

## NON-PROLIFERATION, *Arms Control and Disarmament*

As we seek new tools for the UN to respond to threats to security, we must not relax our efforts in traditional areas of concern such as non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. With the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995 and the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996, the international community took an historic and definitive step forward on nuclear disarmament. Canada is firmly committed to pursue the goal set out in that treaty to reduce nuclear weapons, with the ultimate goal of elimination.

We are equally concerned that international condemnation of chemical and biological weapons and support for related treaties not abate. Nor should the international community neglect the threats to security arising from excessive and destabilizing accumulations of conventional weapons. We believe that more can and should be done at the multilateral level to address such concerns, including in relation to small arms and light weapons.

### ELIMINATION OF ANTI-PERSONNEL LANDMINES

Canada believes that if the international community can agree to end testing of the most costly and sophisticated weapons systems in the world – nuclear weapons – then there may be real hope for ending the use of the most simple weapons in global arsenals – anti-personnel landmines. A deadly legacy of conflicts which may have ended decades before, anti-personnel landmines victimize more than 26,000 people every year. Most of the casualties are civilians, many of them children, and almost all are in developing countries.



That is why, in October 1996, Canada hosted the Ottawa Conference “Toward a Global Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines”, bringing together more than 74 states to discuss a strategy for achieving a global ban. In the Ottawa Declaration, participating states committed to ensuring “the earliest possible conclusion of a legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines”. Determined to see this unprecedented gathering produce quick action, Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, invited the participants to return to Canada’s capital in December 1997 to sign a global treaty banning landmines.

This stage of the so-called “Ottawa Process” came to a successful conclusion when, in December 1997, over 120 countries signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. At the event, Prime Minister Chrétien announced Canada’s plans for the next phase of the process that began in October 1996. Known as Ottawa Process II, the goals of this initiative are to build international commitment to expand mine clearance and assistance to victims, to promote universalization of the treaty and to ensure its effective implementation. Canada has committed an additional \$100 million over the next five years to help meet these objectives.

*“The Ottawa Process has so far proved to be the most powerful vehicle available for achieving the goal of a comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines as rapidly as possible. Support for the process has grown at an astonishing rate.”*

Kofi Annan

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 1997

