

FOREWORD

Arms Control and Security Policy Framework

The promotion of international peace and security constitutes a key Canadian foreign policy objective. Indeed, it constitutes one of the three pillars of the Government's comprehensive foreign policy statement of 1995, *Canada in the World*, namely "the protection of our security, within a stable global environment". To that end, Canada is a major proponent of arms control and disarmament agreements as well as measures to promote transparency and build confidence at the regional and global level.

Canada's policies recognize the right, enshrined in the United Nations Charter, of all nations to provide for their legitimate self-defence. At the same time, however, Canada believes that excessive accumulations of arms can have a de-stabilizing effect on both the regional security situation and global order.

Canada is working actively to promote greater transparency in the trade of conventional weapons. An Annual Report on the Export of Military Goods from Canada has been issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) for each of the past six years, beginning with the year 1990. We were a proponent of the creation of the *United Nations' Register of Conventional Arms*, and a founding contributor.

In 1995, 89 countries made submissions to the Register which records information on imports and exports under seven major categories of conventional weapons systems. Canada is one of a small minority of countries which submits data on military holdings and procurement through national production. This data is beyond the minimum requested by the Register. We will be working to further strengthen the Register by encouraging other countries to join us in submitting such data as a mechanism for promoting transparency and confidence-building as well as restraint.

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 such discussions will bring understanding of the reasons underlying military procurement; build confidence and thus promote restraint in arms spending. Such dialogue could also lead to the development of regionally based registers that respond to the specific concerns and conditions of each region, e.g. the Americas, Africa and Asia-Pacific. We are also active in proposing broader mechanisms to address regional security concerns in such forums as the Organization of American States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Regional Forum in order to deal with the root causes of insecurity which often manifest themselves in arms buildups.

The challenge of dealing with conventional weapons also includes the problem of landmines. Canada has a two-track approach to this challenge.