

15. Conclusion

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To be delivered in **English**

I am here as a Mozambican, as a Bishop, and as a representative of the World Council of Churches, which has 348 member churches who are a vital part of civil society in 150 countries.

What happens at this meeting over the next week should certainly make a difference in reducing the negative impacts of armed violence. We know that we still have a long way to go and we pray and commit ourselves to this work.

We are heading deeper into the business of consolidating a culture of peace, a culture in which we are one another's keeper. Controlling small arms is a process of committing ourselves to be accountable to one another in the preservation of human life.

The consolidation of peace has to take into consideration those things that threaten peace... and small arms are the single most decisive tool for disrupting peace and starting armed conflict. Because small arms can disrupt communities and undermine prosperity, civil society cannot be marginalized in dealing with the small arms pandemic. The destructive nature of small arms is felt strongly in communities long before it has wider state repercussions. Therefore, initiatives at the community level cannot be considered irrelevant, as they impact what happens higher up.

We salute and encourage those individuals and institutions that have designed mechanisms to make the issue of small arms control part of their agenda. We salute and encourage those states that have taken concrete steps to implement what has been agreed upon here five years ago, and have been creative in doing more, and hopefully will continue to be creative in doing even more.

To all these groups we say that God has given you elasticity. You have been given a capacity to stretch yourselves, as leaders, for society's sake and society is watching to see the exercise of this gift. You can do more to make sure:

- that the sanctity of all human life is respected in laws and in actions, and
- that human dignity is protected from the threats of armed violence and
- that a programme of action on small arms will be anchored in respect for human rights, international humanitarian law, and human security.

I am wearing a cross made from guns broken into pieces by local communities. In my country we see communities as key to the success of controlling small arms. The church helps connect local communities to the

national community, inviting the police and the army to be part of smashing what has to be destroyed. Guns are cut into small pieces, making them unusable, and the community gets tools in return-sewing machines, bicycles and ploughs. And these gifts are a link to the international community.

How do we get where we want to go?

By real dialogue, by mutual accountability, and by the goodwill and transparency developing in various institutions. We only need to add common disciplines which include:

- Setting goals which are measurable;
- Monitoring progress; and
- Being flexible, according to circumstances and opportunities that occur.

We must also acknowledge the spiritual dimension in this whole process, recognizing that a human being is a profoundly spiritual being and that armed violence is deeply destructive of precious things inside us.

It has been said that this world belongs to our children. We hold it in trust for them. Unfortunately, we are inundating this world with guns of various types, shapes, weights and sizes, yet making the world unsafe, fearful, indeed dangerous. Can we today at this conference take specific steps to make sure that the world we hand over to our children will be a places where it is safe. And, that they may say `thank you' to us for freeing it from all these weapons?

Their gratitude is also for you, channeling your skills and energies away from finding respectable uses for weapons and away from permitting a business in instruments of death. Thank you for decisively committing yourselves to the sanctity of life and to the protection of human dignity in joint actions under the rule of law.

It is my conviction that the God of all life is pleased with such steps and they will prosper for the good of all.

Thank you Mr Chairman.