



The Managua Declaration on Parliaments, Development and Small Arms Control

We, representatives of 11 Latin American and Caribbean Parliaments, together with parliamentarians from Europe and Africa, have gathered in Managua, Nicaragua on the 22-23 of October, 2009 to discuss the role of parliamentarians in promoting human security and deepen the analysis of the devastating consequences of armed violence in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The homicide rate in our region is among the highest in the world. In Central America it is four times the world average. In certain countries¹ of the region, the costs associated with gun violence represent over ten percent of GDP.

Despite this alarming data, significant progress has been achieved through the adoption of international instruments and legislative developments aimed at reducing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the threat they pose to humanity. Important milestones have been achieved, for example the United Nations Program of Action and the process towards a restrictive treaty on arms transfers. Through the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development and its subsequent regional declarations such as the Guatemala Declaration, a growing number of states have committed to ensuring human security to its citizens as a core responsibility of the states².

Through our role as parliamentarians, we recognise the importance of bringing issues related to human security to public debate. We see the need for the establishment of legislative reforms in many of our countries, through the knowledge of best practices, in order to reduce violence and save lives.

We recognize the excellent work carried out in favor of a model legislation on firearms, adopted by Parlatino³, and commit ourselves to continue to work to enact national legislative reforms to provide improved arms control, which respect the principles and criteria established in the Model Legislation, considering it a model to harmonize legislation in this area.

Focusing on the issue of security from a citizenship perspective, we consider the findings of the 2009/2010 UNDP Regional Report on Human Development for Central America essential in order to in further promote human security in our countries. Ensuring security to all citizens on equal and universal terms is fundamental.

Within this context we have discussed and analyzed the rapid and worrying expansion of the private security industry, which is partly a result of the failure of the states to fulfil their irrevocable obligations. People turn to these private providers to ensure that their right to security is guaranteed. Hence, the notion of security as a fundamental human right and a common good is thereby threatened. Given this rapid expansion, it is important that the states take resolute actions,

¹ Global Burden of Armed Violence Report, <http://genevadeclaration.org/resources-armed-violence-report.html>

² Geneva Declaration, www.genevadeclaration.org

³ Latin American Parliament, www.parlatino.org



to promote a sound and sustainable development in this regard. In this light, we call for the establishment of national regulations as well as international frameworks designed to address the inherent risks in this dramatic process.

We recognize with gratitude the various good efforts in our region including the involvement of our parliaments and parliamentarians in tasks aimed at being implemented in order to promote human security. We highlighted the valuable work done by the Latin American Parliament, the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Central American Integration System and its Central American Small Arms Control Programme and others, in order to limit the impact that Small Arms and Light Weapons impose on our society. To encourage these and other good initiatives as well as intend to provide a platform for future initiatives, we;

Declare our support for the signing of an Arms Trade Treaty that set restrictive standards,

Emphasize the importance of working for national legislative reforms, adopting regulations that respect the principles and criteria established in the Model Legislation, throughout parliamentary assemblies,

Observe the need to strengthen mechanisms in our countries to ensure effective compliance with international conventions and treaties adopted on the issue,

Commit ourselves to working for the adoption of regulations to adequately control the expanding private security sector,

We urge the international community to promote cooperation between regions in the pursuit of strategies aimed at addressing the threat of armed violence, recognizing the essential role that parliaments and parliamentarians have in this regard,

We make a special appeal to arms-producing countries to take effective measures regarding the reduction of arms production,

Assume an active engagement in promoting a culture of peace,

Take our responsibility to provide adequate information to civil society organizations, universities and parliamentary networks, to efficiently use the support provided by these organizations,

Suggest that the Secretariats of Parlatino and the Parliamentary Forum on SALW continue to facilitate the exchange of information and to compile and analyze data on parliamentary initiatives, such as those being implemented by the Central American Integration System (SICA),



Advise the Parlatino and the Secretariat of the Forum to take further steps in the development of capacity-building and awareness-raising activities on issues related to citizen security, with the purpose of creating increased parliamentary oversight, capacity and engagement,

Appreciate and recognize the efforts of the parliamentarians and staff of the Assembly of Nicaragua, for everything done in order to make this Conference a success,

Managua, 23rd of October 2009, signed by the participants of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference ‘Parliamentary Action on Small Arms – policies, legislation and regional approaches’”, held in the National Assembly of Nicaragua, under the auspices of UNDP, SICA, Parlatino , the Parliamentary Forum and CASAC.