

**Statement by Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
on the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence, 13-19 June 2011**

Each day, armed violence wreaks havoc in villages, towns and cities across the world. This affects hundreds of thousands of women and men, girls and boys - including those fleeing from conflict, working the fields, trying to run a business without extortion, or tending children in urban slums.

Armed violence can flourish easily and become endemic where the availability of weapons is high, small arms controls are lax, and the rule of law is not upheld. Such circumstances would draw young men towards the illusionary gains from a criminal livelihood, resulting in the spread of fear, lawlessness and insecurity, and the denial of development opportunities to communities and whole regions.

This year we mark the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms. Yet despite a decade of its existence, armed violence still thrives. States are preparing to review this global agreement next year.

Meanwhile, negotiations have started at the United Nations towards an arms trade treaty, establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

Yet agreements and meetings are meaningful only if they translate into results that make a real difference in people's lives.

The Global Week of Action against Gun Violence reminds us of the continuing need to take concrete action, such as putting legislation in place, organizing weapons collection programmes, enhancing border controls, improving stockpile security, and developing community policing initiatives.

Such measures require close cooperation between government authorities and civil society. During this Week of Action against Gun Violence, I call on all governments to work with grass roots organizations to reduce armed violence and make the lives of people safer and more secure.

