

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this paper is twofold. It will describe Canadian procedures in the preparation of its annual submission to the United Nations (UN) Register of Conventional Arms (the Register), and present Canada's interpretation of the definitions contained in the Register. While it is understood that each country will have unique bureaucratic structures and processes, by outlining Canada's practices it is hoped that this paper will assist other countries in making their submissions to the Register.

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms was established by the Secretary-General on 1 January 1992 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, entitled Transparency in Armaments. The resolution called on Member States to annually "provide data on their imports and exports of arms as well as available background information regarding their military holdings, procurement through national production and relevant policies." Once national reports are received by the UN Centre for Disarmament Affairs they are compiled into a single annual report - the Register. The Register is intended to promote enhanced levels of transparency in armaments, thereby contributing to confidence-building, promoting stability and strengthening regional and international peace and security.

While inconsistencies are found in the Register each year, the majority of these can be attributed to different national interpretations of the Register's definitions. Thus, the utility of the Register would be significantly enhanced if a consistent set of interpretations of the associated definitions were used by all contributing nations. In the absence of such consistency, each nation should, at the least, inform the UN of the definitions it uses within the Register's categories as they apply to its conventional arms transfers and procurements.

In the past the UN has frequently requested that contributing nations submit a paper outlining their interpretation of the definitions contained in the Register. This paper contains Canada's response to that request, as well as an overview of the process Canada follows in the compilation of its annual submission to the Register.

DISCUSSION

CANADA'S DATA SUBMISSION PROCESS

Each year a comprehensive Canadian report is submitted to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) with input and assistance from the Department of National Defence (DND).