

In all, 138 states have submitted data for at least one of the UN Register's reporting years. Canada is one of a number of countries that also voluntarily submit data on military holdings and procurement through national production. These data go beyond the minimum currently required by the United Nations. We are working through the Group of Experts to further strengthen the Register by encouraging other countries to join us in submitting such data and to otherwise enhance their submissions through ensuring accuracy and completeness and the provision of any other relevant background information.

In addition to our efforts at the United Nations to improve and expand the Register, Canada has taken a leading role in encouraging dialogue within regional organizations on the data submitted to the Register. Our hope is that these discussions will bring an understanding of the reasons underlying military procurement, build confidence and thus promote restraint in arms spending. We have been successful in this regard in the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Such dialogue could also lead to the development of regionally based registers that respond to the specific concerns and conditions of each region. In addition, in 1996 Canada played an important role in developing a set of United Nations Guidelines on International Arms Transfers and has also agreed to the OSCE's 1993 Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers. Canada also welcomes the new European Union Code of Conduct for International Arms Transfers.

The challenge of dealing with conventional weapons includes the problem of particular classes of weapons such as landmines and small arms. On the question of landmines, Canada can look back on the successful conclusion of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction at the December 2-4, 1997, Ottawa Conference. To date, 133 countries have signed the Convention. As 48 countries have now ratified it, the Convention will become binding international law on March 1, 1999. Canada has also ratified Protocols II and IV of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which regulates the use of landmines and other inhumane weapons. This instrument will remain an important one, particularly for those countries not yet willing to sign the Ottawa treaty.

Canada, in co-operation with like-minded partners, is looking at ways to address the proliferation of small arms, which can undermine the security and development efforts of many developing countries as well as contribute to human suffering. We recognize that dealing with excessive accumulations of small arms is a complex problem that necessitates a co-ordinated and co-operative approach on multiple tracks and in a number of fora.

Canada has been active in several fora including the United Nations, the OAS and the P-8 (the group of eight countries that participate in the political discussion at the annual economic summit) to promote international initiatives aimed at addressing aspects of