

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)
Canadian Government, Weapons Enforcement Unit
The Wassenaar Arrangement
World Bank
World Customs Organization
United Nations General Assembly Resolutions and Reports

Finally, as discussed at the 8th meeting of heads of WHO Collaborating Centres on Injury Prevention and Control on 22 October 1997 in Johannesburg, South Africa where were detailed the achievements and focus on gun injuries of the Quebec WHO Centre, we noted that our main role involved collating, appraising and disseminating epidemiological information on firearm injury and deaths, and doing advocacy to promote safety and injury prevention for WHO. Professor Leif Svanstrom of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, underlined the importance of this role, since WHO itself was not mandated to addressing the gun issue in a military, police or customs perspective. Nevertheless, considering the WHA resolution on « Violence as a public health problem », the firearm violence issue can now be addressed directly by WHO and its Collaborating Centres and Experts. Also, the UN recently completed international firearm survey, and the four workshops planned in 1997 were described and the meeting participants requested copies of reports covering both their own country responses and the international perspective, so as to apply these data to preventing firearm related injuries. A document proposed by Dr Rosenberg, from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta on « Implementation of the WHO Violence Prevention Plan », has a preamble about mobilising knowledge and resources for action, that could apply to the surveillance and prevention of firearm injuries.

« In all parts of the world violence extracts an unacceptably high toll, measured not only in terms of injuries and deaths, but also in terms of fear and diminished quality of life for victims, families and communities. Every step of the established WHO plan is ultimately directed at controlling this problem, preventing violence wherever possible, treating victims, and deterring perpetrators. This plan will address all causes of violence, including individual behaviours, structural factors in the social environment, and factors in the physical environment. It will collect information on all types of violence: self-directed, interpersonal, and organised violence. While it is important to enhance efforts at each step of the way, we are beginning this collective effort by organising our efforts to describe the extent and magnitude of the problem of violence in every country so that we can more effectively prevent it and mobilise for this effort the resources it requires. This effort must take into account input from participating member nations and must be user friendly, and widely disseminated. It should serve to mobilise nations to develop the capacity and participate in violence prevention programs involving many sectors working together. »

SAO PAULO WORKSHOP

Sao Paulo was the third in a series of four regional workshops held by the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, mandated by the unanimous vote of 138 nations in 1995,ⁱⁱⁱ followed by a 33-nation ECOSOC resolution in May 1997.^{iv}

At the 1st European regional workshop in Ljubljana, Slovenia 22-26 September 1997, the focus was on "Civilian firearms and civilian firearm regulation, with an international perspective."^v and firearm injury prevention and domestic gun control laws and their role in promoting public safety was amply discussed. Where firearm regulations are canvassed as a means to: "Reduce the levels of crime and violence associated with the misuse of firearms."^{vi} and to: "Promote... projects that recognise the relevance of firearm regulation in addressing violence against women, in promoting justice for victims of crime and in addressing the problem of children and youth as victims and perpetrators of crime."^{vii} At the 2nd African regional workshop in Arusha, Tanzania 3-7 November 1997, the focus was on small arms that are left behind in post conflict situations and find their way into civilians hands. The uncontrolled availability and flow of assault rifles and other small arms and light weapons that are fuelling conflicts and exacerbating violence and criminality, thus threatening the security and safety needed for sustained development. This is compounded by high levels of poverty in the region which fuels theft, illegal sale, and barter of firearms for food. Much discussion evolved on strategies to reduce demand for firearms, considering that domestic peace is an important prerequisite in demand reduction for firearms for self-protection^{viii}.