

the Disarmament Commission must address its agenda in a manner that contributes pragmatically to the real challenges facing the United Nations and Member States.²

2. The Interrelated Nature of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

The experience of the United Nations and Member States -- particularly in Central America, Cambodia and Africa over the last ten years -- has demonstrated beyond a doubt that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants are interrelated and necessary for successful post-conflict peacebuilding. The experience strongly suggests the futility of pursuing small arms and light weapons-related disarmament measures without also considering demobilization and reintegration measures. Successful demobilization has been possible only when accompanied by a certain degree of disarmament; and disarmament and demobilization, in turn, have been sustainable only when former combatants were rehabilitated and integrated into civilian life or the restructured state army.

Failure to deal effectively with demobilization and reintegration at the time of small arms disarmament:

- a) seriously complicates the process of disarmament, as ex-combatants, with no alternative training or occupational opportunities in prospect, will be less likely to relinquish their arms and will attempt to circumvent prescribed arms control and disarmament measures;
- b) risks a return to hostilities;
- c) risks an increase in crime, banditry and other violent behaviour by ex-combatants, which leads to new problems of arms control as well as to social and economic disruption; and
- d) increases the likelihood of small arms proliferation and illicit trafficking in weapons.³

On the other hand, effective demobilization and reintegration measures can assist the disarmament process by encouraging compliance with agreed measures and by providing for the removal of combat materiel such as mines and explosive ordnance. At a more general level, successful and integrated DDRPs can provide the basis for the reestablishment of confidence in social institutions, such as the judicial system and police, as well as a secure

² These are among the reasons cited by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the sweeping reforms announced by him in document A/51/950 which he presented to the General Assembly on July 16, 1997.

³ See the *Report of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, A/52/298, 27 August 1997.