

Information about the nature and extent of the problem in various regions is incomplete. We often do not know the context and the types of firearms or small arms used.

Whether the concern is peace-building or crime and injury prevention, some efforts are focused on controlling the supply of the instrument of death and injury - the firearm. In both contexts there are three principal sources of firearms:

- firearms which are acquired for legal purposes and misused (in suicide, in domestic violence, in human rights violations)
- firearms which are acquired for legal purposes and sold/stolen (children/youth and firearms crime and unintentional injuries, the "gray market")
- illegally manufactured or trafficked firearms (the "black" market)

Therefore, tracking and controls on the supply of firearms from manufacture to final use are critical.

There are striking links between the measures advocated in public health, crime prevention and peace building approaches. All include efforts to reduce demand (social/economic development). There is also a parallel in perspective (crime prevention vs. disarmament), similar methods (amnesties, buybacks) solutions, and recommendations (i.e. some weapons serve no legitimate purpose in civilian hands). From all perspectives, implementation is also much more difficult and requires sustainable resources.

Discussion:

Several themes emerged during the discussion and a wide range of initiatives and approaches were proposed. It is important to emphasise that while participants had different points of emphasis, there was broad consensus on the following suggestions.

Framing the problem:

We agreed that firearms and small arms are a public health issue and that the prevention of firearms death and injury is the unifying theme. A variety of perspectives on the issue were provided but it was agreed that despite different dimensions in different contexts, firearms/small arms death and injury are a serious health problem.

There was general agreement that a comprehensive approach to the problem was needed, ranging from interventions focused on the demand for firearms in the domestic and international context (socio economic development, values building), interventions which control access to firearms (licensing, storage, embargoes), interventions on the supply of firearms (standards, tracing, etc.), interventions to reduce supply (amnesties, buy-backs) and enforcement/treatment interventions.

Strategic Issues:

Any strategy must recognise that measures to reduce firearms death and injury will be confronted by significant economic and political interests.

The ability to act effectively will depend on the congruence of efforts to mobilise and efforts to collect and share information. We are on a steep learning curve and must work on both dimensions concurrently.

It was suggested that in the model of interventions, emphasis should be placed on interventions at the earliest possible point - the point of manufacture. When considering the public health perspective, interventions directed at the supply side of firearms-small arms, as there are marks in the life span of the gun (i.e. manufacture, sale, carrying, use) are critical, among other approaches. It was suggested that the earlier the intervention in the life cycle of the gun (i.e. at point of manufacture) the more