

During the deliberations of the 1992 panel which adjusted the category definitions and developed the operating procedures, several interventions from developing countries made the point that the seven categories of weapons systems were at such a high level of capability that they excluded most of the conventional arms being 'excessively accumulated' and used in regional conflicts, especially in places such as Sub-Saharan Africa and Central America. During the workshops held in the spring of 1993 by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, Member States not on the panel also made it clear that regional factors must somehow be integrated into the process. For example Ambassador Karmal of Pakistan openly questioned the origin of the weapons categories and doubted their applicability to the South Asian region.<sup>42</sup> And of course there is the example of the CSCE procedures of sharing information on conventional weapons inventories and troop locations, as well as the Open Skies agreement. As previously mentioned the submission of data to the Register in the first year varied widely by region, providing further evidence that regionalization of the register process may well bring immediate dividends. In a recent address to the UN Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, the UN Secretary General provided the strongest boost yet for this approach. 'Regional registers should now be the next step. They have the advantage of allowing the categories of weapons to be registered to reflect the security concerns felt in the region.'<sup>43</sup>

What would be the specific advantages of regionalization?<sup>44</sup> One can assume that states in a particular region share similar approaches to transparency and openness. In Latin America for example, the role of the military has been traditionally strong, resulting in a reluctance to release military information. A process which focuses just on Latin America may well increase participation. Second, many regions already have mechanisms and organizations in place into which the register approach could be integrated. Many of these organizations are formally linked to the United Nations, which itself has begun to reemphasize the role of regional security organizations as part of the new UN.<sup>45</sup> Third, the causes and conduct of armed conflict vary significantly by region. This is particularly true of the categories and types of weapons whose excessive accumulation are the object of the register process. Also, in those regions where security questions can be regionalized, the register process can be easily integrated, a step that is critical if the register is to go beyond mere

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<sup>42</sup> Ambassador Ahmad Karmal, 'Transparency in Armaments: A Regional Perspective,' *Transparency in Armaments: The Mediterranean Region*, Disarmament Topical Papers 15 (New York: United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 1993), 47-50.

<sup>43</sup> *Address of the Secretary General to the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters*, United Nations Press release SG/SM/94/3, 12 January 1994.

<sup>44</sup> For the pros and cons of regionalization of the UN Register see Joseph DiChiaro, *The Regionalization of the UN Register of Conventional Arms*, paper presented to the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, 30 March 1994.

<sup>45</sup> For an important example see UN Secretary General, *An Agenda for Peace*, UN Document A/47/277 (New York: United Nations, 17 June 1992), 17-19.