

## UN Encourages Asia Pacific Disarmament

*A little-known aspect of the UN's work is its three regional centres for peace and disarmament: one in Latin America, one in Africa and one in Asia Pacific. This last, established in 1988 and located in Katmandu, Nepal, has a mandate to provide, on request, substantive support for peace and disarmament-related activities agreed by the states in the region. The Centre also coordinates the implementation of UN Disarmament Information Program (formerly World Disarmament Campaign) activities in Asia.*

*There is wide recognition among Asia Pacific states that the Centre should encourage regional and sub-regional dialogue to enhance confidence and promote disarmament and security. Towards this end, the Centre has held a series of regional meetings on confidence-building and security, with participation from governments, research institutes, the mass media and non-governmental organizations from around Asia Pacific. The meetings provide an opportunity for participants to review continuing changes in the international and regional security environment and to consider the implications for peace and disarmament. Canada has been represented at these meetings by Ambassador for Disarmament Peggy Mason. Below are excerpts from Ambassador Mason's address to the Sixth UN Meeting on Peace and Disarmament in the Asia Pacific Region, held from January 31 to February 2 in Katmandu.*

I have been asked to discuss the "Guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security" adopted by the UN Disarmament Commission in 1993....

### **Disarmament lies at the heart of the cooperative security-building process.**

developed in a *global* forum...is dramatic testimony to the post-Cold War disarmament agenda of which the heightened regional dimension is perhaps one of the most striking features....

Disarmament at its core is concerned with creating the conditions under which countries will place less reliance on armaments and more reliance on alternative processes for ensuring their viability and well-being against all manner of threats, however defined. During the post-Cold War era of interdependence, integration and globalization at the macro level, as against increasing tribalization and fragmentation at the local level, it seems clear that the tools for building such alternative mechanisms will be increasingly regionally and cooperatively based.

The UN has both a "top down" or global/normative/framework role to play and a "bottom up" or operational role to play, the latter at the regional, sub-regional and local levels. Arms control and disarmament — both in the strict sense of negotiating agreements to limit/control/manage armaments and in the broader sense of building confidence among nations by promoting greater openness in military matters — are tools in the process of building collective/cooperative security, just as preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding are tools to this end. All aspects along this continuum need to be addressed if the goal of collective/cooperative security is to be reached.

Countries must be encouraged to develop concrete mechanisms to prevent and to resolve disputes peacefully. For such mechanisms to work, there must be an ever-enlarging consensus on the proper roles of power, armaments, the use of force and, above all, on the limits of the use of force. From this perspective, arms control and disarmament relate to cooperative efforts (at every level from local to global) to control the use of force and to promote collective security based on agreed rules of interstate behaviour, including on the use of force. Increasingly, too, intrastate behaviour will be involved, including the specific issue of disarming both irregular and regular forces within the boundaries of one country.

There is an obvious role for the UN in respect of global agreements aimed at eliminating weapons of mass destruction or, at minimum, at limiting their spread.... Regarding conventional arms, the objectives are far less clear since it is not a matter of eliminating them but of encouraging barriers to excessive transfers and accumulations. Above all, a

disarmament Commission in 1993....

The very fact that we have consensus guidelines on *regional* approaches to disarmament de-

greater common understanding must be developed with respect to what is legitimate and what is excessive, together with agreed parameters for the transfer of such armaments. To develop such an understanding, efforts must take place both at the global and regional levels. At the global level, the UN Arms Register is the main vehicle for stimulating such a discussion. Equally important is the UN's work in promoting transparency, confidence building and openness in military matters on a regional basis, particularly through the UN Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament.

Since 1990, Asia Pacific has seen a multitude of efforts at promoting a cooperative security dialogue process. The ASEAN Regional Forum is the tangible result of these many interlocking efforts....

Disarmament — both in the narrow and broad senses — has not diminished in importance but rather lies at the heart of the new collective/cooperative security-building process.

The [new UNDC guidelines] should be viewed as our common asset. Their applicability and their elaboration in specific regional and sub-regional contexts must now be worked out.

## Canadians Help Demine Cambodia

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet and Minister of National Defence David Collonette announced on February 24 that Canada will send 12 Canadian Forces personnel to Cambodia to provide training and administrative support to the Cambodia Mine Action Centre. The personnel will be provided through the United Nations Development Program, which is coordinating international support for demining operations in Cambodia. The Canadians will constitute half of the 25-member international technical advisory group to the Centre.

"Cambodia has the worst problem of uncleared landmines in the world. Agriculture is impossible because of mines littered in farmland. Trade is being strangled by mined roads. I'm proud of this Canadian effort to train Cambodians so that they can overcome this most serious obstacle to the country's development," said Mr. Ouellet.