:

Haiti

- Availability of low-cost, low-quality marijuana in Jamaica and high demand for guns
- Availability of guns and high demand for marijuana in Haiti.

Colombia

- Long believed that guns that come in through this vector are solely for protection while at sea and then left in Jamaica
- However, seizures have shown otherwise
- Larger quantities than would be necessary for protection
- Many high-powered weapons
- Usually new weapons.

Honduras

- Most recently identified vector
- Intelligence picture not yet fully understood
- Honduran fishermen diversify operations by satisfying the high demand for weapons in Jamaica.

Trinidad and Tobago

In Trinidad and Tobago, trafficking in narcotics has been noted as a major factor in the increasing availability of and accessibility to firearms and the consequent rise in armed violence. As in the rest of the region, firearms that are required to protect contraband during transportation are smuggled along with drugs. Unlike the illicit drugs, the weapons not

destined for North American or European consumer markets and remain in the country to satisfy an ever increasing demand.

A pattern of steadily increasing violence has been noted in the last decade. “Before 2000, firearms were responsible for less than one-third of all homicides. By May 2006, this percentage had risen to 74 percent” (UNODC/World Bank 2007, p. 129). In 2001, 82 of 151 murders (54 per cent) were committed with the use of firearms. For the period January-May 2006, 123 of 166 murders (74 per cent) were committed with the use of firearms (UNODC/World Bank 2007, p. 129). Many other serious crimes also involve the use of guns (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Proliferation of firearms in serious crimes in Trinidad and Tobago (total population) (UNICEF 2007)

| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 (to 23 April) |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------|
| Homicides | 195 | 272 | 269 | 51 |
| Robberies/Aggrav. | 426 | 1,634 | 2,039 | 461 |
| Shooting | 122 | 121 | 144 | 53 |
| Robbery/Violence | 347 | 407 | 490 | 117 |
| Wounding/Intent | 125 | 299 | 510 | 48 |
| TOTAL | 2,205 | 2,733 | 3,452 | 730 |

The fact that most victims of gun violence are men, especially young men, has been attributed to the existence of gangs and related gang rivalry. A brief examination at the phenomenon of gangs reveals that the perpetrators and victims belong to the same demographic group between 15 and 30 years of age. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this gang culture is present in school population throughout the country.

Even in the traditionally more peaceful islands of the Caribbean, violence—in particular, armed violence—has been on the increase. In the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States—Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines—the average murder rate rose sharply from 15.7/100,000 in 2004 to 19.9/100,000 in 2007, despite relatively strong economic growth and falling (Economist Intelligence Unit 2008).

Gender and Gun Violence

The Caribbean is not in an active state of war; the overt use of small arms and light weapons, then, is a direct product of the socio-cultural, socio-

economic, and political realities playing out in the lives of different groups of people. Therefore any attempt to discuss the social reality of the excessive use and misuse of small arms should be informed by the ways in which gender norms shape this interaction. Such an understanding is imperative because at the heart of the pervasive social context is the fact that “gender is a way in which social practice is ordered” (Connell 1995, p. 71).

Gender should be understood in the context of the conduct of everyday life and its organization. “Gender is used to describe those characteristics of women and men, which are socially constructed, while sex refers to those which are biologically determined. People are born female or male but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. This learned behaviour makes up gender identity and determines gender roles” (WHO 2002, Annex 1). Gender identity influences all aspects of our lives—our thinking, our interactions, and our life chances. Gender affects the lives of both men and women.

Issues of gender are important to an organization such as WINAD because, in the Caribbean context, although equality of men and women is a de jure reality, actual experience is different. To ensure that the work of organizations such as WINAD remains relevant to lived reality, gender must be central to the analysis undertaken. The lives of Caribbean men and women are influenced by the gender disparities and structural inequalities that persist in many facets of Caribbean life. These inequalities act as vectors for many of the social ills that challenge development. Inequity and inequality are manifest in earnings, the likelihood of poverty, the risk of violence, and opportunities for advancement. Inequities are exacerbated within the region when crosscutting factors such as race and class are added to the analysis.

Much of the work to reveal the use and impact of SALW in the region has highlighted the masculine perpetrator and victim. Although this is a legitimate space of inquiry, it is important to recognize that the view is unbalanced. A more integrated approach requires an understanding that “masculinity does not exist except in contrast with femininity” (Connell 1995, p. 68). This understanding is important to deepen the discourse on reducing the violence and movement of these weapons.

To date, much of the investigation has examined the place of a working-class representation of masculinity within the larger context of the

movement of small arms. This representation draws on particular trends that are seen in the movement of SALW within the region. In a post-“structurally adjusted” Caribbean region, and as a result of shifting trading arrangements, there remains a persistent challenge in positioning the economies of the region to address growing levels of poverty. The larger economic shifts have seen the growth of the commoditization of violence, in the Caribbean and in such countries as South Africa. In both situations an increasing number of citizens have had to rely on criminal violence of various kinds to secure a livelihood (Cock 2004, p. 5).

A sense of the phenomenon comes from examining statistics. “Between 1982 and 1997, the homicide rate more than doubled in Jamaica; from 2003 to 2005 alone, the homicide rate rose from 36 to 58 per 100,000, before falling to 49 per 100,000 in 2006” (UNODC/World Bank 2007, p. 8). In Jamaica, as in other territories² struggling to come to terms with the growth of violence and the use of small arms and light weapons, there are some persistent trends. These trends include the following:

- While the violence is not confined to urban areas or poor people, violent crime tends to be geographically concentrated in poor urban communities. “In Jamaica, wealthier household are much more likely to experience property crime (robbery and the theft of agricultural goods), while poorer households are more at risk to be victims of all violent crime. Additionally, households in poorer areas, even after controlling for the household-level consumption, suffer higher risk of murder and wounding” (UNODC/World Bank 2007, p. 35).
- Both victims and perpetrators of violent crime tend to be young men who either unemployed or underemployed (Special Task Force on Crime 2006, p. 8).

In recent years the ease of access of small arms throughout the region has created for many young men within the poor communities a powerful masculinity/militarism nexus (Cock 1992). Guns evoke contested social meanings and identities, with the resultant violence a part of a system of domination controlled by young males. It is important to note that the gun culture that has evolved is not a fixed, ahistorical entity, but is based on a set of highly heterogeneous resources that are used selectively by members of different groupings.

CARICOM and International Action on SALW

The persistent and lethal impact of the small arms plague in the region has forced Caribbean decision-makers to align CARICOM with the global movement to control the spread of weapons. CARICOM states have made important commitments as part of their participation in a number of global and regional instruments intended to reverse the dire consequences of the illicit trafficking and use of small arms. These instruments include the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA), agreed in New York in 2001.

The UN Programme of Action on Small Arms

The UN PoA was approved following a meeting of UN member states that were gravely concerned about the humanitarian and socioeconomic effects of the illicit trade in small arms on children, women, the elderly, and other disadvantaged populations, as well as the link between trafficking in drugs and trafficking in small arms. In its attempts to reduce the human suffering caused by the illicit small arms trade, the PoA recognizes the rights and responsibilities of governments to provide security for their populations:

Believing that Governments bear the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and, accordingly, should intensify their efforts to define the problems associated with such trade and find ways of resolving them. (I:13)

Cooperation with civil society is encouraged in the PoA to ensure coordination, partnerships at all levels, and synergy in the varied efforts, including action-oriented research, to deal with the illicit trade in small arms through the implementation of the PoA.

CARICOM member states are politically bound by the UN PoA, which identifies initiatives and activities required at the national, regional, and global levels. At the national level, the PoA tasks UN member states with, inter alia, establishing a national point of contact “to act as liaison between States on matters relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action.” As shown by Table 2, to date seven Caribbean

states, fewer than half of CARICOM members, have designated a national point of contact and notified the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs. Similarly, the PoA calls for national coordination agencies or bodies “responsible for policy guidance, research and monitoring” of efforts to control small arms trafficking and misuse. Yet, as of the 2006 PoA Review Conference, only one CARICOM member state, Haiti, had reported a national coordination mechanism.³ Although fewer than half of states worldwide have established national coordination mechanisms (90 in total), the situation in the Caribbean is markedly low and suggests a significant subregional disengagement from the UN PoA process. This view is reinforced by the fact that 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.

Similarly, Jamaica, which sat on the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on tracing illicit small arms, is the only country from the region represented on any of the major committees set up to explore the various aspects of the PoA. Two related recent UN expert groups—the GGE on Ammunition and the GGE on the Arms Trade Treaty—also did not have CARICOM representation, although ammunition, in particular, is a major source of concern for CARICOM. By not participating in these groups, the region has once more missed the opportunity to provide expertise on a matter of regional interest.

The submitted national reports document national-level implementation of the UN Programme of Action by a minority of CARICOM member states. The reports range from one-page submissions on relevant national activities and legislation by Barbados and Grenada to more extensive discussions of national action by Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica. The brief 2003 report by Barbados outlines the “fight against crime” and possession of illegal firearms, noting that the passage of the Firearms Act provides for additional and harsher penalties for illegal possession. The Grenada report states that the island has no armament industry nor SALW stockpiles; that the possession of or trade in firearms requires a license; and that permits are required to import or transship weapons.

Table 2: CARICOM member states and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms

| CARICOM member state | Report on implementation of UN PoA | | | | | | National Point of Contact 2007 |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|
| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | |
| Antigua & Barbuda | | | | | | | Yes |
| The Bahamas | | | | | | | |
| Barbados | | Yes | | | | | Yes |
| Belize | | | | | | | |
| Dominica | | | | | | | |
| Grenada | | | Yes | | | | Yes |
| Guyana | | | | | | | |
| Haiti | | Yes | | | | | Yes |
| Jamaica | | | | Yes | | | Yes |
| Montserrat | | | | | | | |
| St. Kitts & Nevis | | | | | | | Yes |
| St. Lucia | | | | | | | |
| St. Vincent & the Grenadines | | | | | | | |
| Suriname | | | | | | | |
| Trinidad & Tobago | | Yes | Yes | | | | Yes |

Source: UNODA 2008

In addition to providing some analysis of the firearms problem within the state and the region, the 2003 and 2004 reports by Trinidad and Tobago outline national legislation and administrative procedures relevant to implementation of the UN PoA. These include the Firearms (Amendment) Act assented to in 2004 which, inter alia, requires all imported firearms to be marked by the manufacturer, and disqualifies persons convicted of domestic violence from firearm possession for five years. They also include the Anti-Personnel Mines Act of 2000, which is “the only piece of local legislation enforcing an international disarmament convention” (Trinidad and Tobago, 2004, p. 6). The Trinidad and Tobago reports go on to identify national technical and other assistance required to implement the PoA under the heading “Implementation, international cooperation and assistance.”

Similarly, the 2005 report by Jamaica identifies national concerns—in particular, the connection between illicit small arms and illicit drugs—as well as national measures, including seven pieces of relevant legislation that at the time were under debate by parliament. The Jamaica report welcomed “increased international aid and assistance to help reduce the

inflow of these weapons in order to bolster the capacity of the country to deal with this problem.”

The UN PoA also calls for initiatives at the regional level. The more detailed reports to the UN by CARICOM members identify the key organizations and instruments that make up the regional response to small arms proliferation and misuse. The 2004 report by Trinidad and Tobago describes “regional efforts geared towards reducing crime” through two mechanisms: the CARICOM Taskforce on Crime and Security and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS). The CARICOM Taskforce presented its first report in 2002 to the CARICOM Heads of Government Conference. The Taskforce report 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 of the recommendations, particularly those categorized under the “Illegal Firearms” section, coincide with commitments arising from the UN PoA. In other instances, the Taskforce recommendations go beyond the PoA, including, for example, a call to “limit civilian access to weapons manufactured for military use.”

Regional Commitments

CARICOM member states are also members of the Organization of American States. In 1997 the OAS adopted the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing Of and Trafficking In Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA). As its title indicates, CIFTA is intended to address illicit firearms manufacturing and trafficking across the Americas, including within the Caribbean. Although its scope does not include all firearms transfers (it excludes government-to-government transfers), the convention contains a number of important legal requirements of states parties to create or strengthen firearms controls in CARICOM and the other subregions of the hemisphere. These include:

- Legislation to criminalize acts of illicit manufacture of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives, and related materials;
- Appropriate markings during the manufacture and as part of the importing of firearms;
- An effective system of export, import, and transit licensing; and

- Recordkeeping to trace and identify illicit weapons.

In addition, the treaty calls for collaborative state action on illicit firearms manufacture and trade, including:

- Confidential sharing of information, including smuggling routes;
- A national point of contact for liaison and to facilitate cooperation;
- Provision of technical assistance for relevant capacity building;
- Programs to share experience and for training; and
- Cooperation on law enforcement (Schroeder 2004, pp. 15-17).

To assist with the implementation of CIFTA the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the OAS has developed model regulations for international commercial movement of firearms and for firearms brokering. These model regulations are intended to guide the policy and practice of OAS member states, including CARICOM members.

With the exception of Montserrat, all CARICOM members have signed CIFTA. All but Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname have ratified the treaty, although only three of the 10 CARICOM states parties have reported a “Point of Contact” for cooperation and information exchange (see Table 3).

Although not cited in CARICOM member reports on PoA implementation, an important regional perspective and commitment to small arms action emerged in the 2006 Antigua Guatemala Declaration of the Regional Preparatory Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean States for the UN Review Conference on the PoA. The Antigua Guatemala Declaration reiterated the fundamentals of the PoA, including the need for international cooperation, the importance of the work of civil society, and the importance of minimum standards for the safety and security of small arms stockpiles.

Table 3: CARICOM states participation in multilateral firearms instruments

| CARICOM member state | CIFTA | | | UN Firearms Protocol ^o | |
|---|---------|-----------|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| | Signed* | Ratified* | Contact Point* | Signed | Ratified |
| Antigua & Barbuda | 1997 | 2003 | Yes | | |
| The Bahamas | 1998 | 1998 | Yes | | |
| Barbados | 2001 | 2004 | | Yes | |
| Belize | 1997 | 1997 | | | |
| Dominica | | 2004 | | | |
| Grenada | 1997 | 2001 | | | Yes |
| Guyana | 1997 | | n/a | | |
| Haiti | 1997 | 2007 | | | |
| Jamaica | 1997 | | n/a | Yes | Yes |
| Montserrat | | | | | |
| St. Kitts & Nevis | 1997 | 2004 | | | Yes |
| St. Lucia | 1998 | 2003 | | | |
| St. Vincent & the Grenadines | 1997 | | n/a | | |
| Suriname | 1997 | | n/a | | |
| Trinidad & Tobago | 1998 | 2004 | Yes | Yes** | |
| *Sources: OAS-CIFTA website; Summary of Country Compliance with CIFTA, OEA/ser.L/XXII.4.2, 8 Feb 2008 | | | | | |
| "Contact Point" for cooperation and information exchange. | | | | | |
| ^o Source: International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) | | | | | |
| **According to Trinidad and Tobago 2004. | | | | | |

The Declaration committed the Latin American and Caribbean states to not only implement the politically binding international instrument on marking and tracing small arms and light weapons, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005, but also to work toward a legally binding instrument. The Declaration reflected the views and concerns of the region, noting that “crime prevention must ... be an integral part of the approach to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.” Going beyond PoA commitments, the Declaration called for a legally binding instrument on brokering, for common criteria for the authorization of small arms transfers,⁴ and for regulations on the civilian acquisition and possession of small arms.

CARICOM states have made important multilateral commitments to end the proliferation and misuse of small arms. Implementation of the PoA, in particular, is vital to Caribbean interests. The need for resource

mobilization and expertise to pursue this goal cannot be overstated as CARICOM takes its place among nations plagued by armed conflict and violent crime and resolute in their resolve to eradicate the scourge.

Lessons from Other Regions

In keeping with the UN PoA, which encourages regional initiatives, a number of subregions affected by small arms violence have taken steps to advance regional action on small arms. These subregions 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 these subregions.

The experience of MERCOSUR

The MERCOSUR subregion⁵ includes states with some of the highest rates of gun violence in the world. Brazil, Venezuela, and associate member state Colombia experience armed violence on a major scale, the first two as urban violence, and the last as a combination of urban violence and armed conflict. Across MERCOSUR gun violence is linked to youth gangs and drugs. Many states are involved in the hemispheric cycle of narco-trafficking north and arms trafficking south.

A report on the subregion by the nongovernmental organization Viva Rio (Pérez Mellado 2007, pp. 10-11) has noted several regional factors that are relevant to the issue of gun violence and arms transfers. The report notes, “In the MERCOSUR region:

- The volume of ‘legal’ imports is high;
- The region’s geography is characterized by porous borders. There exist a large number of clandestine airports and small seaports that make it challenging to adequately control and monitor import and export activities.
- There is a high demand for arms as a result of gangs, drug dealers and other illicit actors that often have large financial resources enabling them to easily purchase weapons.
- Many countries in the region 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 member states are party to several multilateral instruments that are relevant to a subregional approach to reduce gun violence and control small arms and light weapons. In addition to political

commitment to the UN PoA, all MERCOSUR states have signed and ratified the hemispheric treaty, the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials—more commonly known by the Spanish acronym CIFTA. The MERCOSUR members have also signed the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons, although not all have ratified the treaty.⁶ The OAS transparency convention obliges states to annually report all transfers of the seven categories of convention weapons that states voluntarily report to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, as well as to make timely notifications of weapons acquisitions, including weapons produced domestically.

Some MERCOSUR members are party to other relevant multilateral instruments. Two member states, Argentina and Brazil, and one associate member, Peru, have ratified the Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, commonly referred to as the Firearms Protocol (Mack 2007, p. 10). Ecuador has signed the protocol, but not yet ratified. The Firearms Protocol is the third protocol to accompany the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime; it requires signatories to pass legislation criminalizing illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms; establish effective export control systems; and share information, technical experience, and training to enable cooperation in preventing illegal shipments of firearms. States parties must keep records for at least 10 years on their marking and transfer activities to assist the tracing of firearms across borders (Boese 2001). Like CIFTA, and as a component of an international convention, the Firearms Protocol is legally binding on states parties. As with CIFTA also, the scope of the Firearms Protocol is not comprehensive—it is intended to strengthen the regulation of commercial firearms manufacture and trade and does not extend to state transfers of small arms.

Argentina is the sole MERCOSUR member of the association of arms supplier states, the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies. Although the scope of the Wassenaar Arrangement involves all conventional weapons and dual-use goods, the supplier group has provided specific guidance on small arms transfers via the 2002 Best Practice Guidelines for Exports of Small Arms and Light Weapons. The guidelines include principles for export authorization decisions that are in keeping with the core principles proposed for the international Arms Trade Treaty.

Associate MERCOSUR members Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru have ratified the 2003 Andean Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects (the Andean Community's Decision 552). In recognition of the Andean states' commitments under the UN PoA, the Firearms Protocol, and CIFTA, Decision 552 provides a detailed action agenda on small arms. Indeed, Decision 552 is "comprehensive, ambitious, and binding," although to date its "implementation has been lagging severely" (Mack 2007, p. 13).

In addition to member participation in these multilateral initiatives, the MERCOSUR subregion 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. The Joint Mechanism arose from the 1998 Presidents' Declaration on Combating the Manufacturing of Illicit Trafficking in Arms, Ammunitions and Related Materials in the Southern Cone. To advance implementation of the mechanism, the subregional states developed a registry, the MERCOSUR Security Information Exchange System (SISME), intended for the exchange of data on purchasing, selling, importing, and exporting of firearms.

Since 2000, moreover, the MERCOSUR Working Group on Firearms has met every few months to strengthen subregional cooperation on firearms issues and harmonize relevant legislation across the subregion. The Working Group operates as both an information exchange and a platform for developing common positions in multilateral forums such as meetings of the OAS and the UN. The Working Group regularly liaises with civil society groups with expertise in relevant firearms issues such as national legislation.

In 2006, the meeting in Uruguay of the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino)—which includes representatives of parliaments from Latin America and the Caribbean—discussed framework legislation for the regulation of small arms and light weapons. The meeting documentation included a draft bill prepared by the Brazilian NGO, Viva Rio, in conjunction with a team of civil society group members of the Latin American Coalition for the Prevention of Armed Violence (CLAVE). The draft bill of 160 articles addressed the context of small arms proliferation and misuse in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bandeira 2006).

Nairobi Declaration and Protocol

The 2000 Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa is a subregional instrument in response to “easy availability” of illicit small arms that was agreed in advance of the 2001 UN Programme of Action. The political declaration expresses grave concern with the “devastating consequences” of the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, noting in particular their regional role in “sustaining armed conflict and abetting terrorism, cattle rustling and other serious crimes in the region.” The declaration was signed by 10 states.

The declaration calls for a “concrete and co-ordinated agenda for action” in the subregion to promote human security. It notes that all states in the subregion should have in place “adequate laws, regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the possession and transfer of small arms and light weapons.” Several measures are identified to advance such regulations and procedures.

It is worth noting that the declaration gives particular attention to the *civilian possession* of small arms and light weapons, an important concern which was regrettably omitted from the UN PoA agreed a year later. The declaration calls on signatory states to strengthen, adopt, coordinate, and publicize national laws to effectively regulate the possession of arms by civilians. It also endorses policies and measures to “create social, economic and political environments to reduce the resort to arms by individuals and communities.” In effect, the declaration calls for attention to the conditions that produce the demand for weapons.

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. It also reinforces the need for national controls, calling for action by signatories to monitor and control through licensing all small arms transactions. National licensing should be strengthened by subregional cooperation among security officials, including police and border control officials, typically the front-line agents in efforts to combat the illicit circulation and trafficking in small arms.

The Nairobi Declaration identifies other measures to assist more effective controls on the possession and transfer of small arms and light weapons. These include information-sharing in the region through research and data collection; the cooperation of the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, with respect to implementation of the declaration; and financial, technical, and political support from the international community.

The declaration was bolstered in the same year by an Implementation Plan that established a coordinated agenda for action among the state signatories. The Implementation Plan called for National Focal Points to coordinate each state’s response to the small arms problem. In addition, the plan included:

- National databases and communications systems to monitor and control the movement of small arms within the country and across borders;
- A regional agenda to coordinate a long-term sustainable response;
- Harmonization of, and minimum standards in, national regulations; and
- Capacity-building within states to verify, safely store, and control state stockpiles as well as weapons owned by private security companies and dealers.

As a result of the Implementation Plan, a Regional Secretariat to coordinate the regional action agenda was established in Nairobi, Kenya in 2002. The secretariat has since been upgraded to the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) (Adala 2007, p. 57).

The Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, 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 entered into force on May 5, 2006.⁸

The text of the Nairobi Protocol was informed by the Nairobi Declaration and the UN PoA. The preambles to both the Declaration and Protocol identify the impact of the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in the subregion of the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa. Several of the articles of the Nairobi Protocol reflect components

of the UN PoA, notably the articles on legislative measures, operational capacity, transfers, and brokering.

The Nairobi Protocol is a stronger instrument than both the Nairobi Declaration and the UN PoA, not least because it is a legally binding commitment rather than a political agreement. The Nairobi Protocol establishes common legislative and procedural standards across a region that has been severely affected by small arms and includes key provisions omitted from the UN PoA. Among the latter are important measures to control civilian possession of small arms and light weapons, including:

- A ban on civilian possession of semi-automatic and automatic rifles;
- Registration and centralized registration of all civilian-owned small arms;
- Competency testing of prospective small arms owners;
- Restrictions on the number of small arms that may be owned;
- A ban on the pawning of small arms;
- Accountability and control of weapons owned by private security companies;
- Programs to encourage voluntary surrender of small arms for destruction; and
- Harmonized, heavy minimum sentences for small arms crimes.

The Nairobi Declaration and Protocol process was advanced by the development of Best Practice Guidelines on Implementation of the Nairobi Protocol. The guidelines arose from a series of workshops held between September 2004 and April 2005 and hosted by RECSA in collaboration with civil society partners and National Focal Point coordinators. The guidelines were approved by a ministerial conference in June 2005. In July 2005, they were presented by RECSA to the Second Biennial Meeting of States on the UN Programme of Action on small arms (Adala 2007, p. 58).

The Best Practice Guidelines 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. The guidelines related to the “Import, Export, Transfer and Transit of SALW” are particularly noteworthy since they detail the obligations of signatories regarding licensing of arms transfers and provide important criteria for arms transfer authorization that closely

match the global principles proposed for an international Arms Trade Treaty.

Although many implementation challenges remain, not the least capacity-building across a range of arms control areas, the Nairobi Declaration and Protocol process has provided important lessons for any regional or subregional approach to small arms proliferation and misuse. These lessons include:

- States in regions affected by gun violence can come together to formulate a collective response—based on the conditions and needs of the region—to the illicit use and transfer of small arms and light weapons. Variations in social, economic, and political dynamics need not prevent a common regional approach to reducing and ending the devastation of weapons misuse.
- National laws and procedures will remain the frontline tools for the control of weapons, but common standards are necessary across a region. These prevent the weaker regulations of some states from undermining regulations of neighbouring states. Common agreed standards can also encourage all states in the region to improve their laws and practices.
- Regional instruments aid the implementation of the UN PoA on small arms. They also can stipulate objectives and standards that surpass the PoA, especially in those areas, such as civilian possession of firearms, where the PoA is notoriously weak.
- Regional instruments benefit, in turn, from global instruments. An international Arms Trade Treaty in particular would aid the implementation of regional agreements on small arms. An ATT would set global standards for the transfer of conventional weapons—including small arms and light weapons—to more effectively control the flow of weapons into, and within, regions affected by armed violence.
- Implementation of regional agreements provides opportunities for state and civil society collaboration and capacity building. These opportunities come in many forms. The nature and diffusion of small arms requires collaboration between government and civil society to mount an effective response. States may benefit from the implementation experiences of other states as well as from exchanges of technical and legal expertise. The implementation of regional agreements may also be the focus of international cooperation and assistance as stipulated in the UN PoA.

Next Steps: Conclusions and Recommendations

The CARICOM regional experience of gun violence, its members' obligations under a number of multilateral instruments, and recommendations of regional studies and analyses suggest that each CARICOM member state could and should take further steps to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trafficking and use of small arms and light weapons. As we have seen, in other affected regions, one or more regional instruments have proven beneficial to the implementation of national commitments on small arms and, in particular, commitments under the UN PoA. Moreover, the common pressing conditions and impact of illicit firearms use in the Caribbean argue for a regional instrument as a shared response.

Toward a Regional Instrument

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, it is worth noting the elements that would be necessary to make the instrument effective and comprehensive. Although these elements must be based on the specifics of the illicit firearms problem in the Caribbean region, they also need to draw on existing commitments, as well as the experiences of other regions.

Early in an instrument it would be important to reference the Caribbean issues and concerns with respect to illicit trafficking and use of small arms that give rise to the need for a subregional response. Research suggests that particular factors shared by all states in the region—such as unemployment levels among male youth—have shaped the regional rise in gun violence. Existing national and subregional policies point to common concerns in the region, including linkages between illicit firearms and illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in firearms components, and transshipment of firearms. Some identified common needs are crime prevention strategies, technical training of security services, and capacity building across a range of areas.

Given the key role now played by the UN Programme of Action in the international response to the global challenge of small arms proliferation and misuse, it seems prudent to ensure that the PoA is central to any Caribbean instrument on small arms. Indeed, full implementation of

relevant commitments in the UN PoA by CARICOM member states would likely result in significant reversals in the misuse of small arms and light weapons. Similarly, implementation of the OAS CIFTA firearms convention, a treaty ratified by the majority of CARICOM members, would meet many UN PoA requirements. The CICAD model regulations, intended for CIFTA implementation, are worthy of citation, including the model regulations for brokering. The multilateral and regional significance of both the PoA and CIFTA suggests that they are worthy of early reference in any regional instrument regarding small arms and light weapons.

Other multilateral agreements and instruments signed by Caribbean states are also pertinent. These include the Firearms Protocol of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the 2006 Antigua Guatemala Declaration of Latin America and Caribbean States. Of particular importance, given their origin and formulation in relation to the peculiar challenges of the Caribbean, are the “illegal firearms” recommendations by the CARICOM Regional Taskforce on Crime and Security.

Since subregions outside the Caribbean have developed important and relevant initiatives, it would be important to note the lessons and best practices to be learned from existing subregional instruments. These include especially the Nairobi Declaration and Protocol agreements of the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa subregion. Another recent pivotal African subregional agreement is the 2006 ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. Among many other requirements, this treaty establishes a presumption against small arms imports unless approved by the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat and calls for all states parties to formulate national action plans on small arms. Closer to the Caribbean, the MERCOSUR Joint Mechanism for Registering Buyers and Sellers of Firearms may be a model for a subregional data exchange mechanism.

Following recognition of the existing commitments and relevant instruments of other subregions, a CARICOM instrument would need to set out commitments for small arms control that reflect the particular conditions and concerns of the Caribbean. This process could begin by acknowledging the importance of shared objectives and approaches—for example, by calling for a coordinated agenda for action on illicit SALW. A CARICOM Working Group on SALW issues could formulate and update

an action agenda, as well as establish common positions for relevant multilateral forums. The agenda also could provide a mutually supportive approach to national action plans on small arms. Given the complexities of the small arms challenges in the region, the formulation and implementation of a coordinated action agenda would benefit from cooperation with civil society.

Table 4 identifies these and other elements of a possible CARICOM instrument on small arms and light weapons. Since it is the role of states to negotiate such instruments, the elements identified in the table are suggestions intended to support state discussion. The table is not comprehensive and makes no claim to establish all the relevant elements needed in an instrument. Moreover, during negotiations, experts undoubtedly would reveal new areas of emphasis and priority. Rather, the table provides a kind of checklist of existing commitments, worthwhile components of other subregional instruments, and previously identified areas of Caribbean concern.

Table 4: Elements of a CARICOM instrument on small arms and light weapons

Preamble:

- The Caribbean conditions and concerns related to illicit small arms trafficking and use;
- The importance of relevant multilateral agreements, particularly the UN PoA, CIFTA, CICAD Model Regulations, UN Firearms Protocol, the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development;
- The work of the CARICOM Taskforce on Crime and Security and its report recommendations;
- The best practices of other subregions, including relevant agreements.

Provisions:

- A coordinated agenda of action on illicit SALW, possibly including:
 - Working Group re. common positions
 - National action plans
 - Cooperation with civil society
 - Public awareness and education programs;
- Signing, ratifying, implementing multilateral agreements as appropriate, including establishing national contact points and national coordinating mechanisms;
- Harmonized effective national legislation and practice, using model regulations;
- Implementation of particular commitments of the UN PoA and CIFTA including:
 - National legislation on brokering, and marking and tracing
 - Programs for public awareness and voluntary firearms surrender
 - Destruction of surplus weapons
 - Effective border controls
 - Standardized data acquisition and information sharing;
- Implementation of additional commitments arising from subregional interests including:
 - National regulation of civilian possession of firearms
 - Banning civilian possession of military firearms
 - Controls on firearms components and ammunition;
- Other relevant commitments, such as:
 - Common principles for the import, export, and transshipment of SALW;
 - Gender analysis and programming.

International aspects:

- International cooperation and assistance to:
 - implement the coordinated agenda for action
 - technical training, including security sector training
 - capacity building, including within civil society;
- Relevant multilateral institutions (such as the World Bank) to support the integration of National Action Plans on small arms with Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, etc.;
- States that are SALW sources to more effectively control SALW manufacture, possession, stockpiling, and transfer and to work to prevent diversion.

Notes

1. The original figures come from the website of the Jamaica Constabulary Force.
2. Other territories include Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, which are similarly positioned, and Haiti, which grapples with weak state machinery and other novel factors that produce the ongoing proliferation of violence.
3. Although the Biting the Bullet document reported no national coordination mechanisms among the CARICOM states, the 2003 national report by Haiti identified a “National Commission on Disarmament” as the coordinating agency. During the March 2008 workshop, Trinidad and Tobago officials reported that Trinidad and Tobago had appointed a national coordination agency.
4. Also, “these common criteria must contain technical and normative aspects, and ... they need to be objective, non-discriminatory, transparent, adopted at the multilateral level and take into account the particularities of each region.”
5. The Mercado Comun del Sur (MERCOSUR) subregion consists of five member states—Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela—and five associate states—Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.
6. Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela have ratified the treaty. Brazil is in the process of ratification (see Mack 2007, p. 10).
7. Burundi, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.
8. In addition to the 10 state signatories to the Nairobi Declaration, Seychelles signed the Nairobi Protocol.

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PROJECT PLOUGHSHARES

57 Erb Street West

Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6C2

Canada

519-888-6541

Fax 519-888-0018

plough@ploughshares.ca

www.ploughshares.ca

