

## South Asia Small Arms Network (SASA Net):

SASA Net is an initiative for promotion of peace and tolerance in the South Asian region. It resulted of a regional meeting of notable civil society organizations from South Asia, at New Delhi in 2001. The participants of that meeting shared their concern about the spread of small arms and the fact that it was posing serious threats to the lives of the people and shaping their mindsets to disrespect the sanctity of life, narrow the space of dialogue, speak the language of smoking barrels and degenerate the common trust of the citizens into absolute non-cooperation. The participants shared their experiences of the conflicts in which small arms led people to face more volatile conflicts and adversely impact women, religious and ethnic minorities, children and other weaker groups because of their vulnerability in social, political and economic terms. These discussions about the impact of small arms vis-à-vis security, peace and human rights led the participants of that Delhi meeting to form a very vibrant regional advocacy network against small arms, called SASA Net.

The SASA Net since it kicked off five years ago has been actively pursuing South Asian societies and states to expunge small arms industry, control illicit trade of guns, promote regional and global cooperation and change social, political and economic policies in the interest of the people. It continues to register the concerns of the common citizens and the civil society towards conventional and nuclear weapons, pressurize the member states to dismantle their nuclear-bomb facilities and use the resources saved thus for the wellbeing of their citizens.

The SASA Net has conducted various activities in the form of public awareness campaigns, research, forums and capacity building since its establishment. SAP-Pk became its member in the third of a series of meetings organized at Delhi, Dhaka and Colombo.

There are 57 and 18 individuals in the general body and steering committee respectively in the Pakistan chapter of SASA Net. The secretariat of the SASA Net Pakistan is currently with SAP-PK. In fact, the national steering committee asked SAP-Pk in its second meeting, held at Islamabad, to accept the responsibility of running the secretariat.

Year 2006 was a very busy time for the SASA Net in Pakistan. Following were a few achievements of the year:

Activity	Results
3 Meetings of the Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decided about secretariat of SASA Net Pakistan to be with SAP-Pk</li> <li>Defined outlines of the plans for SASA Net Pakistan</li> <li>Developed and approved Constitution of SASA Net Pakistan (A committee comprising of 3 male and female senior academicians and development professional developed the constitution)</li> <li>Extended campaign to different organizations and institutions, especially of education</li> </ul>
Participation in 2 Regional Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlined Regional Strategic Plan</li> <li>Reviewed past activities</li> <li>Presented Pakistan's work for Annual Report of the SASA Net (Regional)</li> </ul>
4 Position Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabled national partners to define their position with regards to advocacy and lobbying on peace and regional cooperation</li> </ul>
Linkages with Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitized universities' youth, through theatre, about peace vis-à-vis small arms, and mobilized them to actively protect and support peace initiatives (Chancellor of Bahawalpur University was also interested to host a exhibition of posters and invite victims of violence)</li> </ul>

Theatre Shows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educated students and general audiences of Pakistan Social Forum (Lahore), educational institutions and World Social Forum (Karachi) about peace, regional cooperation and use of small arms</li> </ul>
Internet Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchanged information (Internet group of SASA Net partners have been set up</li> </ul>

SASA Net Regional Secretariat is set up in South Asia Partnership International (SAP-I). SAP-I receives reports from national chapters on six monthly basis for review. Meetings are also held at the regional level as need arises and resources allow. Discussions in such meetings assist the national chapters in assessing progress of their members and developing their future direction and strategies.