

“Fortaleciendo los compromisos para combatir el tráfico ilícito de armas pequeñas y ligeras”

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Quito, Ecuador

Prepared by Global Action to Prevent War and Armed Conflict (GAPW)

Introduction

The control of illicit small arms and light weapons is a high priority for many governments worldwide. In the Andean region, sources of such weapons vary widely. They are brought across borders beyond the reach of government control. They are diverted from the legal sale to illegal uses by criminals and non-state actors. They are made locally by rural people seeking to increase their security or to make extra income.

Whatever the sources and circumstances, there is broad recognition in the international community of the insidious role that such weapons play in destabilizing security environments, increasing opportunities for criminality and insurgency, creating obstacles for participation in society by women and indigenous peoples, and undermining appropriate government authority.

Governments within and beyond the Andean region have taken stock of the need to address the grave problem of illicit weapons. In the context of the 2001 UN Programme of Action on Small Arms (PoA) review process as well as the current work in preparation for formal Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) negotiations, states face the challenging task of finding consensus language on how to address related security issues including stockpile management, weapons marking and tracing protocols, and ending diversion from the legitimate arms trade to illegitimate uses that fuel corruption, insurgency, criminality and terror.

As the UN gears up for major 2012 events, including a review of progress on the PoA during its 10th anniversary year and the beginning of formal ATT negotiations, it is critically important that states contribute as much as they can to the success of these multi-lateral engagements. The states of the Andean region know they can do more together to control borders, dry up stockpiles, enhance inter-agency cooperation, seize and destroy illicit weapons and bring their communications and intelligence on illicit small arms up to the highest international standards. Increasingly, these states also assist other governments eager to improve marking, tracing, record keeping and other key arms-related tasks.

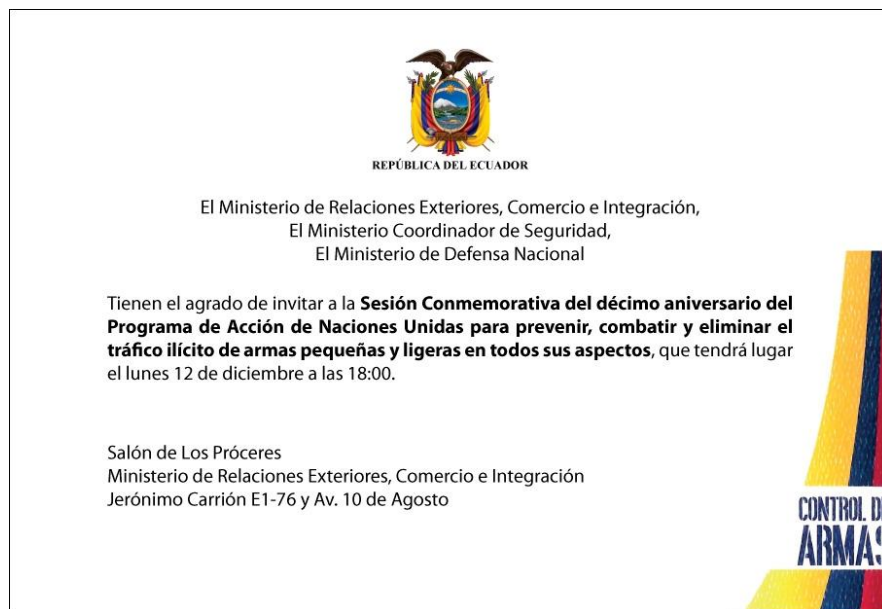
But more than anything else, 2012 offers opportunities for new leadership from states and regions – including the Andean states – that have wrestled with diverse challenges related to small arms proliferation and have both the urgency and advice to offer other sectors of the international community that have not yet fully seized their own opportunities to end the scourge of illicit weapons.

The workshop organized in Quito in December 2011 by the government of Ecuador in association with Global Action (GAPW) focused on the problem of illicit small arms in a manner that was part assessment and part leadership development. The Andean region has been a focus of intense activity on small arms by some key actors who were, gratefully, part of the implementation team for this

workshop. Both the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey (SAS) and the Lima-based United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLiREC) have already offered a menu of specific, robust programming designed to inform and inspire activity on illicit small arms (see attached schedule of work). This programming has been designed to create opportunities for Andean governments to use the authority they have earned in this area to guide international policy and influence national and regional action in other global sectors.

This particular workshop, involving governments and civil society representatives from Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru, was capably organized by the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs of the government of Ecuador with important assistance from the Ecuadorian mission to the United Nations in New York. Funding was provided in part by the government of Ecuador and by UN- based GAPW, though the bulk of the funds were generously provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Germany, which has also taken a keen (and most welcome) interest in the policies, practices and leadership potential of the Andean region on small arms.

The combination of excellent organizing and timely funding helped ensure that the workshop was a truly regional affair including NGO experts on small arms policy and related issues of development and gender, making it possible for the workshop to delve into many related aspects of the small arms challenge. As often noted, there are both transnational and domestic aspects of this problem. Uncontrolled borders, the presence of non-state actors engaging in broad-based criminal behavior and the preponderance of street crime are all exacerbated by the presence of so many weapons beyond the reach of state regulation. These weapons inflict unpredictable violence that produces many negative consequences in communities, including for women seeking their rightful places at the policy table and for children seeking a proper education.



In the pages that follow, both in the form of brief narrative and abundant appendices, a rich tapestry of research and policy will become apparent. There is much to highlight and much to appreciate. Two of the highlights were in the form of an evening event featuring four Ecuadorian ministers reflecting for their public and media the ways in which illicit small arms undermine their work in security, in development and more. In addition, on the day following the workshop, the Defense Ministry

convened a moving ceremony during which as many as 25,000 weapons seized from illegal possession were destroyed. Watching the expressions on the faces of soldiers, it was clear that they saw the hard work leading up to this ceremony as less of a task and more of a patriotic duty. This reinforced the themes of the workshop – that illicit weapons are much more than an annoyance, but represent threats to both a stable security sector and to national progress on a range of social development and participation responsibilities.



As for appreciation, there is much to share here as well. The workshop would not have taken place without the organizing skill of the Ministry of Defense – especially Veronica Gomez and Michelle Fiol – as well as Fernando Luque of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Special thanks are also due to Jose Eduardo Proano of the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations in New York. The presence in Quito of Sabrina Pffner, an expert on the PoA from the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs, added an important multi-lateral dimension to our discussions. Dr. Detlev Wolter and his colleagues at the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin provided important financial support without which the workshop would not have been possible. Eric Berman and Sarah Parker of Small Arms

Survey provided much conceptual guidance for our deliberations. Melanie Regimbal, Camilo Duplat and Amanda Cowl of UNLiREC continued their extraordinary outreach to governments in the region and helped us in so many ways to fashion a workshop that could continue the momentum of the activities and guidance they are already providing. Claudia Detsch and Daniel Gudiño in the Quito office of our global partners, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, provided important logistical support.

This formidable array of skilled policymakers, officials and experts helped to ensure a successful workshop but, more importantly, are committed over the long term to helping the Andean region do more to address illicit arms and to take greater leadership for progress on eliminating these weapons in other global regions. This is our primary hope for workshops such as these – not to necessarily break new ground so much as to sustain important momentum generated by others.

We recognize the degree to which the United Nations presents an uneven playing field where too much of the policy leadership is concentrated in too few hands. As the challenges for human security grow and expand, we must find ways to integrate more technical capacity, insight and experience from diverse regions. Workshops like this one represent one small step towards placing a wider array of best practices and new leadership squarely into the global policy domain.

Quito Panel Summary Narratives

Introductory Panel

This panel had several purposes, one of the more important of which was to reinforce the strong linkages between the United Nations – specifically the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs and its regional affiliate, UNLiREC – and efforts by Ecuador and other Andean governments to stem the flow of illicit weapons. In its best form, the partnership provides an international audience for some of the hopeful best practices undertaken by Ecuador and its Andean partners to curb illicit arms. At the same time, the partnership ensures a steady flow of relevant technical support to assist governments in fulfilling their responsibilities to the PoA, to the '552' Action Plan and of course to meeting the expectations of citizens of their respective countries seeking a respite from gun-related violence. With leadership from UNLiREC and direct, practical interest from diverse global partners, the issues and strategies of this region are poised to inform practice on small arms policy worldwide.

Sabrina Pfiffner, Oficina de Desarme Naciones Unidas
Ronald A. Munch, Encargado de Negocios de Alemania en Ecuador
Valm. Homero Allena, Ministro de Coordinación de Seguridad

Key Insights

- **Small arms are the weapons of choice for criminality and gang warfare.** There is little doubt that a more 'weaponized' society is not a safer one.
- **Ecuador and surrounding states must do more to combat 'handicraft' weapons.** The Ecuadorian military is considering and testing multiple strategies for minimizing and eliminating these weapons and this activity can help influence efforts in other countries that are facing problems with 'home grown' weapons.
- **The SG wants more capacity assistance exchanged between states.** The Andean community

followed up the 2001 PoA commitments with the '552' Action Plan in 2003. Since that time, technical and capacity assistance has been flowing regularly into the region, especially through UNLiREC and ODA, both of which were praised throughout the workshop for these efforts.

- A major stress in all areas of policy and action to address illicit arms is cooperation. **The PoA Prep Com in March and Review Conference in August provide excellent opportunities for states to assess efforts towards implementing the PoA, strengthen follow-up mechanisms to measure progress and lessons learned, and identify new leadership and resources to help stem the flow of illicit weapons.**
- **Addressing illicit small arms has both supply and demand components and has multiple areas of responsibility** – from local government activities and policies to national and multi-lateral efforts to more effectively regulating transnational arms production, export and trade.

Panel 1: ¿Plan de acción de Naciones Unidas para armas pequeñas y ligeras: Dónde estamos y hacia dónde vamos?

In surveying the vast activity under way in the Andean region to curb illicit small arms, there remain many potential actors to coordinate as well as many challenges of communications and cooperation to overcome. The more coordination on resources (human and material) and communication that can occur, the better the chances of removing and eliminating threatening weapons from both local and regional settings. Moreover, it is important that national legislation is adopted that mirrors other regional legislation as well as broad regional and international commitments made at PoA Review Conferences and other settings. Multiple levels of commitment can reinforce policies and practices that can provide long-term relief from the unpredictable and often devastating violence associated with illicit weapons.

Moderated by Alcides Costa Vaz, Instituto de Relaciones Internacionales de Brasilia

Sabrina Pfiffner, Oficina de Desarme para las Naciones Unidas

Adolfo Lopez, Coordinador Político de la Comunidad Andina de Naciones – CAN

Gloria Polastri Amat, Presidente del Equipo Técnico de Control de Armas (ETCA), Ecuador

Key Insights

- **We would do well to follow the SG's proposed security framework that integrates human rights, development, public health and small arms.** Keeping issues and their implications linked so that policy can encompass related security claims and interests is vital to successful, integrated security policy.
- **Civil society must provide more technical and oversight assistance in stockpile management and other efforts to curb illicit arms.** There are gaps in government capacity that can be filled by competent and trustworthy organizations that provide technical skills, highlight the needs of the vulnerable, and more. Freedom from insecurity and injustice is a societal goal that is compromised by the illicit arms trade, and civil society is in a unique position to keep these values – and the activities that promote them – in the spotlight. Civil

society organizations can and should also do more to scrutinize operations to curb illicit arms to ensure that these operations are properly undertaken.

- **In terms of the norms that guide activity on illicit small arms, it is important to recall that the PoA is largely a political document and not legally binding.** The Firearms Protocol (part of the Convention against Organized, International Crime), also adopted in 2001, has more legal authority, and, of course, national legislation that mirrors international agreements has even more impact. Structural obstacles to PoA implementation are many, including the lack of concrete benchmarks to gauge the success of efforts in this area and limited judicial control over the manufacture, distribution and use of weapons, illicit and otherwise. There is a critical need for more inter-agency cooperation at the national level and more coordination with local stakeholders – including media – to build support for small arms initiatives.
- **States are urged to fulfill reporting obligations on small arms as many remain lax in doing so.** It is recommended that states send national reports to the United Nations earlier than the 31 December deadline and to include assistance needs so that these can be assessed and responses made through the UN and other multi-lateral settings. Governments should be especially active in making their needs for capacity assistance known prior to PoA Preparatory and Review Conferences, since these are settings where assistance needs can best be negotiated and met. States should also participate more actively in the Group of Interested States (GIS) process at UN headquarters, specifically the ‘matching needs and resources’ initiative that uses the GIS as one recruiting and assessment forum.
- **Andean governments are taking initiatives to form a more integrative foreign policy, which is moving towards a strong, collaborative position against illicit small arms.** The Andean Council is adopting a gradual, scalable approach to the problem that will have long-term benefits in addressing illicit arms, including more effective regional communications. In addition, governments recognize that their important work to open up regional and global trade also opens up new avenues for region-wide trafficking in drugs and arms. In this light, more robust implementation through National Customs Offices of the UN’s Container Project is essential. Ecuador is one of the countries that has requested and received scanners to ensure that arms and drugs are not being smuggled in shipments. Thousands of containers are in circulation regionally and provisions should be made for yearly scanning in all four participating countries.
- **Highly publicized events for destroying guns and ammunition send a strong message to groups that manufacture and use illicit weapons that governments are serious about addressing this threat.** The military, which takes primary responsibility for such destruction, must not bear too much of the burden for all aspects of small arms policy, but should always be an active part of the communication flow.

Where else should we go from here? Key strategies for further consideration by states and policymakers include the following:

- Strengthen national committee coordinators and national focal points
- Strengthen national legislation and ensure that all Andean countries have adopted similar legislation and robust coordinating and communications mechanisms
- Create more opportunities for technical assistance, including training courses

- Facilitate more robust exchanges between government agencies with relevant responsibility and expertise in this area
- Implement measures to enhance prospects for a culture of peace –focusing on the demand as well as the supply of arms—by helping to build a society that rejects the use of these weapons
- Strengthen border control and cross-border initiatives and collect and control illicit weapons that proliferate at borders
- Follow the SG’s lead and add the production, trade and storage of ammunition to PoA-related priorities
- Eliminate weapons from 'hand crafted services' that can account for as much as 80 percent of gun-related violence in a country such as Ecuador

Panel 2: Desafíos del Sector Seguridad desde la perspectiva de género y poblaciones vulnerables



At a time when the protection of civilians is considered primarily to be the responsibility of states but also, under limited circumstances, of the international community, it is important that we be reminded of the many ways in which illicit arms compromise stable security and minimize options for political participation for women and especially vulnerable persons. Many constituents of vulnerable groups are also women and members of indigenous cultural communities. Removing guns from our streets and communities has tangible benefits in terms of protection and participation but also for inspiring more confidence in the ability of states to fulfill their security-related responsibilities fairly and effectively. We must remain mindful that women and indigenous persons are much more than victims. They are leaders of organizations and communities, actors in responsible social change and healers of individuals and communities from experiences of trauma. It is difficult for many of us to talk fairly and accurately about women's issues without under-emphasizing skills and capacities and over-emphasizing victimization. A sustainable security sector must be ever mindful of its victims but ever welcoming of the skills and passion of all its constituents.

Moderated by: Katherine Prizeman, Global Action to Prevent War and Armed Conflict

Andrés Dávila, Investigador Asociado CERAC, Colombia
Crnl. Verónica Espinoza, Directora del Hospital de la Policía Nacional
Gualdemar Jiménez, SERPAJ – Ecuador

Key Insights

- **Security is not only about protection, but requires the active engagement of citizens.** We need to integrate diverse stakeholders – including and especially women – who can influence national policy but who can also speak with authority and compassion on behalf of the vulnerable and bring needed attention to their issues and concerns.
- **Women and indigenous people are both victims and perpetrators of gun violence.** They are also still largely excluded from policy discussions on small arms and from government activities that seek to eliminate these arms and create cultures that are more conducive to weapons-free living.
- **There is still a culture of *machismo* in many parts of the region and that image is often tied to the possession and use of guns.** Moreover, that culture often makes it difficult for people – especially women – to speak frankly about the threats of violence that is too often perpetrated against them. Many women are simply ashamed to admit what is happening to them in their own homes, including violence that is not directly gun-related. As one speaker put it, “We can scan guns but not fists.” Thus, there was a persistent call for more educational programs directed in part towards changing cultural values related to all kinds of gender-based violence. There was also a call for more gender/domestic violence programs throughout Ecuador and elsewhere in the region.
- The concept of 'integral security' was floated and was equated with 'proper living.' It was suggested, in this panel and elsewhere, that **we should do more to create a 'culture of peace', including more education on issues impacting women and indigenous peoples and more engagement with the media to give these issues more status as 'national concerns' towards a more stable, integrated security environment.**
- There was, in this panel as well as others, a call for more reliable data on violence against women. Key questions included: How have efforts to control arms affected local populations? Is violence against women on the rise or is the situation improving? **Because of the lack of robust and reliable data, we can't really describe the situation on the ground with any certainty and thus we do not know how much progress is being made on curbing violence.**
- **Increasing women's participation in political life and security policy is a key agenda item, but it was noted repeatedly the degree to which armaments compromise progress in this area.** In some places, the 'costs' of participation are simply too high. Laws that guarantee women's participation in politics are helpful, but full participation cannot be realized without a robust, transparent, reliable security sector. In countries that have been ravaged by conflict, being intentional about including people who have been displaced by war in security and reintegration policies is very important.

- **Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000) can serve as an effective mandate for small arms policy and implementation by encouraging women’s participation in relevant decision-making** as well as by identifying specific entry points for gender analysis—such as reform of national security recruitment practices, implementation of small arms initiatives in collaboration with women’s organizations, and policy training and education to increase women’s participation on issues critical to the UN PoA.

Panel 3: Armas ilegales y violencia urbana: políticas y campañas en contra del uso de armas pequeñas y ligeras y entrega voluntaria de armas, municiones y explosivos

Creating a reliable, dependable security sector is a primary function of governments. There is little doubt that the widespread presence of illicit weapons on the streets of cities creates multiple levels of anxiety – increasing fearfulness among citizens, random violence tied to criminality, limited confidence in government security efforts, and much more. A predictable security environment is a key condition for children to pursue an education, for women to pursue their place at the policy table, for businesses to attract customers (including tourists), and for governments to attract outside investment. Streets free of illicit weapons are keys to sustaining a vibrant public sector where everyone feels free to participate in civic, cultural and economic life.

Moderator: Dr. Robert Zuber, Global Action to Prevent War and Armed Conflict

Daniel Pontón, Observatorio Metropolitano de Seguridad Ciudadana de Quito

María Andrea Torres, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia

Bernardo Ovalle, Coordinador del Observatorio de Seguridad Ciudadana de Guayaquil

Camilo Duplat, Centro Regional para la Paz el Desarme y el Desarrollo (UNLiREC)

Key Insights

- **One of the core concerns of this panel in assessing responsibility for curbing illicit small arms is the relationship between the weapon and the user.** For some, the trafficking in illicit weapons provides both ease of access and abundant temptations to criminal behavior at the point of a gun. These people believe that it is easier to control the means (small arms) of criminal behavior than to control the behavior of users. For others, the use of weapons is the issue not the volume of licit and illicit weapons in circulation. Here, the objective is less about removing guns and more about changing the culture that sanctions weapons possession while ignoring the role of weapons as the pathway to criminal violence. It is not clear that any of the speakers saw controlling arms and changing culture as mutually exclusive activities, but there was clearly a difference of priority focus.
- While the session highlighted the need for closer coordination between local and national authorities to curb illicit small arms and their use in urban environments, **the issue for some was not so much about whether the police or military handles measures like gun registration, but whether such activity is based on accurate information regarding ownership and use.**
- **There is a need to create more disarmament education campaigns,** such as the Arms Free Schools program organized and managed by UNLiREC. Colombia has organized educational campaigns (‘journeys’) on disarmament for cities such as Cali and Medellín. A successful

campaign should contain several inter-related components such as careful program planning, identification of the problems facing local communities, and the development of norms and activities (including analysis and monitoring) that can highlight the contexts for illicit arms-related violence and suggest new patterns of response.

- **There is also a need for more 'diagnostic' analysis to support such educational campaigns** (and indeed any activities to address illicit arms and urban violence) based on questions such as: Who is using the arms? What types of arms are they using? What do users seek to accomplish through the use of arms? Where are the arms coming from? Ideally, governments and civil society alike should be working towards a society without weapons, and sound, evidence-based analysis is one key to making that possible.
- **However, it is important to avoid the tendency to 'crisis legislation'** -- the notion that every time something goes wrong governments are obligated to pass another law to address the specific, short-term concern rather than assessing the situation from a macro-level perspective and passing legislation that reinforces a long term, sustainable vision for a peaceful society.

In addition to these points, speakers spoke of the need for National Action Plans on small arms to coordinate response capacities and ensure robust legislation that can punish offenders and dry up supplies of illicit weapons. Among the tasks of such an Action Plan include:

- Strengthening the culture of disarmament
- Promoting voluntary civilian disarmament
- Enhancing international cooperation on capacity and communication
- Prioritizing human resources, especially the skills needed to coordinate and implement small arms policy
- Strengthening relationships with civil society at all levels, including churches and universities

As part of such a plan, local communities should do more to share their strategies and best practices for getting guns off the street and dramatically reducing their use in robberies, homicides and other crimes. Locally manufactured guns (handicraft weapons) are often weapons of choice and opportunity in the commission of local crimes and should remain a particular focus of government interest.

Among the other ideas put forward during this panel include the following:

- Authorize local commissions tasked with eradicating illicit firearms
- Establish more police check points in areas known to be centers of illegal arms trafficking
- Create 'Neighborhood Watch' organizations to promote more involvement by citizens in community protection and safety
- Support the voluntary surrender and collection of arms, including through the selective use of amnesty laws
- Involve interested civil society organizations in all aspects of small arms policy, including national legislation and implementation
- Create national and regional standards for and commitments to marking ammunition, without which guns have no real function.
- Conduct and share more research on the specific types of weapons used in urban violence and make those weapons a priority for response.
- Manage existing weapons stockpiles more effectively to prevent arms from falling into the

hands of criminals and other non-state actors

***Panel 4: Mecanismos de Intercambio de Información a nivel regional y bilateral
Estrategias para prevenir desvíos y corrupción en la transferencia de armas***

While a primary focus in curbing illicit small arms is on promoting national legislation and policies that mirror regional and international commitments, major energies must also be expended on regional cooperation and coordination. The Andean region is moving towards an integrated foreign policy that has great potential to address threats from small arms (and related threats to national and regional security) in a coordinated manner. Nevertheless, the region has a complex geography and anthropology – barely penetrable borders, remote indigenous communities, trafficking in illegal narcotics, 'home grown' weapons production facilities and other challenges. Despite a vast array of cultural and ecological contexts, the Andean Region also has many shared interests, including the promotion of security that is reliable, transparent and consistent with international obligations and protocols.

Moderator: Diego Pérez, Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales, Ecuador

CrnI. Felipe Medrano Montes, Ministerio de Defensa de Bolivia

Vitaliano Gallardo, Director de Seguridad Internacional Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Perú

CrnI. Edwin Lara, Jefe del Departamento de Control de Armas – Secretario del Equipo Técnico (ETCA)

Key Insights

- **There have been several efforts by Andean governments to create common regional frameworks for foreign policy and security.** All have strengths in dealing with illicit small arms as well as limitations, but all are based on the assumption that the safer one's neighbors, the safer one's own country is as well. It was repeated often that all Andean governments have a responsibility to the countries with which they share borders, culture, and ecology. As well as being the beneficiaries of assistance from regional governments, security collaborations such as the Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (UNASUR) and the international community, Andean governments have wisdom and capacity to share that must be made more readily available to impact regional frameworks.
- **MERCOSUR has been taking more of an interest in security questions, in part because of the impact of unreliable security on business and commerce.** MERCOSUR offers a forum for information exchange, and its infrastructure is available to facilitate more effective efforts against illicit trafficking in small arms.
- **Another potential institutional base for the facilitation of regional dialogue on small arms policy is the Inter-American Convention against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms (CIFTA),** originally known as the Inter-American Convention against Illicit Firearms Trafficking in the Americas. Unlike MERCOSUR and UNASUR which have vital and recognized roles in the region, CIFTA has fallen a bit on hard times. Fewer and fewer delegations are represented at meetings, though the forum is still deemed useful for information exchange on state activities and outcomes.

- **It was recommended that states work more closely with UNLiREC to establish a bona fide regional communications network to spread best practices, coordinate capacity support, and establish opportunities for international leadership on small arms policy through the PoA and other multi-lateral mechanisms.** It was also mentioned that governments should investigate closer arrangements with INTERPOL, specifically its sophisticated, robust capacity to track illicit weapons used in a variety of crimes.
- **Customs Services in the region need to be upgraded and more technologically sophisticated strategies must be implemented to monitor imports and check cargo.** The presence in Ecuador and the region of ever more reliable and effective equipment to screen containers coming into ports is just one of the ways that governments can ensure that the flow of illicit weapons (and drugs and other contraband) can be halted.
- **There were suggestions on practical and symbolic ways to build cultures of peace, including one proposal to hold joint weapons destruction exercises along the Ecuador – Colombia border.** Highlighting this and other weapons destruction activities provides both tangible and symbolic evidence for citizens that governments can be a truly effective force in eliminating illicit small arms and promoting effective, reliable security for communities. The merging of symbolic and concrete measures to enhance both the facts and feeling of security has added value for communities. Indeed, more than one speaker mentioned that ‘symbols’ such as police cars do not necessarily, in and of themselves, translate into feelings of security.
- **The Latin American region is heavily involved in weapons production and the largest of these producing states – especially Brazil and Argentina – have the highest standards for weapons imports and exports.** Other countries must do more to approximate these standards on weapons transfers while also paying closer attention to complementary issues like controlling weapons stocks and providing accurate inventory figures.
- **It was noted that in many countries there have been significant shifts in military culture that make it easier to establish and maintain inter-agency cooperation on illicit small arms.** In Ecuador, for instance, the Technical Group for the Control of Arms has established good working relations across diverse sectors of government. Inter-agency cooperation that directly involves the military bodes well for successful, coordinated policy implementation to combat illicit arms.
- In Peru and elsewhere in the region, while better statistics still need to be compiled and analyzed, an important shift in criminal behavior seems to be occurring. **Crimes were once committed primarily at knife point, while crimes now seem more likely to be committed at gun point.** Peru's National Plan for Community Security takes account of this shift and also debates the relative merits of voluntary disarmament programs and direct seizure of weapons. Regardless of the weapons of choice for crimes, the Plan seeks to identify and alleviate obstacles that block efforts to address and solve a range of community security problems.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Robert Zuber, Global Action to Prevent War and Armed Conflict
Rosa Mercedes Pérez, Viceministra de Defensa de Ecuador

When the idea of this event was first brought up with the Ecuadorian Foreign Ministry and more specifically with the Permanent Mission of Ecuador in New York, there were five assumptions that guided our thinking:

- The need to keep a focus on the PoA with so much attention in 2012 to be spent on the NPT and ATT
- The need to level the playing field among governments and promote more opportunities for Andean leadership on global disarmament priorities
- The need to highlight Andean initiatives on SALWs and to support efforts to create an integrative policy on this and related security issues
- The need to highlight the promotion of women's participation in policies and practices related to SALWs
- The need to provide as much publicity and support as possible to the work of UNODA and UNLiREC in the region

All of these assumptions and more were addressed at this meeting. At the same time, a rich and dense tapestry of data and policy insight was shared that can help us make our streets safer, control illicit arms flows, end impunity for arms-related violence, and ensure that governments are able to fulfill their primary responsibility to the safety and welfare of their citizens. The governments of the region have much to gain from regional and international assistance, but also much to provide, to teach, and to share. The hope is that as commitments to end the scourge of illicit weapons expand, and regional capacity grows to supplement national initiatives, Andean governments will move into greater and more authoritative leadership roles regarding perhaps the most important security issue facing global communities.

We also learned much about the complex nature of the small arms problem in the Andean region and the need to respond comprehensively by government agencies at all levels with support from the international community. Protecting borders, monitoring shipping containers, drying up unregulated stockpiles, removing weapons from urban streets, ending the business of handcraft weapons – these and other tasks require flexible and blended policy responses.

The final session also reaffirmed that civil society organizations have important roles to play in addressing the multiple, negative impacts of illicit weapons, including a key role in both the protection of vulnerable populations and in ensuring that their needs and expectations find their place in national, regional and international policy.

Finally, it was reaffirmed that Andean government efforts to combat illicit small arms must include a robust commitment to open and regular communications as well as reliable data on all aspects of the small arms problem – from transfers to arms-related homicides. As many speakers made clear, sound coordination on illicit small arms requires carefully researched and assessed data streams on which to base and to justify sound policy choices.

Regional efforts on illicit small arms constitute an important contribution to the quality of lives of

potential victims of gun violence, to the stability of a security sector in which children can safely receive an education and women can safely take their rightful places in society, and to governments seeking to fulfill their legitimate security functions. Such efforts can also make important contributions to complementary initiatives to build and sustain regional security, including through treaty organizations such as the one managed by el Organismo para la Proscripción de las Armas Nucleares en América Latina y el Caribe (OPANAL), dedicated to preserving the nuclear weapons free status of the Latin American region.

For many communities and nations of Latin America, small arms are their 'weapons of mass destruction.' With ongoing support from UNODA, UNLiREC, the German Government, the Small Arms Survey and interested academics and NGOs, the destructiveness of these weapons can finally meet its match. We all need to keep building technical capacity and political support so that Andean governments can both reach their goals and help teach the rest of the world how best to address this global menace.

Afterword

For all of its insights and possibilities for strategic engagement, this workshop was never intended to supersede important efforts by regional and international actors to curb illicit small arms in the Andean region. As important as it is to promote regional leadership and 'best practices' on this issues based on thorough assessments of opportunities and challenges, the organizers interpreted the efforts here as an effort to preserve momentum rather than break new ground. The Andean region enjoys the support of many prominent partners to help meet the challenges of illicit arms. The goal of the organizers of this event was to ensure steady, sustainable progress—progress that will remain in the hands of regional governments, interested civil society organizations, and those international organizations that justifiably carry the most credibility in the region.

Indeed, Andean governments are breaking new ground themselves, endorsing creative regional communications mechanisms, creating national legislation to strengthen and standardize legal and other government response to illicit weapons, testing strategies to limit the possession of guns in public places, carrying out high profile weapons destruction ceremonies, and much more. At the same time, an increasingly empowered civil society and engaged academy can provide both oversight and reliable statistics to drive policy and ensue proper implementation.

With all that governments in the Andean region have to manage, it is sometimes difficult to keep a robust focus on illicit arms flows. Indeed, some donor governments are now urging Andean governments to shift energies from eliminating illicit arms to interdicting illegal narcotics. The relationship between arms and drugs is indisputable; thus any shift of priority that occurs in response to outside pressure should be carefully measured rather than dramatic.

Ultimately, we 'second' UNLiREC's contention that they and others have worked very hard to place and keep the issue of illicit arms on national and regional agendas, programmes and policies in the Andean States. In a variety of settings, forums and formats, it is now our collective responsibility to ensure that this scourge remains a priority focus.

Appendices

- 1. Seminar Program**
- 2. Seminar Background Information (Circular Informativa)**
- 3. Invitation to Public Event at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Remarks by the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs**
- 4. Introductory Remarks from the German Embassy**
- 5. Powerpoint Presentation from UNLiREC**
- 6. Powerpoint Presentation from UNODA**
- 7. Resource on National Reporting Created for the Conference by Small Arms Survey**
- 8. Press Coverage of Quito Workshop**
- 9. UNLiREC Plans to Enhance Public Security Through Firearms Control in the Andean Region**