

United Nations Regional Best and Promising Practices Seminar
on Armed Violence Reduction and Prevention
for South and Southeast Asia

Kathmandu, Nepal, 15 -18 March 2011



Representatives of 17 countries from South and Southeast Asia, as well as international and regional organizations, including the United Nations and civil society organizations were invited to Kathmandu, Nepal, from 15 to 18 March to document and distill best and promising practices and lessons learnt from experiences on armed violence reduction and prevention programmes within the South and Southeast Asia region and beyond. The seminar was preceded by a one-day preparatory workshop for civil society organizations from the region. The regional seminar was organized by the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) and co-hosted by the Government of Nepal with the support of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the UN Development Programme and Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development Secretariat, and with the financial support of the Government of Switzerland.

Officially opened by Hon. Barsaman Pun, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction of Nepal, the seminar addressed the intersection of armed violence and development and strengthened government commitments to develop armed violence reduction and prevention programmes in the region. With the support of regional and international experts, participants focused on topics related to armed violence, including youth, gender and urban and rural violence. Break out groups identified a catalogue of regional best and promising practices on armed violence reduction and prevention. They highlighted that the media can play a positive role in preventing and denouncing armed violence. Government cooperation with civil society organizations and the private sector is seen as another good practice as it has a large potential to deliver social services to reduce armed violence. Similarly, community based approaches such as local policing have successfully been employed to complement national capacities throughout the region. Participants also emphasised that reliable data on armed violence, and evidence and research-based policy making are key to implement concrete measures addressing armed violence reduction and prevention. This also requires ownership, responsibility and increased cooperation on a local, national but also regional level. Particular attention should be paid to the incorporation of a gender perspective.

The seminar proved to be a timely effort to address an urgent issue in South and Southeast Asia. It paved the way for increased efforts by actors in the region and served its purpose in increasing awareness of a complex issue, identifying best and promising practices and existing needs, fostering inter sectoral and inter regional cooperation, and outlining ways forward and mechanisms for assistance to reduce and prevent armed violence.