

THE OTTAWA GROUP

8th October 1999

Held at:

The Simons Foundation, Vancouver, Canada

In Attendance:

Chris Smith, Michael Heflinger, Geraldine O'Callaghan, Christopher Carle, Paddy Rawlinson, Douglas Ross, Vivienne Chin, Yven Dandaram, Mark Gaillard, Wendy Calder, Steve Lee, Joe Smith, Jim Hayes (by telephone)

Although this document has been agreed as a true representation of the meeting held by The Ottawa Group, the views contained herein do not necessarily reflect those of the entire group. In addition the group members acted in an individual capacity and their views do not necessarily reflect the position of the departments they represent.

Report by the Ottawa Group on Small Arms. The Simons Foundation.

October 8, 1999

Since the last meeting of the Ottawa Group, there has been an extraordinary process of consensus building among the participants on the issues raised by the proliferation and transfer of small arms and light weapons. The group recognises the role played by NGOs and their ability to influence governments that this is perhaps the most important time of the decade for what is being done. These efforts have been met by several governments with a resolute and a demonstrable commitment to ensure that necessary support will be given in the near future. It is instructive to compare the reaction of governments with regard to other arms security issues, such as the need to control the transfer of major conventional weapons and nuclear arms control regimes.

In a relatively short space of time we now have two major initiatives designed to provide the architecture to get to address the interrelated problems of firearms trafficking and light weapons proliferation. Work on the UN Firearms Protocol proceeds apace, and the forthcoming UN 2001 Conference to address light weapons proliferation will set in motion efforts to further these already underway efforts. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In addition, there are several developments at the regional level. The European Union (EU) has made significant strides in the area of arms control, with the agreement of an EU Code of Conduct on arms exports, the EU programme to stop trafficking and comprehensive joint action on small arms. The Organisation of American States Convention (OAS) on arms trafficking is widely recognised as a landmark achievement, though implementation is proving difficult. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) moratorium is still in its infancy but has the potential to address the light weapons issue in West Africa pending successful capacity building. Other initiatives include those underway by NAFTA, ECNE and SADC.

Above all however, we may currently be witnessing a major transformation in thinking about the relationship between security and development. It is time to give substance to concepts relating to human security and a major commitment on the part of some powerful governments to view security as being fundamental to development. For us to be able to ensure the development