



Föreningen för Utvecklingsfrågor, FUF, är en politiskt och religiöst obunden organisation som arrangerar seminarier, debatter och konferenser om internationella frågor, med tonvikt på utvecklingsländer och utvecklingssamarbete. www.fuf.se

Small arms and development

Report from a seminar in April, 2007, Stockholm.

Armed violence and small arms proliferation curtails prospects for human development and the consolidation of democracy in the world. Is the picture as gloomy as this or are there signs of a brighter future ahead for developing and transitional societies? Speakers: Henrik Hammargren, Head of Division for Peace and Security in Development Cooperation, Sida, MP Joseph Nkessarry, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW and member of the Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum on Peace, Kenyan Chapter, Dr Siemon Wezeman, head of SIPRI Arms Transfer Research Team, Ana Martinovic, Coordinator for Western Balkans Parliamentary Forum on SALW-UNDP-SEESAC. Moderator: Peter Weiderud, General Secretary of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW.

The seminar examines crippling effect of small arms on development, looks for positive signs of change

Experts working in the Balkans, Europe and East Africa spoke at a seminar at the Swedish Parliament today to discuss the detrimental effects of small arms on development as well as to highlight paths to progress on the issue. Ambassadors, parliamentarians, non-governmental representatives and researchers attended the open event, sponsored by the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in cooperation with the Swedish Development Forum.

It is difficult to calculate the many costs that small arms have on developing societies, especially when it comes to indirect effects. With 70 countries producing the hundreds of millions of weapons circulating worldwide, the question is how do we tackle these problems — from the supply or demand side? Is proliferation the main problem or should we strengthen border controls, Henrik Hammargren, Head of the Division for Peace and Security at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency asked in his talk.

Highlighting the Eastern African perspective on small arms proliferation, Kenyan parliamentarian and Vice President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW Hon. Gen. Joseph Nkaisserry spoke on the importance of amnesty laws in providing incentives to hand over weapons, as well as better state controls to monitor the internal and external trade of weapons.

Yet, incentives and state controls fall short of erasing the power that guns and light weapons represent in societies. In Serbia, a common saying is "a house without a gun is not a home," Ana Martinovic Communications Officer at the South Easter and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms & Light Weapons (SEESAC) told the audience.

A fourth speaker brought up the complex, often hypocritical, relationships states have with each other when it comes to trading arms. Political and economic interests dictate state arms trade and keep governments from posing restraints on their own use and supply of weapons. These conditions make it hard to reach international agreements on small arms proliferation issues, said Dr Peter Wezeman, head of the Arms Transfer Research Team at Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).



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Despite the many obstacles, the speakers saw signs of a positive shift on the issues. Ten years ago advocates for small arms issues struggled to get these types of questions onto the agenda, but now, with the help of civil society, these issues are prioritized by leading politicians, said Mr. Hammargren.

There are also positive shifts towards women ' s engagement in politics and the small arms debate, said Hon. Gen. Nkaisserry who is also Chairperson of the Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum on Peace — Amani Forum. Female representation in the Amani Forum and the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, where the President is a woman, were great examples of this.

Dr Wezeman also noted a moral shift with more and more countries acknowledging the ethical dilemmas surrounding the arms trade, pointing to Ukraine and Bulgaria as examples of the growing will to restrain arms exports.

Christine Green, Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons

April 25, 2007 Stockholm, Sweden



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