

eliminate the movement of weapons from Liberia into Sierra Leone and elsewhere? Similarly, it would be currently impossible for India and Pakistan to even discuss the movement of weapons from Pakistan into Kashmir.

The group agreed that the issue of non-state actors demands urgent attention.

Conclusions

The Ottawa Group consider it important to understand that progress on controlling flows of weapons cannot exist in isolation. In essence, states must build and maintain the capacity to sustain effective control of weapons. Once control is lost the state is liable to collapse. To a large extent, more perhaps than is currently appreciated, this area of international public policy is dependent upon political, economic and social development. The weaker the state, the less its ability to control borders and the activities of criminal organisations. The weaker the economy the less resources will be available to combat crime and provide opportunities for diminishing the demand for illegal weapons. If civil society breaks down or fails to function, the social pressures that militate against the acquisition of weapons will either cease to exist or cease to be effective. The existence and location of weapons *per se* is an important part of the problem. It is also the atmosphere and environment in which they become available and dangerous that must also be addressed.

Light weapons proliferation cannot be separated from issues of good governance and peace building. Second, it must be accepted that this process will be largely political. It will be impossible to convince developing countries and weaker states to adopt programmes of reform if there is no sign of movement elsewhere. The further universalisation of the Ottawa Convention, for example, is currently constrained by the perceived belief that the United States is disinterested in the landmine issue. The same must not be allowed to happen in the case of small arms and light weapons.

The success of international initiatives to tackle the global small arms issues is reliant on the strength of the weakest states to implement the necessary architecture. Canada has a leading role to play in encouraging support for these developing states.

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