

Development and implementation of public awareness programmes

This obligation is contained in paragraph 3A(v) of the Bamako Declaration, which deals with national measures on the problem of the proliferation and illicit trafficking of SALW. Specifically the Declaration calls for states to develop and implement public awareness programmes on the problem of proliferation and the illicit trafficking of SALW. This section discusses the progress made in this respect and measures it against existing programmes on SALW public awareness.

In the seven countries that have been reviewed, both state and non-state actors are important in raising awareness on the negative effects of illegal possession and use of SALW. Through workshops and conferences, representatives from government and civil society organisations have continued to prioritise different aspects of the SALW problem on the local, national, regional and international agenda.

The national and regional co-ordinating agencies use not only the print media but also posters at strategic places calling on the public to volunteer information that will help apprehend suspects using or in possession of illegal arms. The Nairobi Secretariat and the Kenya National Focal Point have held workshops and conferences in this regard.¹⁰⁵ The Secretariat has

105 For example, between 10–11 December 2000 the state parties organised an experts' meeting which discussed specific issues in regard to the establishment of National Points, the adoption of a legal Protocol on small arms control and responsibility in managing stockpiles of small arms and light weapons and the collection and destruction of surplus small arms and light weapons. From 7–8 August 2002, the First Ministerial Review Conference was organised in Nairobi, Kenya, during which states reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the various declarations on small arms and light weapons. From 26–27 November 2003 a regional parliamentary conference on the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa was held in Mombasa, Kenya, organised jointly with UNDP and Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA).

launched a newsletter, *Progress*, as a means of sensitising the public. So far three editions have been published. The Secretariat, together with the KNFP, also supported the awareness activities in the prelude to the public burning of the recovered arms in Nairobi in March 2003.

Civil society organisations, including international actors, have sponsored radio/TV programmes on the subject through networks such as the EAANSA, KANSA (Kenya) and UANSA (Uganda). In Kenya, this was more evident during the commemoration of the third anniversary of the Nairobi Declaration. Beyond meetings, civil society organisations and institutions in the region are undertaking specific researches aimed at not only establishing the nature and magnitude of the problem but also informing policy intervention. In Senegal, the Movement Against Small Arms in West Africa (MALAO) and the African Strategic and Peace Research Group (AFSTRAG) in Nigeria organised several public awareness events to mark the 2003 small arms week of action. The Federal Police in Ethiopia have maintained various programmes aiming at raising public awareness and creating close collaboration between the police and the general public. They have a weekly television and radio programme which focuses on their activities and includes crime, peace and security.

In South Africa, the development and implementation of public awareness programmes on SALW falls under South Africa's fourth pillar,¹⁰⁶ the Prevention of Crime and Violence through Awareness and Social Crime Prevention Partnerships. One way to achieve greater public awareness has been through the provision of Firearm-Free Zones (FFZs). Section 140 of the Firearms Control Act, providing for FFZs, was used in May 2001 by the SAPS to launch a pilot project that declared some schools FFZ. Although the project ended in June 2002 with 27 schools establishing themselves as FFZs, additional applications are currently being processed.

Regional groupings such as the ECOWAS, SADC, Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and East African Community (EAC)

106 In 2001/2002, the SAPS developed a Firearm Strategy that has five pillars to eradicate the proliferation of firearms for use in crime and violence in South Africa and to guide its programmes in Southern Africa. The pillars are to facilitate the smooth implementation of the Strategy.

have also undertaken activities aimed at publicising the negative effects of illicit proliferation and use of small arms. In fact IGAD, through the Conflict Early Warning Response Mechanism (CEWARN), has started a pilot project targeting the Karamoja and Wajir clusters.¹⁰⁷ The two clusters are adversely affected by the illicit proliferation and use of small arms in the Horn of Africa region. The purpose of CEWARN is to promote the exchange of information and collaboration among member states with the aim of designing appropriate intervention mechanisms.¹⁰⁸

On landmines, Ethiopia, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda have programmes on mine awareness. But Uganda's programme is more established. Through the Mine Risk Education (MRE) programme, the Ministry of Health Disability Department, the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF), the District Local Councils and other NGOs, among others, have been at the forefront in awareness raising. They have had the collaboration of the Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR – Uganda), the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW – Uganda) and the *Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale* (AVSI), the Ministry of Health Disability Department, the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF), the District Local Councils and other NGOs, among others, have been on the forefront in awareness raising. By the year 2002, it is estimated that 1,778 MRE community educators had been trained in the districts of Kasese, Pader, Kitgum and Gulu. These consisted of 153 sub-county level educators and 715 primary school teachers, among others.¹⁰⁹ Radio programmes on MRE are conducted, in addition to two drama groups formed in the Paicho and Awach sub-counties of the Gulu district. The purpose is to carry out MRE through the media.¹¹⁰

107 The Karamoja cluster consists of parts of north-western Kenya, north-eastern Uganda, southern Sudan and parts of south-western Ethiopia, while the Wajir cluster covers the region that borders north-eastern Kenya, north-west Somalia and parts of south-east Ethiopia.

108 For more on functions see the Protocol on the Establishment of a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism for IGAD Members States, IGAD, 2002.

109 *Op cit*, interview with Richard Nabudere, 18 November 2003.

110 *Ibid*.

It has, however, emerged that there are no sustained public awareness programmes by either the government or other stakeholders on SALW. Instead most of them are short-term activities geared towards a specific function such as commemorating specific events.

Despite the absence of specific public awareness programmes on SALW, it is safe to say that the issues have received some meaningful publicity. Official statements and research remain critical for explaining the complex nature of the problem of illicit small arms. The actions of civil society and international organisations are to raise understanding on the existing instruments and also lobby governments to implement the resolutions therein.

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