

CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective: To identify practical options for Canadian policy practitioners seeking to maximize and rationalize the allocation of resources to support multilateral SALW commitments and programmes

Summary and Conclusions

The current situation is characterized by sharply different levels of regional activity. Some regions/sub-regions (eg. Southern Africa) have adopted a comprehensive approach while others (eg. ASEAN) have only agreed a more limited or partial approach. Still others (such as South Asia and the Middle East) seem uninterested in the issue.

The UN *Programme of Action* did not introduce any significantly new types of SALW commitment. Moreover, the commitments articulated in the *Programme* are in many ways weaker than those expressed in regional agreements. The *Programme* remains important, however, in that it provides both a framework and an impetus for future SALW action. Given the lack of regional commitments in some parts of the globe, the *Programme* also provides a framework for action in those regions/sub-regions that lack formal legally or politically binding regional arrangements.

The most common and widely endorsed forms of SALW commitment have to do with post-conflict DDR, surplus weapons collection/destruction. This seems to have evolved out of the practical challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding. Law enforcement and export licensing are also widely endorsed, probably because they are consistent with norms of state sovereignty.

There is a growing sense that the kinds of commitments currently agreed are inadequate. Emerging priorities include tracing and marking, transparency, illicit brokering and stockpile management/security. There also seems to be an emerging interest in pressing for the negotiation of legally – rather than merely politically – binding SALW agreements. One example of this is the recent French-Swiss initiative that aimed to oblige states legally to implement marking and tracing measures.

A broad range of actors have been mobilized in support of these commitments, including states, multilateral institutions, and NGOs. Moreover, the SALW issue is now firmly embedded in both the global political agenda and the global consciousness.

It is obvious to all involved that, given the extent and depth of the problem, no region or functional category of SALW action is adequately resourced – although it is equally obvious that some are better resourced than others. It is also clear that the effective implementation of many commitments is undermined by lack of resources and inadequate institutional capacity in many parts of the world. Ultimately, then, all regions and programmes could benefit from the availability of additional financial support.

Implementation lags seriously behind commitments. There is no regional implementation mechanism for the Bamako Declaration; nor is there a global implementation mechanism for the UN *Programme of Action*. There is a general consensus that practical/financial support for the UN *Programme* is a high priority if forward momentum on the SALW issue is to be maintained.

The majority of those SALW implementation programmes that currently exist are under-resourced. Having said this, it is important to note that levels of resources differ sharply between regions/sub-regions. In this regard, programming in the Southern African and European regions is