

Foreword

Arms Control and Security Policy Framework

The promotion of international peace and security is a key Canadian foreign policy objective. It constitutes one of the three pillars of the Government's comprehensive foreign policy statement of 1995, *Canada in the World*, namely "the protection of our security, within a stable global environment." To that end, Canada is a major proponent of arms control and disarmament agreements as well as measures to promote transparency and to build confidence at the regional and global level.

Canada's policies recognize the right, enshrined in the United Nations Charter, of all nations to provide for their legitimate self-defence. At the same time, however, it is Canada's view that the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons has a destabilizing effect on both regional security and global order.

Canada is actively working to promote greater transparency in the trade of conventional weapons. This *Annual Report on the Export of Military Goods from Canada* has been issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) for each of the past nine years, beginning with the year 1990. We have, over time, endeavoured to improve the report by providing additional information about the types of goods exported, and we hope that other countries will seek to provide the same standard of information.

An important element of international efforts to promote greater transparency and the exercise of responsibility among supplying countries, with regard to the trade in conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, is the Wassenaar Arrangement, which Canada helped to form in 1996. Its objective is to contribute to regional and international security and stability and to prevent destabilizing accumulations of arms and strategically sensitive commodities. The 33 member states (see Annex 2) exchange views on areas of concern and draw up lists of the goods and technologies to be controlled. Through their national policies, members seek to ensure that transfers of these items do not contribute to the development or enhancement of military capabilities that would undermine these goals, and that they are not diverted to support such capabilities.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms also makes a significant contribution to transparency, confidence building and enhanced global security. Canada strongly promoted the creation of the Register of Conventional Arms, established by the Secretary-General in January 1992, and was a founding contributor. We have advocated its continued development and expansion in the Group of Governmental Experts on the Register of Conventional Arms convened by the Secretary-General in 1994 and in 1997. In support of the Register, which is maintained at UN headquarters in New York, all UN member states are asked to supply data annually on their imports and exports in seven major categories of conventional weapons systems. In each year of the Register's operation, more than 90 governments have made submissions to the Register, and of these about 70 have