

Work is also being done to develop an effective mechanism for verification and compliance of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. The Missile Technology Control Regime came into force in 1987, and has served to reduce the proliferation of ballistic missiles by controlling the exports of missile equipment and technology.

Although the memberships of Russia and South Africa have increased MTCR's effectiveness, much work still needs to be done to deal with the real threat of continued missile proliferation, particularly in regional contexts such as South Asia, the Middle East and the Korean peninsula.

Following the 1991 Gulf War, Canada called for greater transparency, consultation and restraint in conventional-weapons transfers. Events in Rwanda, Bosnia and elsewhere over the past two years have once again illustrated the need for effective measures to deal with conventional weapons.

The UN Secretary General has spoken about the need to undertake micro-disarmament, including the small arms and light weapons (machine guns, pistols, mines) that cause so many deaths.

The United Nations Conventional Arms Register remains a key tool for developing transparency in arms transfers and can contribute to building the confidence required to undertake serious conventional disarmament. The register needs to be used by more states and serious efforts must be made in the coming year to improve and strengthen it as an important instrument for dealing with conventional arms proliferation.