

to present the concept to their governments in preparation for a sub-regional conference on the subject.

Subsequently, in March 1997, the conference was held, again in Bamako. Regrettably, of the twelve countries represented at the November Conference, only six attended. On the other hand, in addition to the United Nations family, there were representatives from the Organization of African Unity, sub-regional organizations, the Wassenaar Arrangement, and the USA. Of particular note was representation from the Wassenaar Arrangement, the post-Cold War mechanism for information exchange among some 35, mainly industrialized countries, intended to promote "transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of arms and dual-use goods and technologies, thus preventing destabilizing accumulations".¹⁰⁷

The Final Declaration, although failing to agree on concrete steps toward a moratorium, did charge the Government of Mali to pursue the modalities of such a concept with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In addition, the Government of Mali was tasked to work with the United Nations on a possible "Programme of Coordination and Assistance for Security and Disarmament" on behalf of the states of the sub-region.

Observations:

This process may seem to be a somewhat indirect route to the collection and control of illicit light weapons. Two points are important in this context. When the mission met with Malian President Konare at the end of its first visit, he made the point that, for a fraction of the money spent on the UN mission in Rwanda, security assistance could prevent the spectre of such a calamity in his country. Secondly, the experience of the UN in recent years has proven that new and innovative approaches were necessary. The 'Mali Process' thus continues, albeit at a slow pace. Continued leadership by President Konare, together with continuing support from the UNDP, backed in turn by sufficient donor response and creative approaches by the UN Secretariat, still hold out promise for a return to stability in the sub-region.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the Mali/Sahara-Sahel experience:

- the implications of the link between the security situation in a state and its capacity for development are slowly gaining recognition;
- confidence-building measures **within** states may be as important as

¹⁰⁷ Consultation sur la proposition du moratoire sur l'exportation, l'importation et la production d'armes légères en Afrique, "Déclaration finale", 26 mars 1997.