

**Statement by Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs  
on the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence, 15-21 June 2009**

Most conflicts today are fought with small arms and light weapons. They are the weapons of choice in civil wars and for terrorism, organized crime, and gang warfare. They also facilitate human rights violations, including killing and maiming, rape, enforced disappearance, torture, and forced recruitment of children by armed groups.

In response, States have committed themselves to a number of agreements, both globally and regionally, as a means to help control these deadly tools of violence. In the past year, hopeful signs include the positive outcome of the UN Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the increased attention to the nexus between armed violence and development, and the start of discussions in the UN on an Arms Trade Treaty. Yet agreements and meetings are meaningful only if they translate into results on the ground—and much remains to be done in that regard.

Civil society plays an indispensable role. In the case of small arms and light weapons, many civil society organizations—from local grass roots movements to large international action networks—have booked impressive results. They have done so through advocacy, assistance in improving legislation, development of disarmament education programmes, provision of victim assistance, and many other means.

The Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence should energise civil society and governments alike to intensify their efforts on curbing the excessive accumulation of small arms.

See also:

[UN Small Arms and Light Weapons website](#)

[IANSA Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence website](#)

