

# A HUMAN SECURITY CONCERN: THE TRAFFICK, USE AND MISUSE OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN THE CARIBBEAN



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## **Executive Summary**

This paper looks at the place of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) as a threat to Human Security with specific reference to the Caribbean context. The concept of Human Security for the purpose of this paper is not limited to a State centric realist definition of the concept. Human Security is interpreted and interrogated within a more people centred approach to the concept. The intent of the paper is to outline the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weight weapons within the framework of a compromised Human Security and as a hindrance to development.

It further explores the major considerations of Human Security for the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean region, investigating the political and economic development path as a contributor to and facilitator of this compromised security. Additionally, the unique geopolitics and economics of regional development and the space created for the proliferation of SALW is also looked at in terms of providing as holistic as possible an understanding of the factors which determine the mis-use of SALW within the region.

In conclusion, the remedial work undertaken, both at the level of the State and non-State actors, specific to the social and economic fallout consistent with the proliferation and mis-use of SALW will be explored. The initiatives which seek to address the issue of SALW as a threat to human security at the national, regional and international levels. The overarching concerns of the paper are the place of gender within the Human Security and SALW dialogue and the place or impacts on the development agenda for these issues.

## 1.0 Human Security

A widely accepted definition of human security remains an elusive goal. Human Security therefore is a contested concept. The persistent area of contestation remains the vacillation of the central referent object of analysis between the State and the individual. In the mainly American security studies paradigm the State is seen as the referent object, that is, the entity to be secured. This is consistent with the neo-realism school of thought, and the dominant security studies paradigm which sees threats to security as emanating from the nature of an anarchic system of sovereign States (pg 2 Helsinki Process Papers on Human Security edited Helsinki Human Security Secretariat January 2005).

The neo-realist school builds on the realist paradigm. Within which citizens are seen as the ultimate referent object and the state is the necessary mechanism to ensure the security of these citizens. Therefore within this framework the security of the State and the security of its citizens are synonymous. This analysis, although it brings the plight of the citizen to the fore, does not leave room for situations where the State wages war on its own citizenry or where the State has failed, or elements of the State, is fighting against itself or when the State wages war on individuals within its borders who are not officially part of its citizenry.

Therefore, cognizant of the conceptual limitations and concerns related to the concept of Human Security, for the purpose of this paper, Human Security is seen as being about protection and provision for individuals, national security is seen as being about the protection of States. Additionally, one of the state's primary responsibilities is the provision of security to its citizens. It is further recognized that there are a multiplicity of factors which result in an inability of the State to effectively provide this security to its citizens, and that the pursuit of the state's security could often be at the expense of the individual's security.

This paper posits that the individual is the referent object. Human Security is seen as an overarching concept of an integrated vision of positive peace, human rights and development (pg 79 2004: ed. Ricciutelli et al.). This is consistent with the United Nation's working definition of the concept of Human Security. The UN interprets Human Security as 'Freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want' and freedom to live in dignity, often referred to as 'people-centred security' or 'security with a human face', this form of human security places human beings—rather than states—at the focal point of security considerations. Inherent in this definition are considerations of gender equity and equality and security considerations for the environment as a means of protecting human security. It emphasizes the complex relationships and often-ignored linkages between disarmament, human rights and development, holding fast to the fact that today all security discussions demand incorporation of the human dimension (UNIDIR).

## 1.1 Human Security and Development

The redefinition and expansion of the concept of human security to encompass human and ecological needs instead of allowing it to be limited to national sovereignty and borders, has brought the concept into an interrelated and intimate relationship with development as a people centred concern. This form of development requires a revisiting of the social order. It rests on the equal participation of marginalized groups, including women and indigenous people. It restricts the use of military force and on the basis of this reordered social fabric would the move to collective global security be realized (Ibid pg 79). The relationship between human security and development is further borne out through a closer look at the threats to human security based on an understanding of human security as foundational for the equal participation of men and women in the process of development.

The many threats to Human security, differing for individuals at different times, fall into seven main categories;

- Economic insecurity
- Food insecurity
- Health insecurity
- Personal insecurity
- Environmental insecurity
- Community and cultural insecurity
- Political insecurity (pg 36 UNDP Human Development Report 1999)<sup>1</sup>

If development is interpreted not strictly as a function of economic growth but as human development, the listed threats to Human Security are restrictive of human development. The definition of Human Development being used is the process of enlarging people's choices by expanding their functionings and capabilities. Functionings refer to the valuable things that the individual can do or be (such as being well nourished, living long and taking part in the life of a community). Capabilities reflect the various combinations of functionings an individual can achieve i.e. the freedom to achieve functionings (pg17 UNDP Human Development Report 2000).

Therefore the effective pursuit of human development cannot be achieved where the threats to human security are unaddressed. If human development is not premised on solely the generation of an income, but becomes closely intertwined with concerns of personal security, community and cultural security and the experience of men and women as they may differ specific to access to security, then each concept becomes a necessary facilitator of the other, within the notion of sustainable and culturally relevant development.

Inherent in this sustainable and relevant development lies the equal rights and participation of both men and women in the development process. This hinges on equal rights, opportunities and

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<sup>1</sup> These threats to human security must be seen as being more severe and debilitating to human existence in situations where gender inequality and inequity persistent inequality in terms of access to and control of resources, participation in decision making and other fundamental development concerns.

access to resources, the eradication of poverty and a commitment to social justice and gender justice which requires involvement of men and women both as agents and beneficiaries in social and economic development. The introduction of gender equity and equality concerns into this dialogue further expands human security to embrace the structural violence of the widening economic gap between the haves and the have nots globally and nationally, and the social fallout consistent with this widening gap, and the institutionalized inequity which continue to place women at a disadvantage socially, economically and politically.

Conventional concepts of Human Security which resides in the protection of borders and states do not challenge the systemic inequality between men and women which hinders human development nor does it call to account the entrenched inequality between groups of persons, based on geography, sexual preference or physical disabilities, in terms of access to resources and systems of decision making. Increasingly, the human security discourse, which seeks to incorporate the concept of sustainable human development, cannot be of credence without equality of men and women and equality of access and control of resources. The unhindered inequality among groups and between men and women continue to be a challenge to advancement of many developing regions including the Caribbean. Unfortunately, this concept of human security, which emerges out of the plight of peoples and groups traditionally excluded from the national security agenda which is historically rooted in the military-defence domain. Additionally, for the Caribbean and many other developing regions, the expanded discourse on national security remains an '*alternative discourse*', defined, articulated and rooted in civil society groups, social movements and marginal groups – especially women largely outside of the State and other planners of national development paths and models.

## **2.0 The Caribbean within the Global Illicit Drug Trade**

The global drug trade provides an important backdrop against which SALW have entered the Caribbean<sup>2</sup>. Guns and the illegal trade in drugs have formed a symbiotic relationship which has seen the emergence of an increasing violence throughout communities regionally. Illegal guns enter the region mainly used as protection of shipments and in some cases as payment for some drug shipments. Therefore, the guns and the drugs are intertwined. An understanding of the extent of the Small Arms and Light Weapons problem within the region could be brought to the fore through a critical understanding of how this very small region features in global narco-trafficking. This insight was sourced from the Publication entitled Caribbean Drug Trends 2001-2002 emerging out of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime published in February 2003.

In 2001, the countries and territories that comprise the Caribbean region accounted for aggregate seizure figures of 24.7 metric tonnes (MT) of cocaine, 112.9MT of marijuana, 223 kilos of heroin and over 115,000 ecstasy tablets. Heroin, cocaine and cannabis seizures showed large increases over the previous year – 35%, 29% and 17% respectively and this upward trend has been confirmed by the reported seizures during the first half of 2002. On the other hand, the number of ecstasy tablets seized by law enforcement agencies in the Caribbean decreased by

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<sup>2</sup> NB The illicit trade in drugs does not account for all the small and light weapons entering the region, in recent years insurrectionists and various militia type organizations have been known to be important importers of these weapons.

60%. For cocaine, this increase in 2001 and 2002 represents a U-turn in historical trends which have shown a constant decline in cocaine seizures since 1996. The amount of marijuana seized by law enforcement agencies continued the upward trend that began in 1998 following huge declines in the period 1995-1997. Heroin seizures are at an historical high. The interception rate for cocaine (the amount of cocaine seized divided by the total estimated quantity of cocaine crossing Caribbean jurisdictions) increased from 8.7% in 2000 to 11.5% in 2001. For marijuana, the interception rate was well over 25% (Ibid).

The highest increases in cocaine seizures by jurisdiction took place in Anguilla, Belize, Bermuda, Antigua and Barbuda, Turks and Caicos Islands and Suriname. On the other hand, in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Cuba and Puerto Rico the amount of cocaine seized declined by more than 50%. By geographical areas, the highest increases in cocaine seizures to the increasing participation of the European export market, has transferred the bulk of the cocaine trafficking from the Central Caribbean to the margins<sup>3</sup> of the region.

The high levels of cocaine seizures prove that the Caribbean is a high intensity cocaine trafficking area. With only 0.5% of the world's population, the law enforcement agencies of the region contributed 7.4% of the global seizures of cocaine. This percentage increased in 2001 after five consecutive years in which the share of cocaine seizures in the Caribbean declined. In 1994, the percentage of cocaine seizures in the Caribbean reached a historic high of 12%. However, cocaine seizures are much lower in the Caribbean than in the competing Central American-Mexican corridor. For the territories periphery of the Caribbean, Belize and Bermuda recorded the largest increases in cocaine seizures – well over 1000%. The South American Caribbean (Guyana and Suriname) and the Eastern Caribbean also saw increases in their share of cocaine seizures – by 400% and 200%, respectively.

Meanwhile in the Central Caribbean area, from the Cayman Islands and The Bahamas to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, the amount of cocaine seized declined by 23%. Nevertheless, this area continues to account for more than half the total cocaine seized but this ratio has been dramatically reduced from 85% during the 1995-2000 period to 53% in 2001.

The significance of the Caribbean in the global illicit drug trade and the close place of SALW in this illegal trade are important to understanding the extent of the growth of SALW regionally. The regional trade in illegal drugs relative to the international trade in illegal drugs sees the Caribbean superceding its size. If the region's trade in illegal drugs is significantly greater than its size, and illicit weapons are intertwined with illegal drugs then it is reasonable to assume that the spread of SALW throughout the area would be substantial. The relevance of the drug trade as an indicator of the presence of SALW is of greater importance when this information is understood in the context that the drugs seized represents less than approximately thirty 30% (in some regional jurisdictions the figure is significantly less) of the drugs traded. Guns accompany every shipment which passes through regional waters. Therefore as the region is proportionally

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<sup>3</sup> Central Caribbean: Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Cuba, Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and British Virgin Islands.

Periphery: Belize, Aruba, Netherlands Antilles, all jurisdictions in the Eastern Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, French Guiana, Suriname and Bermuda.

over represented in the transshipment of drugs so is it, proportional to its size, over represented in its exposure and stockpile of weapons consistent with this trade. It is important to note that the Caribbean's place in the trafficking of drugs emerges out of a number of factors which are external to the varying national contexts. However here exist internal features of regional development which create trends of inequity and inequality which act as pull factors to the drug and gun trade.

## **2.1. Caribbean Development as a Facilitator of the Gun Culture**

The Plantation System established in the Caribbean region with the advent of the Atlantic slave trade provided a significant amount of the critical surplus capital which propelled England and France into self-sustained economic growth in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (pg 120 Beckles et.al). This historic positioning of the region in the periphery of the global economy, built on the short known history of the region has seen the generation of wealth as the only reason for the settlement of the region. The generation of this wealth has long been the equivalent to the creation of a society and civilization within this part of the world resulting in a commodification of the regional space.

This commodification is exacerbated by the fact that the people, other than the indigenous peoples, have historically seen themselves as transient, mainly coming as workers committed to returning to their homes and not settlers. During the period of slavery, indentureship and colonization the generation of wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few persons and large proportions of the wealth generated regionally was sent elsewhere to build civilizations and societies. This legacy has therefore informed the post colonial development process. The challenge for the region remains firstly one of expanding the activity of wealth creation beyond a few hands and one of ensuring the wealth created regionally is used to build a Caribbean society and civilization. The regional inability to address this challenge has seen a heightened attractiveness of the illicit trade in drugs in recent years, a fact which is further magnified by the narrow definition of development which continues to inform development policy.

From the time of independence to present, development in the Caribbean has been viewed strictly as an economic process to be advanced by Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). A by-product of this has been that the people of the region and the concept of human development have not assumed primacy in the process of development. This phenomenon, coupled with the fact that the economic development of the Caribbean has not resulted in a large-scale redistribution of wealth in many territories, has seen the growth of inequity and inequality regionally. Economic power relations have not been radically altered from the post slavery and colonial periods. This is a situation exacerbated by a brand of politics which has sought to propagate this bourgeois democracy<sup>4</sup> and has seen a limiting of economic options for much of the regional population (Tafari-Ama, 2002, pg 43). These trends have been exacerbated by the need and the commitment of regional governments to keep in step with international policies and

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<sup>4</sup> A form of democracy which does not see the central function of structures of governance as a service to the people but one controlled by structural power brokers with a tremendous stake in controlling the minds of the population. Inherent in this form of governance in a distorted discourse of race/colour and class, entrenched clientelism, which produces a peculiar form of violence



development trends, limiting the place of the regional cultural and social context to effectively inform the development course.

In a 1977 article economist Lloyd Best stated, *The present Caribbean Economy needs inequality in much the same way as current Caribbean Politics*. His conclusions, one decade after the regional territories had begun to assume their Statehood lied in the fact that the technological advancement pursued by the economies lied in imitation of the first world space and the provision of an economic playground for capital coming out of these countries. Therefore, even national companies were a metropolitan subsidiary, affiliate or branch plant, with the techniques of production being programmed abroad (1977 ed. Girvan et. al, p 13). At the time Best was writing, foreign direct investment was not bringing remedy to the life of the masses of the region, and it resulted in the continued concentration of wealth in the hands of a strategically placed few.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century challenge is not radically dissimilar to that of 1977. The economies remain small and heavily dependent on the inputs from abroad to lend buoyancy to economic development. The international trading rules are becoming increasingly hostile to the survival of these economies and the options for economic survival are decreasing as trade becomes more liberal. For the region, development along the path of unbridled capital investment and expansion of the space for foreign capital has meant the resultant persistent growth of inequality. The varied and limited fraternization of the economies with socialist democracy or in the case of Grenada socialism, did not reap the envisioned rewards. The international relations of the region and the sphere of influence of international lending institutions and the hand of larger multi-national interests has combined to create a very narrow economic space for the region. It is out of the combined internal and external factors which have forged economically and politically disenfranchised masses of this region which have permitted some to pursue alternative outlets of economic activity to remedy their disenfranchised state.

Geographically, the location of these States between the South American Mainland and the North American main land make them ideal ports of transshipment for illicit products produced in the South, which have a high demand in the North. This interplay of factors provides a fertile breeding ground for the proliferation of the trade in illegal drugs which is unable to operate in isolation from the trade in illegal guns.

## **2.2 The Caribbean Representation of Gun Culture**

The emergence of Caribbean gun and drug culture<sup>5</sup> comes out of a combination of factors which include economic inequity, absence of comprehensive social safety net for the citizens of the region, the drug trafficking and limited official ability to counteract the drug trade. Geographically the Caribbean lies between the largest producer market for illicit drugs, particularly cocaine, and the largest consumer market. The countries belonging to the CARICOM grouping have small<sup>6</sup>, open economies<sup>7</sup>, with a narrow export base<sup>8</sup> and a heavy

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<sup>5</sup> Gun Culture here refers to that integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that is both a result of and integral to humankind's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations as shaped by the emergence of this current reality of guns, and drugs and their related societal ills.

<sup>6</sup> The average annual output for CARICOM member states is USD \$1.2 billion and more than half of CARICOM's GDP is less than USD \$500 million with an average population of 500,000 (Jessen 1999,p4)

reliance on the trade preferences<sup>9</sup> for economic survival making these economies very vulnerable to external economic shocks<sup>10</sup>. The open borders combined with small open economies, heavily influenced by North American norms, produce access to drugs leaving South America and a socio-economic space facilitative of the economic gains the drug economy brings with it. The most visible representation of this gun culture being the crime and drug related violence played out in poor communities regionally.

The communities in which the drug and gun culture is most visible in the Caribbean context are urban ‘garrison communities<sup>11</sup>’. Historically these communities have been utilized by political parties to advance their respective cause and are the backbone of the various parties. In exchange for the apparent centre stage in the political process these communities received a preferred status in the distribution of scarce benefits which may emerge from the political party of choice, once they assume rule of the country. (Tafari – Ama pg 111). Unfortunately for these communities, the appropriated benefits are not equated with lasting development opportunities. These communities therefore continue to be hall marked by high rates of unemployment, gang wars, sexual violence, petty and complex crime, poor or a lack of education and poor health care and general inner city stagnation. The level of these social ills and hindrances to development are disproportionately higher within these communities than in the rest of their respective countries (Ibid pg 110).

The historical poverty experienced within these communities is best spelt out in the work of Earl Lovelace in his novel, *The Dragon Can’t Dance*, based on the life of the people of Calvary Hill. A community located within Trinidad and Tobago’s most prolific ‘garrison community’ Laventille. Although the novel is a work of fiction based in the decade after independence, the images presented of this community are still relevant to the discourse today.

*This is the hill, Calvary Hill, where the sun set on starvation and rise on potholed roads, thrones for stray dogs that you could play banjo on their rib bones, holding garbage piled high like a cathedral spire, sparkling with flies buzzing like torpedoes; and if you want to pass from your yard to the road you have to be a high jumper to jump over the gutter full up with dirty water, and hold your nose. Is noise whole day. Laughter is not laughter; It is a groaning coming from the bosom of these houses-no-not houses, shacks that leap out of the red dirt and stone, thin like smoke, fragile like kite paper, balancing on their rickety pillars as broomsticks on the edge of a juggler’s nose (pg 14 Daily Express 21<sup>st</sup> February 2005).*

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<sup>7</sup> External transactions are large relative to the total economic output (Ibid, p 5)

<sup>8</sup> Countries depend on a small number of commodities for their export earnings, mainly agricultural commodities-sugar, banana, rum-minerals and services such as tourism (Ibid, p 5)

<sup>9</sup> The EU and North America, for many years, through arrangements such as LOME and CBI and CARIBCAN has given preferential access to commodities coming out of CARICOM.

<sup>10</sup> The relationship between economic vulnerability and alternate crop production could be advanced in the case of St. Vincent where the anticipated collapse of banana (under new global trade regimes) may have provided a more permissive social environment for the growth of ganja (pg 156 Jamaica HD Report 2005)

<sup>11</sup> Garrison communities emerged as a term to describe the urban enclaves of violence which supported the competing political parties in Jamaica in the 1960’s and 70’s. The term has evolved to embrace regional communities where poverty and violence combine to produce a space of high levels of personal insecurity for the persons who reside there and by extension the national community.

Communities such as the above-mentioned have changed minimally from the post – independence era of the early 1960sto the present. These are the communities which provide fertile breeding ground for the gang violence and use of SALW in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana and to some extent other regional territories.

The political economy of the region is such that although these communities form the bedrock of many of the political parties regionally, they do not engage the elite of the party, neither do they inform the policies which emanate from the parties, whether they may be in opposition or government. Therefore although these communities as an aggregate wield power in the politics of the land, this power is not translated easily into economic or social rights. The historically disadvantaged and violent space is combined with sustained limited economic options and social security and safety net options which do not offer an outlet for the specific challenges facing these communities, favours a facilitative arena for the lower ends and most visible and violent seeds of the drug trade and the symbiotic gun culture to play out itself. Here the gunman is powerful.

The extent of the violence tends to be coupled with periods of economic decline. In Jamaica the growth of the drug and gun culture is best seen in the statistics. In 1986 46% of all murders were committed with illegal guns (which at that time was hardly accessible outside of criminal networks). In 1993 this had risen to 56%, and in 1996 68%. In addition to this in 1993, 53% of all robberies were committed with illegal guns and 24 % of all reported rape cases (Ibid pg 115). In Trinidad & Tobago, the growing use of handguns is seen in the growing number of homicides from 1995 – 2005 (See Table2) and the growing number of homicides by firearms (See Table 3).

**TABLE 2**

***NUMBER OF MURDERS 1995 – 2005 IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO***

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>COMMITTED</b>	<b>SOLVED</b>	<b>UNSOLVED</b>
1995	122	81	41
1996	106	60	46
1997	101	76	25
1998	98	68	30
1999	93	67	26
2000	120	69	51
2001	151	69	82
2002	171	76	95
2003	229	94	135
2004	259	66	193

*Source: Homicide Bureau*

**TABLE 3*****NUMBER OF HOMICIDES BY FIREARMS FOR SELECT YEARS FOR T&T***

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NUMBER OF HOMICIDES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF HOMICIDES BY FIREARMS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF HOMICIDES BY FIREARMS</b>
1995	123	45	63.5%
2000	120	60	50.0%
2005	321	233	72.5%

*Source: Pg 23 Sunday Guardian 11/13.05*

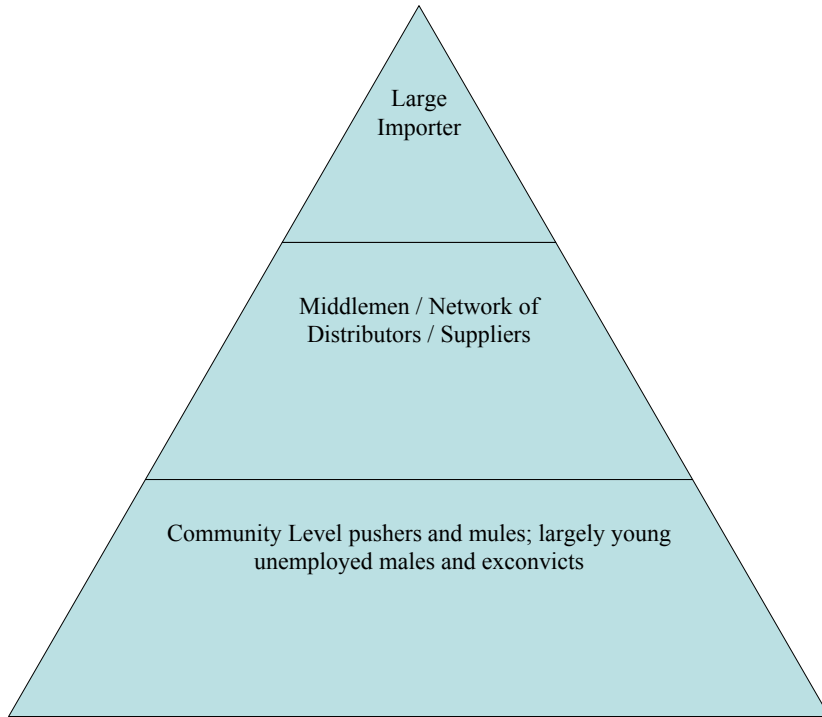
In both territories the murders are connected to easy access to handguns and other SALW. These embattled communities are also plagued by the illegal drug trade. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago the murder rate within these embattled communities is further coloured by the fight for turf specific to the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP)<sup>12</sup>. (Pg 4 Sunday guardian Newspaper April 03/05).

Although statistics for the rest of the region is limited there are some noteworthy trends in the economy of the region and the resultant effects. In 2003/04 Guyana faced the challenge of a death squad which operated mainly in the urban areas of the country. There were a number of reported killings of detainees in Police Stations and a prolific insecurity for persons wishing to move around at night. In addition to Guyana, the Eastern Caribbean States are now faced with the issue of economic survival post- World Trade Organization decision to end the preferential access of regional bananas to the European Market, a position in which the end of preference means the arrested development of these small, vulnerable economies. This situation has left these economies open to dependence on other crops, illicit or legal which may be shipped through the islands.

### **3.0 The Structure of the Trade**

The mechanics of the trade in illegal drugs and the accompanying guns through unmanned or poorly managed sea ports and porous borders are coupled with questionable usage by legal importers and business persons who legally secure licenses or permits for the acquisition and use of weapons . The network of players through which the guns and drugs enter the communities and pass through to the export markets is a complex interface between three distinct layers of persons. The large importer or business person; the middle-men or distributors; and the community- level pusher or mule. (See Fig 1)

<sup>12</sup> Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) – a long standing social assistance initiative operated by the government to provide short term relief for unemployed persons throughout the national community.



**Fig 1**

In exploring the gun and drug relationship the situation of Jamaica as presented in the country's Human Development Report 2005 gives some view of the drugs – gun dynamic faced by regional territories.

*Some 85% of all the imported illegal weapons that have been seized by the police during the period 1995 – 2002 were sent to Jamaica from the USA. The networks that are used to traffic guns in a northerly direction may be used to smuggle guns in a southerly direction. The gun has become the most frequently used instrument of murder. In 2002 68% of all murders were committed with the aid of a gun. As Jamaican criminal networks extend their international ties, they are better able to exploit the instability in countries such as Colombia and Haiti in order to open up new supply lines for illegal guns. (pg 164 UNDP & PIOJ 2005).*

The relationship works as follows: the large importer of narcotics is located at the top of the structure. This is the group of individuals with access to ports, institutional support, capital and the capacity to ensure the products of the trade enter the national borders. These products are then allocated to the network of individuals who would then secure distribution throughout the national community. At the level of the community the network consists mainly of young unemployed male youth and ex-convicts who would engage in the selling of narcotics and the selling and or rental of illegal firearms within the communities. It is important to note that the relationship is an established one, but not a rigid one; there is some limited fluidity of movement

for some individuals along the structure. There is also some straddling of the illegal / legal divide in the movement of the goods and the appropriation of the funds generated from the activity.

The most visible manifestation of the trade remains though, within the communities referred to as garrison communities. Here various groups of vulnerable young men are targeted by suppliers. These individuals, who ultimately control the communities through the power of gun ownership and the gains of the illegal trade, use two major methods for recruiting operators and ensuring that the commodities are utilized for profit. Young men leaving prison are approached with a quota of cocaine and the necessary weapons to defend their 'turf'. They are told which 'bloc' i.e. section in the community, that they will control and the means by which the supplier would be compensated. The repercussion for those young men who may resist could prove to be fatal. The fact that these young men are somewhat restricted in their ability to access conventional means of economic empowerment means that their resistance at times is short lived when faced with the challenge of survival and the accumulation of the basic requirements for living and possible upward mobility (WINAD Research activity).

The situation is further worsened by the fact that these young men are mainly illiterate or functionally illiterate and have traditionally relied on or in their post- jail life would have to rely on the poverty alleviation projects provided by the State. With the mushrooming of the drug culture, many of these projects have become increasingly controlled by the drug suppliers within the community. The direct result is that access to these projects would require the goodwill of those who wield the power. Therefore these young men often find themselves hard-pressed not to enter into the fold of the suppliers. This situation is not limited to those young men who exit the penal system. Another group of young men approached in a similar manner are those who are unemployed and or unemployable and those who spend a great deal of their time on the 'bloc'. These young men make up the primary catchment population for those persons employed by the suppliers to control blocs and dispose of the product within the community.

An equally important element of the complicity of young males in narco-trafficking and the misuse of firearms is the notion of masculinity which locates men in positions of power that are related to violence and control over others. In the Caribbean masculinity is also associated to men's ability to provide for women and for their families. In this regard, many of the young men involved in criminal activity claim that their actions were fuelled by the poverty which their mothers struggle with daily; a situation they feel compelled to relieve mothers from.

The returns to be had from the drug economy are assured, large and quick in comparison to the formal legal economy. The attractiveness of the profits derived from the illegal trade, at times fuel a feud between competing 'blocs'. These feuds may escalate into gang warfare resulting in the deaths of gang members and other acts of random violence. Within the communities in which these blocs are located this violence fuels fear and insecurity in the residents of these communities. The national community is affected by the trickle down effect of this violence and the increase in the numbers of illegal weapons needed to secure the players within the drug economy and therefore circulating in the society. The situation is then created, where the unbridled violence and heightened insecurity, negatively impacts upon participation in the legal economy by foreigners and the flight of capital and the brain drain by locals which contributes to the social and economic instability in the country.

The multi faceted complex nature of this problem poses a great challenge to those persons entrusted with the responsibility of law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies continuously bemoan the fact that their inability to gather timely and accurate intelligence, and the limitations encountered in the investigation and implementation of preventive measures stem from a combination of unavailability of advance technology and the unwillingness of citizens to provide information. The reluctance by citizens to confide in law enforcement authorities is linked to a lack of public trust in these agencies. This lack of trust is as a result of a number of incidents in which law breakers were given details of raids on their operations by law enforcement agencies prior to such activity and the assassination of a number of State witnesses in murder cases while they were in police custody.

### **3.1 The Impact of Small Arms and Light Weapons on Caribbean Economy and Society**

The Caribbean region is not a producer of SALW, neither has the English Speaking Caribbean been the subject of open warfare in its recent history. This fact reiterates the illicit nature of the sources of the weapons which are currently within the region. It also brings to the fore the fact that the region as a non-producer is not privy to the gains to be had from the legal trade in SALW.

The economic development of the region is largely dependent on its ability to entice Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This FDI hinges on a high level of personal security and political stability. The current trend in gun violence in the region mitigate against its ability to attract and maintain FDI, a plight which is particularly economically disadvantageous as dependence on FDI become increasingly important as the primary products produced by the region become increasingly less viable on the world market with the loss of protection and preferred access.

Additionally, the mechanics of counteracting the scourge of violence consist mainly of the financial resources, which could be used for social development needs, being re- directed towards hardware and expensive technical advice for the protective services to counteract the issue of violence. For the period of January to November 2005 the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago engaged in arrangements to acquire the following equipment; three (3) Offshore Patrol Vehicles, Six (6) fast patrol vessels, an airship to provide aerial surveillance, a radar system, helicopters, a patrol blimp and an extensive array of security equipment. Security equipment bears a direct cost, as well as the cost to train persons for effective use and it also bears extensive upkeep costs. The governments of Guyana and Jamaica have also sought overseas expertise, including the use of the Scotland Yard in Jamaica to stem the impact of crime. This expertise comes at a cost, one that the region can ill afford however, in the face of the challenge of crime many governments have pursued this option. The crime situation, although most visible in ‘Garrison Communities’, is felt throughout the national and regional space.

The emergence of tourism as a viable income earner for the Caribbean heightens the urgency of human security. The tourism product is a commodity which is particularly vulnerable to threats to personal security. The alacrity with which developed nations place warnings to nationals visiting various countries, when faced with acts of violence, is debilitating to the tourism market. Unfortunately, the most lasting impact is seen in the social cost paid by the region with a reduction in visitors.

This social cost is represented by the increased use of drugs and illicit narcotics within these territories, and a reordering of the work ethic due to the acquisition of drug and gun turfs. These contending forces lead to the creation of an almost invisible parallel economy operated on illegal drugs and controlled by guns. The impact of which is an increased liquidity in the national economies which disadvantage the poor by increasing the cost of basic commodities such as real estate far beyond their reach and they grapple with the impact of systematic laundering of money within the small national economies. This poverty and heightened insecurity is comparatively more debilitating for the poor of the region, a category of persons in which regional women are featured in greater numbers than their male counterparts.



#### **4.0 The Impact of Small Arms and Light Weapons on Development**

The unhindered and uncontrolled use of SALW unlike the gains of economic policies based on theories of ultimate trickle down to improve the life of the poor masses of populations does flow throughout societies and retards development in a very profound and lasting manner. This remains a major contributing factor that has led to increased poverty and the growth of human insecurity in the region. Globally, cheap, portable, and readily available, SALW are the weapons of choice in gang violence, organized crime, civil wars or inter-state conflict. Their widespread availability can threaten the welfare and stability of communities, states and regions. Because of their long life span, small arms are continuously recycled from old conflicts. (See Table 2 for impact on development and indicators)

AK-47s and M-16s used by combatants during the Vietnam War have resurfaced as far a field as Nicaragua and El Salvador more than 30 years later. Within the inner cities of Jamaica AK- 47 made in China and Russia have been known to be placed in the hands of ‘Dons’ who control these communities. These weapons are highly durable. They frequently outlast peace-agreements and can be taken up again well after the conflict has ended. The sheer quantity of such weapons in circulation today (at least 550 million) can support violent solutions over peaceful ones—particularly in the absence of legitimate public authority and the rule of law.

Small Arms and Light Weapons have a direct impact on human development and kill more than 500,000 people each year. Their impact is not limited to countries in a state of war, but is felt more readily in countries not engaged in active conflict, but where social, political and economic circumstances combine to make these weapons highly accessible and attractive to the everyday existence of a number of citizens. Deaths and injuries related to such activity are not restricted to the violence they create but affect sectors such as health and education which shape human development.

In Trinidad & Tobago, for example, firearm deaths and the persistent increases in expenditure on National Security to combat the impact of the violence consistent with the proliferation of guns and drugs have resulted in the destruction of productive “life years” of people, and have reduced the real GDP of the country. The widespread availability of small arms also causes indirect impacts on human development worldwide that include:

- **Criminal violence**

Perpetrated with small arms has severe implications for the quality of life for civilians, labour productivity, the costs of goods and services and the value of property, investment and tourism. In Colombia, an estimated 90 per cent of the average 20,000 homicides annually are attributed to handguns. The widespread insecurity generated by small arms availability has led to the costly privatization of security. This global industry was estimated to be worth nearly US\$100 billion in the 1990s. In 2004/05 Trinidad and Tobago ran second to Columbia in the numbers of kidnappings per capita.

- **Collapse of health and education services**

Health and education workers are often targeted or attacked in the context of arms-related violence, leading to the collapse of health care and education facilities. Furthermore, the access of patients to these services is frequently limited or constrained due to armed insecurity. For those who are able to reach essential services, they are often faced with abandoned clinics or facilities that are over-stretched. This has significant secondary impacts on health: in the arms affected areas of Mindanao, a region in the Philippines, child mortality rates exceed 310 per 100,000, whereas the national average is less than 175 per 100,000.

- **Displacement of people**

The fear and terror generated by small arms availability is a critical factor in inducing displacement (internal or cross border) and inhibiting or delaying later return or resettlement. There is evidence that firearm related insecurity is a significant factor influencing individual or household decisions on whether to flee or migrate, as measured by rates and numbers of displacement from areas affected by gun violence. Almost half of Sierra Leone's population has been forced to flee to neighbouring countries as a result of the terror provoked by arms-wielding rebel factions. The migration patterns of Caribbean peoples, particularly business persons are closely linked to gun violence and related criminal activity. Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Guyana have all experienced this phenomenon.

- **Reduced government resources**

High levels of armed violence and forced displacement can have a negative effect on government revenue (through lower tax collection) and rates of domestic savings. Lower levels of domestic savings reduce the available resources for investment and can contribute to declines in economic activity. The migration of the most educated and the human resource which has been developed to best serve the country also means a reduction in taxable income by Government. This adds to the hesitance of nationals to invest in highly violent and volatile economies, resulting in excessive capital flight.

- **Damage to the social structure**

High levels of small arms availability can have negative implications for a society's social capital in terms of family and communal cohesion, gender relations, and customary institutions that condition social control and may undermine the prospects for human development. In Kenya, customary institutions among pastoralists such as bridal dowries, elder's councils, common property resources and informal exchange mechanisms have been distorted by small arms availability.

- **Withdrawal of development assistance**

Small arms availability has generated insecurity for development agencies, often resulting in a withdrawal from regions that are particularly affected. The frequency of security incidents involving small arms have increased the costs of doing development work across the board, including transportation, logistics and, perversely, the opportunity costs of not intervening. Removing small arms from conflict or potential conflict situations can save lives and promote development.

A preventive development approach is essential for dealing with the impact of small arms availability and use. Such an approach should focus on both the sources of supply of these weapons and the reasons why people possess them. It is this supply side dynamic which highlights the critical need for the comprehensive control of SALW transfers, consistent with the UN Small Arms programme (PoA). Basically, there are two major approaches to small arms reduction, by either attempting to contain the supply of these weapons, or by reducing the demand. While these approaches can be used in combination, it is ultimately necessary to address the root causes of armed conflict and social violence. This focus on the demand side is linked to the preventive development approach, which assumes that without well-balanced and sustainable human development, armed conflict and social violence are more likely to emerge, and thereby increase the demand for arms. There is a growing consensus around the idea that a lack of opportunity and perceived injustice and inequality compels some people to take up arms. As a result, efforts to combat the proliferation of small arms must address the issue of trust among people by building confidence, by forging collaborative networks in the community, and by supporting genuinely participatory initiatives and a long-term commitment between stakeholders.

**A MATRIX OF THE EFFECTS AND INDICATORS OF  
SMALL ARMS AVAILABILITY AND USE**

	<b>IMPACTS ON DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>
<b>Direct</b>	Firearm related Death and Injury	<p><b>Primary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of firearm deaths (e.g. homicide, suicide, accidental rates)</li> <li>• Number of non-fatal injuries</li> <li>• Monetary value of non-fatal firearm injuries (e.g. DALY and YPLL)</li> <li>• Costs associated with treating firearm deaths and injuries at municipal, district and national levels</li> <li>• Insurance costs associated with firearm deaths and disability</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incidence of psychosocial trauma</li> <li>• Demographic sectors (age, gender) affected by death and injury</li> </ul>
<b>Indirect</b>	Armed Criminality	<p><b>Primary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rates (numbers, frequency) of different types of firearm related crimes—homicide, aggravated assault, robbery, kidnapping, car-hijacking (urban versus rural)</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insurance premiums (e.g. household insurance, car insurance)</li> <li>• Private security services (e.g. value of industry, non-productive labour)</li> <li>• Demographic sectors (age, gender) that are most vulnerable</li> <li>• Emigration (by profession)</li> </ul>
	Forced Displacement	<p><b>Primary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rates (numbers of people) of forced displacement from arms-affected areas</li> <li>• Rates (number of incidents) of armed insecurity at site of relocation</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forcible seizure or loss of assets (e.g. homes, livestock)</li> </ul>
	Social Services (Health and Education)	<p><b>Primary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of health and education workers killed or attacked</li> <li>• Number of clinics and schools closed due to armed violence</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vaccination and immunization coverage</li> <li>• Life expectancy and child mortality</li> <li>• Primary/secondary school enrolment rates</li> <li>• Pupil-teacher ratios</li> </ul>
	Economic Activity (Trade and Production)	<p><b>Primary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher transport costs (risk)</li> <li>• Destruction of physical infrastructure during armed conflict</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price of local goods</li> <li>• Local terms of trade</li> <li>• Agricultural productivity</li> <li>• National and subsistence food production (food security)</li> </ul>
	Investment, Savings and Revenue Collection	<p><b>Secondary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends in local and foreign direct investment</li> <li>• Trends in revenue collection</li> <li>• Levels of domestic savings</li> </ul>
	Social Capital	<p><b>Primary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of child soldiers</li> <li>• Membership of armed gangs</li> <li>• Incidents (number, type) of armed domestic violence (e.g. rape)</li> <li>• Breakdown in customary authority</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat criminal activity among minors</li> <li>• Functioning of customary institutions</li> </ul>

	Development	<p><b>Primary</b> Intervention • Security incidents (firearm homicide, armed assault, armed intimidation, evacuation, etc.)</p> <p><b>Secondary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of logistics (proportional to ODA)</li> <li>• Cost of security (insurance premiums, contracted security)</li> <li>• Opportunity costs</li> </ul>
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Source: “Development Held Hostage”, Assessing the Effects of Small Arms on Human Development United Nations Development Programme April 2002

#### 4.1 Women, Men and Gun Violence

Men and women participate in and are affected by gun violence in a dynamic interplay of traditional and changing gender roles. Men are traditionally seen as owners and perpetrators of violence while women are not limited to the role of victims, but they are also activists, facilitators and perpetrators of gun violence, all at the same time (Schroder et al, p 4 2005). Gun violence, whether it is in active combat or peace time conflict, negatively impacts women’s security. Women assume multiple roles as it relates to the ownership and use of small arms within a given society. Unfortunately though, an overarching variable is the fact that in spite of varying roles the place of women and girls is one where they are more vulnerable to the use and misuse of these instruments owing to the differing gender roles in operation within every culture.

Violence is not strictly a male practice; it is however linked, along with guns to masculine identity. This hinges largely on the conventional notions of masculinity, which ascribes the role of protector and defender to men. This role and responsibility of protector and defender have historically in Caribbean and other cultures, been the domain of men. The effective fulfilment of this role is closely linked with the ownership and access to weaponry. In the contemporary space this weaponry has evolved from spears, and knives into guns and other small arms. The implication of this phenomenon has been very far reaching both within and outside the home.

Worldwide, most small arms owners and users are male. As legal owners men dominate the military and the police, therefore giving them a large proportion of the legally owned small arms (Ibid p 20). Women represent a small proportion of gun owners, but in terms of their proportional representation as victims of gun violence they are disproportionately represented compared to their ownership of these weapons.

As victims of gun violence, within the household, a very fundamental shift in the lives of women has occurred specific to the increased availability of SALW. This has been the increased fatality of gender-based violence. A growing example of this phenomenon is the increased fatality of domestic violence incidents consistent with the introduction of guns into the home. Therefore, women become at risk from their partners, fathers, sons and brothers.

In spaces where guns have proliferated as a means of identifying with masculinity and the means of acquiring a livelihood, the place of women in traditional gender roles see women cast in the role of a push factor in the male’s need to acquire a gun to fulfil the provider responsibility. This operates particularly in areas where guns are owned in response to self defence against violence,

in the context of inactive or violent police forces and high crime rates, where guns are seen as being central to economic advancement (Ibid p 24). Within this context, where men as providers require guns and men as protectors require guns and the security of citizens are closely linked to their proximity to guns or gun ownership, women straddle the victim role and the catalyst in the acquisition of guns.

In economic spaces where women consistently earn less than men, or where they form a large cross section of the poor or where the social safety nets are limited, women would increasingly rely on men to fulfil their perceived provider role. In economies where the employment opportunities remain limited and the opportunity to participate in illegal activity remains a lucrative alternative there would always be a pull factor. This remains a challenge for Caribbean governments. The increasing dependence by men and women on the gains of the drug and gun trades and the place of gender roles and responsibilities in the perpetration of this activity presents a phenomenal human security challenge.

As women within such a social context, they run the risk of an increased human insecurity, inclusive of economic insecurity, because of their sex. Women as mothers, partners and sisters act as serious push factors in the proliferation of illegal guns and the related violence. The insecurity is heightened by the high rates of mortality for the male provider involved in this brand of work. This is largely symptomatic of inequitable development and restrictive economic spaces.

Entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict; women and girls are particularly vulnerable because of their status in society and their sex. Parties to conflict often engage in systematic rape as a tactic. Additionally, women are at risk of being forced into sexual slavery, sexual abuse and forced pregnancy as a mechanism of ethnic cleansing and other emerging strategies of war and conflict (Beijing Platform for Action, 2001 pg 85). However, in both times of conflict and in peace time due to the incessant use of small arms, women have also emerged as advocates of social order and peace. In cases where communities collapse or run the risk of collapsing as a result of unhindered violence, the role of women as community peace builders and peace educators become important. They become critical in the translation of an official position of the national peace building into a relevant and applicable dialogue to be effected in the lives of communities and families.

## 5.0 Caribbean Women in Development

The development of the Caribbean region, which is mainly based on a neo-classical economic focussed undertaking, places women at a disadvantage in a number of ways. These include the value neutrality of the science of economics, which is in fact based on male economic activity. The theory is grounded in a European industrialized economic reality where the work of the household is not seen as contributing to the macro-economy. Out of these neo-classical economics have come the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) pursued by all Caribbean Regional Governments, starting with Jamaica in the late 1970s to the Eastern Caribbean as the latest additions to this path.

These policies seek to cut back government expenditure on public services, with the social services being targeted first, liberalization of the monetary system, devaluations and liberalization of trade regimes. For many regional women this has meant increased poverty. This emerges out of the fact that although Caribbean women share a legal equality with the males of the region they are not politically or economically equal. They are faced with a comparatively higher level of economic and social insecurity, and have a significantly lower access to institutions of power and decision making.

Women in the Caribbean feature heavily among the poor of the region when compared to their male counterparts. Historically, labour force participation among regional women continues to be clustered in sectors of female endeavour, which are consistently lower than typical male fields of work. The result of which is that the areas where females cluster persistently pay less than that where men position themselves. This is further exacerbated by the fact that regional women feature heavily in the Government Service, which tend to be the largest employer in most islands and the first to undergo pay cuts and wage freezes in times of economic difficulty. Therefore, although some women have enjoyed high levels of advancement, as an aggregate, regional women are poorer than men and do have a lower standard of living (pg 22, Ellis 2003).

Using Labour force participation (See Table 4) as a means of economic empowerment for both men and women the following table provides a basic insight into the differing participation rates among men and women. The importance of this difference in access to resources means for many regional women heightened insecurity both in terms of the fallout as it relates to the spread of violence and the possible economic fallout of the unhindered proliferation of SALW.

The introduction of guns and the control of that genre of activity by men also heighten the concern of women regarding their security within the home. The gender relations among the young is also affected by the economic attractiveness of the gun carrying male and his ability to assume that traditional male role of provider effectively. Interestingly though, the likelihood of that male being a victim of gang violence also makes his partner and if any, children, the most viable candidate to become female –headed single parent families. This happens to be the fastest growing group of poor persons regionally.

**LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION 1990**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>MALES % IN THE LABOUR FORCE</b>	<b>FEMALES % IN THE LABOUR FORCE</b>
Antigua	53.9	46.1
Bahamas	53.4	46.6
Barbados	54.6	45.4
Belize	76.7	23.3
British Virgin Island	56.6	43.4
Dominica	65.5	34.5
Grenada	62.1	37.9
Guyana	74.0	26.0
Jamaica	57.1	42.9
Montserrat	58.4	41.6
St Kitts Nevis	55.7	44.3
St Lucia	58.9	41.1
St Vincent & the Grenadines	63.8	36.2
Trinidad & Tobago	62.2	37.8

*Source: Ellis 2003 pg 22*

If formal labour force participation is used as a measure of access to economic advancement, Caribbean women when compared to their male counterparts experience a lower level of participation. This lower level of participation could be seen as being contributory to a higher level of economic vulnerability. This economic vulnerability opens questions of dependence, economic insecurity, limited avenues to empowerment and for many women dependence on males (sons, husbands, partners) to play the role of breadwinner or provider. In an economic space where many males find themselves earning income from illegal activity the gender roles and responsibilities which are implicit in the undertaking of such activity cannot be overlooked.

### **Vulnerability and Gun Violence**

Although the gains consistent with guns and drugs could be large, the social and economic fallout consistent with the unstableness of the lifestyle is one which makes women, in their capacity as wife, mother or partner to men involved in this activity exposed to a high level of economic vulnerability.

The cost of legal services in cases where men are brought before the Law, or the cost of untimely death of a child or partner are daily realities for women whose relations operate within the realm of guns and the economic activity associated with this activity. The unscheduled nature of these economic shocks at times means economic ruin for many of these women.

The vulnerability is not limited to economics, there is social fallout associated with the reproductive responsibility of mothers whose off-springs engage in such activity. There is in the



Caribbean a strong sense of maternal responsibility associated with the choices made by offsprings. This responsibility outweighs that associated with the father of the offspring. It is this belief that fuels a public sentiment which makes mothers of persons involved in this brand of illegal activity responsible for the choices of their children and by extension the ills of society brought about by this activity. This periodically manifests itself in some degree of social isolation by persons within communities towards these women.

## **6.0 Work in the area of Gun Violence**

To counteract the scourge of gun violence in the Caribbean work has been undertaken nationally, regionally and internationally. Nationally the work has been limited to Non-governmental interventions which seek to understand and address the conditions and factors within communities which facilitate the proliferation of SALW. Regional work has been focussed on the development of a Caribbean-wide initiative to coordinate the activity of both governmental and non-governmental actors towards the establishment of a holistic response to the issue. While internationally, the subject of SALW has been influenced by the work of IANSA and other international NGOs who have committed themselves to the creation of an international Arms Trade Treaty.

### **6.1. National Work**

The national work in the area is limited mainly to the activity of WINAD. The Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD) was founded in 1999 and introduced its Inter-generational Women's Leadership Programme in the same year. This programme partners young women with mature, conscious women who provide guidance and together they build sisterhood. The Big Sisters are leaders in the media, business, trade unions, politics, law, NGOs, education, culture and social development.

WINAD has developed a number of projects in pursuance of its goal to sensitise the population about issues affecting human development. These projects have ranged from interventions in schools, communities and State institutions. Sensitisations of State and Non State Actors on the issue of gun violence began in 2001. Sister organisations and State officials were approached with an appeal to focus on the rising incidents of gun violence and to try to determine the reason for 'guns' being the weapon of choice in serious crimes. Initially, there was reluctance and rejection but by 2003, the persistence of WINAD and the spiralling crime rate, began to take root and elicit responses from all sectors.

WINAD mobilised civil society organisations and the State for a round table about the impact of gun violence in 2002 and followed with a Caribbean meeting consisting ten countries as geographically diverse as Brazil, Jamaica, Costa Rica, Grenada and Bahamas. This meeting signalled WINAD's intention to organise the Caribbean region and the greater Caribbean to end gun violence.

In 2003, WINAD co-hosted the Laventille Women's Forum along with Laventille Drug Abuse and Drug Rehabilitation Centre, Success Laventille Networking Committee, Desperadoes Steel Orchestra and the Pan American Health Organisation. This two day meeting mobilised over 75 women to discuss the gendered dimensions of gun violence and the impact on their lives.

In 2004, the internationally observed week of action against small arms and light weapons, led by IANSA, was observed in Trinidad and Tobago. WINAD mobilized its partners to visit

shopping malls and distribute literature on the issues and take photographs for the control arms campaign initiated by IANSA, Amnesty International and Oxfam International.

The **NO GUNS FOR CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN** was launched in 2004 to communicate to adults and children that guns of any sort must be rejected and further that the gift of a gun can send a strong signal that possession and misuse of a weapon are sometimes acceptable. The campaign proposed instead that children can be taught to have happy, respectful relationships by spending quality time with them and engaging in educational activities.

In 2005, WINAD co-hosted with one Regional Corporation the “Community Conversations” to encourage citizens to analyse the impact of gun violence in their communities and develop action plans for intervention. The organisation also continued building the national NGO coalition consisting of diverse groups working on issues such as human rights, youth development, trade and community peace building.

Also in 2005, WINAD hosted a meeting with residents and gang leaders to discuss the implications of the violence in the community and to identify measures to alleviate the violence. The meeting was held in two parts. The first part was a public discussion in which all the people in attendance participated and which was covered by the mass media. The second part of the meeting was a private discussion between WINAD members and the gang leaders in which some intervention strategies were identified. There was agreement to collaborate on community activities.

## **6.2 Regional Work**

The issue of regional crime has not gone untouched by CARICOM governments. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat has sought to develop a regional response by the establishment of the CARICOM Task Force on Crime and Security. The consolidation of the work of the Task Force on Crime and Security during the course of 2002 is an encouraging step forward in the needed inter-regional cooperation on SALW and its related activity. This work provides a clear understanding of the linkages between drug trafficking and crime, with their over-all impact on national and regional security, as being forged within the region itself.

The problem of illegal firearms has emerged as a separate concern, but continues to be inextricably linked to the menace of illegal drugs and terrorism. It is not only a principal tool in that arena, but also a currency of payment. The use of firearms in the commission of those transnational crimes has led to a marked increase in the use of firearms in crime at the domestic level.

The number of firearms in circulation on our streets and the availability to the criminal element, are indeed at an alarming level. This is evident from the frequency in the use of firearms in the commission of crimes. Handguns are the weapons of choice, but machine guns and rifles are appearing with increasing frequency in the region. (Task Force 2002)

### **6.3 Internationally**

#### **IANSA**

The International NGO Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) was created to facilitate international NGO action that is fundamentally aimed at enhancing the security of persons by preventing the proliferation and misuse of small arms. IANSA recognizes that assuring human security is an essential part of efforts to reduce demand for, and to control, small arms. It thus seeks to contribute to a more just and violence-free global environment in which sustainable peace, development, human security, and respect for human rights can be achieved. (See Appendix 2 for the Work of IANSA in detail)

### **6.4 The United Nations Framework and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)**

The 2001 UN Programme Action to Prevent Combat and eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (PoA) provides a framework for national, regional and global action on SALW. The proposed legally binding agreement to prohibit transfers of weapons is the draft Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the framework Convention on International Arms Transfers. The Arms Trade Treaty proposed by Oxfam, Amnesty International, the Arias Foundation, Project Ploughshares, Saferworld, the Federation of American Scientists and other NGOs in the International Action Network on Small Arms focuses on the supply of arms, and once adopted, will be an international means of control to ensure that all nations are working to the same standard of arms transfers (see Appendix 2). This Treaty will also help to ensure that deals rejected by one exporter are not licensed or authorized by another.

Article 4 of the proposed Treaty lists several factors which must be considered when making an export decision, and Article 4c clearly states that an arms transfer must not go ahead if it is likely to adversely affect sustainable development. At the time of writing, the ATT text is still under development by a group of international legal experts and policy makers the current text reads as follows:

*In considering whether any international transfer of arms may be authorized ... Contracting Parties shall take into account whether transfers of arms of the kind under consideration are likely to adversely affect sustainable development ... In such a circumstance there shall be a presumption against authorization.*

(See details in Appendix 1).

## **6.5 The Importance of Regional Buy – in**

The Caribbean's survival depends on its policy makers and its people to clearly interpret the holistic nature of the threat posed by the global trade in SALW. For the Caribbean, globalization is an old reality which has gained force and is expressed in new modalities, the current manifestation of the regional crime situation is one product of growing world wide interconnectedness. This interconnectedness has seen definite winners and losers in the organization of world trade and the generation of national income. Regional governments and producer of primary products have lost in terms of access to markets. A lost in the formal economy has also mean possible increase opportunity in the illegal markets. Unfortunately, the generation of this kind of income would perpetuate underdevelopment in a most distractive manner.

The smallness of the regional space and the possible capacity of the guns and drugs to reposition the region from being largely middle income developing economies to a state of anarchy is a real one. The example of Haiti, as a regional state grappling with political instability, social and economic structures which do not serve the population in anyway, is a real example of the impact of unbridled gun ownership within a given national context. Every regional territory runs the risk, in the current global trading arena, therefore of seeing its legal economy become overrun by its illegal economy.

The social and economic fallout from the proliferation of illegal guns and its associated scourges provide a viable basis on which the region could relocate itself in terms of its articulation of the critical need for global trade to be fair. The ATT process which seeks to establish an internationally agreed to and established protocol to control the manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms is an invaluable mechanism on which to advance an understanding of the novel place Caribbean states hold in global geo-politics. Our current state as generally free democratic nations is seriously challenged by the unhindered growth of illegal gun ownership and violence. As a region of non gun manufacturing states and one where the main purchaser of the weapons is supposed to be the State, the mass access to SALW is of critical development concern.

## **7.0 The Way Forward**

### **Research**

Although some work has been done regionally on the presence of guns and the relationship between SALW and the drug trade there is a need for more research to be done in the area, to facilitate evidence-based policy formulation. Analysis of how the illegal and legal divide interface in terms of the transfer of SALW is of critical importance. Understanding the impact of SALW on communities, and not only inner-city communities but other communities is also necessary. In addition, quantification of the actual economic cost and further analysis of the differing impact of these conditions on institutions such as health and education and on men and women, all need to inform the process of addressing this regional scourge.

### **Expanded Collaboration**

Regionally there remains some level of unawareness as to the content and meaning of the ATT process for Caribbean people. The success of the “Buy In” process remains largely dependent on the ability of the non-State and State actors who are currently aware of the requirements of the ATT process to forge strategic partnerships to advance their cause. The threat of SALW to the development of this region is a real one. The region is not large enough or population large enough for this scourge to exist as an isolated irritant. The proliferation of gang warfare which is presently being played out in the streets of our capital cities and communities, if left unattended to, will mean the end of stable living in this region. The valuable human resource on which our development depends will be depleted both in terms of numbers as well as the collective genius.

This is the greatest threat to the survival of this region in its history. It is imperative that the Region becomes a part of the process towards the creation of the ATT. The threats we face are unique to our regional space in terms of the far reaching consequences for regional people but these threats will remain and undermine our development if we do not take action to control the international arms trade.

The threat remains that regional communities increasingly become spaces where high-powered weaponry is used to fuel ongoing violent conflicts between individuals, between gangs and between gangs and the security forces. This threat remains of critical importance for as long as the illicit drugs, introduced into the region mainly by persons involved in legal import and export businesses trickles down to the communities. Inability to control the influx of hard drugs which enter the garrison communities, which generates income, sustains livelihoods and serves as a remedy to blot out the harshness of the daily existence within these communities will lead to our collective demise.

### **Integrated Approach to Regional Crime**

In the Caribbean crime is an issue historically addressed through enhanced policing and legislative enforcement. The issue of crime, although a serious development threat to the region is not seen as a social or economic issue. Therefore, the root causes and push and pull factors

which shape the criminal activity in this region is not a central concern which informs the various policies related to the fighting of crime. The ATT process allows for a pivotal scourge specific to the transfer of SALWs and their place in criminal activity to be brought to the fore of an integrated response to this regional challenge.

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