



## Executive Summary

### **Report on Central American Small Arms Control Programme (CASAC)**

**January-December 2008**

The principal approach and objective of CASAC in 2008 aimed at strengthening inter-institutional mechanisms, in order to enhance human security in the Central American region. This is valid both at national and regional level, in favour of a safer Central America, developing in peace, freedom and democracy. In accordance with the Geneva Declaration on armed violence and development and based on the theory that the proliferation of SALW undermines a country's ability to ensure human security, this Programme aims at promoting sustainable development. Through a regional framework dealing with the prevention of armed conflicts and better SALW control, the intention is to reduce the incidence and potential of armed violence in Central America. The strategy also stressed the importance of accelerating human development and human security as a mean to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

***In terms of objectives and specific results, CASAC has focused on three key elements:***

- In order to improve and strengthen its relations with the UNDP Country Offices (CO) and national counterparts, CASAC initiated its activities in 2008 with a coordination-workshop with the focal points of the Governments and the CO's aimed at defining the work plan of CASAC. Through a closer monitoring, a strengthened support and, in some cases, agreements on seed funds for national activities, CASAC has made a major effort in developing strategic relationships with CO and key stakeholders.

- Additionally, the Programme has sought to consolidate the network of experts on issues of the prevention of armed violence and SALW control: i.e. UNICEF, UNODC and UN-LiREC within the UN system, and CLAVE/ IANSA and the Small Arms Survey. The programme undertook official missions to New York, Brussels and Geneva and met the UN agencies, governmental stakeholders and NGOs working on SALW control and prevention of armed violence.
- Finally, CASAC is about to complete a regional diagnosis in order to have a baseline that will sustain and sharpen the strategy of the regional programme vis-a-vis national and regional realities.

***In terms of outputs, it is important to note the following:***

- This year, the CASAC Programme has focused its activities on the establishment of National SALW Commissions - NC (i.a. the training component): Commissions of Costa Rica and Nicaragua are established and are operating. In El Salvador and Belize the National Council on Public Security plays a major role regarding SALW control, from an operational point of view. Its limitation lies in not integrating institutions such as the Ministries of Education and Health, nor representatives of parliament or civil society. There are legal frameworks for the establishment of CN in Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, but still not functioning.
- With the objective to strengthen the NC's and enhancing the capacity of the relevant actors in the region, CASAC conducted the 1st regional workshop on the establishment and functioning of the NC's, "An interdisciplinary and inter-agency approach". Through this exercise, CASAC has contributed to highlighting the seriousness of the situation regarding armed violence in Central America. The workshop provided space for sharing of knowledge, lessons learned and good practices. This has enabled the regional stakeholders to expand their vision on the situation in each country and in the region. CASAC has also made contributions to the planning for 2009, identifying the priorities of the NC's in each country and identifying challenges and actions ahead through a SWOT analysis.
- Regarding obtained result on Weapons Collection, Management and Destruction (WCMD), CASAC has supported the destruction of 12,996 weapons in Nicaragua and 1,759 in Costa Rica. In addition the programme has promoted the importance of public campaigns for SALW destruction in the region. We acknowledge with satisfaction, based on discussions with national and regional authorities, that there is interest in continuing these processes in 2009. As a reference it can be noted that in some countries there are legal provisions foreseeing WCMD twice a year, thus demonstrating the political commitment across the region to pursue these important processes.

- In terms of support to improved legislation: the programme has supported Panama, Costa Rica and Guatemala in the legal reforms relating to SALW control, and the promotion of the incorporation of regional and international instruments. This component should be strengthened within the next year, through the project approved by the European Union with a budget of 1 million euro. During the period of 2008, discussions also took place in the parliamentary field. A meeting on parliamentary action at the regional level has taken place and a policy paper on strategies and priorities for 2009 has been developed. Also, based on discussions with parliamentarians in several countries, attention has been given to the ATT process.
- In terms of prevention initiatives, the programme has been providing support to Costa Rica and Nicaragua for awareness campaigns. These measures were funded largely by the Spain-UNDP Fund.

CASAC furthermore acknowledges efforts by Civil Society Organizations (CSO) who have dedicated much effort to promote campaigns, research and interventions, thus providing the basis for improved coordination across the region. In just 12 months, CASAC has developed partnerships with Redcepaz, IANSA, SAS and other CSO's, including academia. CASAC is also developing a communication strategy combined with the designing of a Web page that will feature a Regional Campaign for Violence Prevention. This will also include training for reporters, journalists and media editors and other advocacy programmes.

### **PLANNING 2009:**

Legislation: with financial support of the European Commission (EC), CASAC will assist the Central American countries to integrate in their policies the regional and international instruments on SALW control.

Strengthening of capacities: the programme will continue harnessing the capacities of the NC at the national level, through training sessions on SALW control (financed by the EC) and the prevention of armed violence (financed by Spain), promoting in both cases an exchange of information and experiences also at the regional level. Additionally, the EC funding will support national authorities to establish control systems (information exchange systems, systems for registration) at national and transnational level (border control).

CASAC intends to enhance the capacity of CSO regarding arms control (CE) and the prevention of the armed violence (Spain) on national as well as transnational level. Finally, the programme will support enhancing capacities at regional level, by organizing seminars and meetings and to identify best practices in arms control themes.

Prevention: with the support of the Spanish funds, the programme will support regional campaigns for conflict prevention, and work on matters related to gender and armed violence. The programme will furthermore organize trainings for communicators.

In terms of budget, CASAC has been granted substantial support from the European Commission and the Spanish UNDP Fund. As a result of the efforts to mobilize resources during 2008, and according to the strategy described previously, CASAC has been entrusted for the last quarter of 2008, and the years 2009 and 2010, the following quantities, thus ensuring sustainability to the programme:

- European commission: contribution of 1,000.000 euro of the for the period 2009-2010
- Fiduciary Fund Spain-PNUD: contribution of 300.000 dollars for the period 2008-2009
- Fund Spain-SICA: CASAC is negotiating a contribution of 150.000 euro for the period 2008-2009
- Fund Sida: contribution of 12.000 euro in concept of part time technical support (senior advisor) for the period 2008-2009