

Programmes to develop effective controls on legal arms possession and transfers, among civilians and state security forces, remain inadequate. So too are programmes to disarm former combatants, remove excessive or unlicensed arms from civilians, and destroy or safely dispose of "surplus" stocks of arms or confiscated illicit weapons. Transparency, information exchange and consultation among Southern African countries on arms and illicit trafficking remain weak. All these problems need to be addressed urgently.

ELEMENTS OF A SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME ON LIGHT ARMS AND ILLICIT ARMS TRAFFICKING

A co-ordinated, determined and comprehensive regional "Action Programme" on light arms proliferation and illicit arms trafficking is urgently needed in Southern Africa. To enhance capacity in Southern Africa to develop and implement such a programme, and to reinforce its effectiveness, co-operation with the EU and other members of the international community should be developed, particularly through the EU-SADC dialogue.

This Action Programme needs to be comprehensive in its approach. The challenges of light arms proliferation and illicit arms trafficking are complex, and no single type of policy response would be adequate. Programmes to address illicit arms trafficking must be combined with actions to strengthen controls on legally-held arms; to remove, destroy or safely dispose of excess or confiscated arms; and to enhance transparency, information collection and exchange, and consultation across the region.

The programme of action on light and illicit arms should be co-ordinated across the region of Southern Africa, so that local and national actions are mutually reinforcing and appropriate actions are taken at the regional level. It should build upon and further strengthen regional institutions and structures.

Moreover, to be effective, the regional programme to tackle arms proliferation and illicit trafficking must be integrated with wider programmes to promote individual and community security; implement peace agreements; and advance post-conflict reconstruction, economic and social development, and good governance— both within the region and across Africa.

Thus, the region requires an integrated approach. In line with this requirement, donors and international co-operation partners assisting with the implementation of the action programme should adopt a proportional and integrated approach to the promotion of security and development. In much of the donor community, this has become known as the "security first" approach to development co-operation. SADC countries and the EU and its member states (and any other outside donors) should explicitly endorse this integrated approach, and establish consultations and procedures to ensure that this is effectively implemented.

Within this framework, Southern African countries should carry out an action programme to tackle light arms proliferation and illicit trafficking including the following elements. The EU should support this programme, where appropriate, as part of its EU-SADC co-operation.

1. COMBATING ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

Southern African states need to strengthen their collective efforts to prevent and combat illicit