

CANADIAN PRIORITIES

THE HUMAN DIMENSION

While small arms have perverse impacts on the security of people, the response to the threat has been focussed largely on national security or international peace and security dimensions. However, there is a growing recognition of the need to tackle the danger small arms pose to people's safety in its own right. A human security approach to small arms calls for a shift in emphasis from weapons to people, and situates the human cost of small arms within the broader socioeconomic and political environment that encourages the acquisition, accumulation, and use of weapons.

DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILISATION AND REINTEGRATION (DD&R), COLLECTION AND DESTRUCTION OF SALW

Among the positive points integrated into the UN Programme of Action adopted in July, 2001 was the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DD and R) elements. We need to put these elements in practice on the ground. This is where the Security Council can continue to play a Key role-both in incorporating appropriate DD and R provisions in the mandates of peacekeeping operations and in playing its part in securing support for the budgetary aspects of those provisions.

DD and R challenges vary from the systematic collection of weapons from ex-combatants to their preparation for and integration in civilian or military life. Successful interventions in this area would indeed reduce the recurrence of violence that encourage the acquisition of small arms and endanger the security of people.

Failure to disband former fighters may lead to an immediate relapse into war. In the longer term, failure to effectively disarm and retain ex-combatants may result in their participation in armed criminality while inattention to the large numbers of military-style weapons in civilian hands may further undermine the consolidation of peace in fragile post-conflict societies.

Given their importance in contributing to sustainable peace, the development of comprehensive DD and R programmes particular attention should be paid to the procedures and expertise required for timely, safe and secure collection and disposal of SALW. In turn, such provisions should also be appropriately reflected in the mandates and startup budgets of peacekeeping operations.

SURPLUS SALW STOCKS

Canada is supporting means to reduce the number of small arms held in excess, to legitimate security and defence needs.

The destruction of surplus weapons coupled with proper management of national stockpiles is key in reducing the number of potential weapons available to the illicit market.