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SEESAC ACTIVITY REPORT – AR 51

UPDATE OF RMDS/G 05.90 ON SAFER COMMUNITY PLANS

SEESAC FUNCTIONAL AREA	FA 3 - Management Information FA 7 - SALW Management Issues
SEESAC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY	SG 3 - Information Management and Exchange Activities SG 4 - Project Support SG 6 - Technical Support and Assistance SG 8 - Operational Research

"We owe our children – the most vulnerable in any society – a life free from violence and fear. In order to ensure this, we must be tireless in our efforts to attain peace, justice and prosperity for countries, but also for communities and members of the same family. We must address the roots of violence."

Nelson Mandela

The Safer Community Plan is a holistic approach to diminishing the demand for SALW in communities. Through the Safer Community Plan, the representatives of the international community, local government and the communities themselves work to collectively build safer, healthier, more inclusive, more economically attractive and vibrant communities. Although ideally accompanied by a public collection of weapons, safer community development, through the adoption of Safer Community Plans (SCP), can be effective even in cases when there is no formal national amnesty period for weapons surrender, (local amnesties may be agreed with the appropriate authorities). They can be linked to ongoing development activities and focus on risk education and public information in the community in order to reduce risk and improve perceptions of human security.

Since 2003, SEESAC has worked to develop Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards and Guidelines (RMDS/G) in order to support work at the operational level. The RMDS/G reflect the ongoing development of operational procedures, practices and norms, and are constantly updated to reflect the latest developments and practices in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Control.

Based on the experience of Safer Community Projects in FYR Macedonia, RMDS/G 05.90 has been updated to reflect the refinement of the Safer Community Plans based on recent experience. RMDS/G Edition 3 establishes the guiding principles and guidelines for the use of Safer Community Plans (SCP) as part of an integrated SALW programme. Local authorities and police will be encouraged to take the lead in building safer communities by establishing local strategic partnerships involving public organizations, the private sector and voluntary bodies. To be most effective, it is important that Safer Community Plans are considered during the strategic, operational and detailed mission planning phases of SALW Control programme development. The financial costs of SCP can be low at the local level when compared to total programme costs, yet they have the potential for high impact on programme success. The obvious linkages to Community Based Policing (CBP) initiatives should be considered as soon as is practically feasible.

The Safer Community Plan is a participatory tool designed to:

- ❑ assist programme staff in the difficult task of gathering detailed and accurate information about SALW at the community level;
- ❑ source local expertise that can be used to improve the analysis of information;
- ❑ analyse the demand side of the need and use of weapons;
- ❑ build grass root support for ongoing or future SALW Control initiatives;
- ❑ monitor and evaluate the safety situation on the ground as a 'village early warning system';
- ❑ provide an immediate response to current safety concerns;
- ❑ provide linkages to other problem solving projects and community policing activities; and
- ❑ involve communities themselves in decisions about SALW measures.

The Safer Community Plan outlines the different stages needed to design, implement, monitor and evaluate a Safer Community Project. The Annexes contain several helpful tools used for information gathering necessary to determine target groups and analyse the situation and problems facing communities.

SEESAC hopes these guidelines will prove to be a valuable resource for the development of Safer Communities throughout the region. The latest version of RMDS/G 05.90 can be downloaded from the SEESAC website at http://www.seesac.org/resources/current_eng.htm. For more detailed information on the use of SCP please contact Alain Lapon, UNDP SACIM Project manager (alain.lapon@undp.org or Tel: (+389) (2) 321 7688).

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