

innovative programs to reskill and resettle soldiers.<sup>14</sup>

### **Issues Related to the Transparency, Availability and Comparability of Data on Military Expenditure and Arms Trading**

International experience has confirmed the importance of the availability of accurate and comparable data in processes of military and political confidence and security building. In Southern Africa, the overwhelming hegemony of South Africa inevitably places the emphasis on unilateral initiatives by that country although there is also scope for multilateral measures.

South Africa has agreed to report to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, although in its first year of reporting, in 1995, it failed to provide full details. As of March 1995, only Malawi, Lesotho, Mauritius and Namibia had provided returns to the UN Register, in all cases simply in the form of a *note verbale* and not data.<sup>15</sup> Full reporting to the UN Register by all the countries of the region would provide a firm basis for transparency of data; comparability, however, will remain difficult. The statistics in the *Military Balance* are questionable and do not reflect on the serviceability of equipment. For example, most of the military aircraft held by Angola and Mozambique cannot be flown.

Some NGOs in South Africa (the Centre for Conflict Resolution, for example) have promoted the idea of expanding the UN Register on a regional basis to cover transfers of other categories of weapons (notably light weapons) and also to establish a regional 'all arms' register. Given the failure of states to report to the UN Register, and the complexities of administering such a scheme, it seems unlikely that this is viable in the near future. Nevertheless, the question

---

<sup>14</sup>For example, the Ford Foundation has funded a Conference on Defence Rationalisation and Human Resource Development, hosted by the Graduate School of public and Development Management, University of the Witwatersrand. This will explore ways of reskilling South African National Defence Force officers and NCOs facing rationalization. The Institute for Defence Policy has also put forward proposals for the involvement of civil society institutions in demobilization.

<sup>15</sup>*Sipri Yearbook 1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1995, pp. 558-59.