

aspects of illicit manufacture and trafficking of firearms will be required by the Protocol. Because implementation at the global level will come at different speeds, the Protocol wording includes articles on technical assistance, exchange of experience and training, co-operation, and the establishment of a focal point to facilitate those aspects. This should provide those countries that have already developed the architecture to implement the Protocol with the opportunity to move forward more rapidly than countries that currently experience a "governance gap" in relation to the policies and procedures that are implied by the Protocol. It is intended to be ready for signature by the end of 2000.

Although fundamentally valuable in its own right, it is to be expected that the Protocol will also inform and assist developments elsewhere designed to stem the illicit trafficking and manufacture that leads to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Nevertheless, the Protocol and associated measures and initiatives can only become meaningful if those countries that lack the capability and capacity are afforded the opportunity to develop the means to address the issues covered by the Protocol. This will entail a significant transfer of financial, administrative and intellectual resources if it is to be made to work in any meaningful way.

At this juncture there is concern that first donor states have yet to appreciate resource implications implied by successful implementation and, second, verification issues have yet to be addressed; this raises questions relating to credibility and expectations. Verification is also a perceived flaw in the Ottawa Convention. It is thought that some countries which have both signed and ratified the Convention are still producing and exporting anti personnel landmines. Beyond the cost and claims of capacity building to implement the Protocol, donor governments should be fully aware of the need to offer and implement incentives for countries to sign, ratify and implement the Protocol. Obversely, it is unlikely that attempts to develop conditionality packages will be in any way successful.

Finally, in an era of rapid technological change and globalisation the architects of the Protocol should be fully aware of the inevitable need for the Protocol to develop in such a way as to reflect emerging trends in criminality, just as the Convention itself will have to change to keep pace with emerging and evolving criminal practices. Therefore, ideally the Protocol should be a living document.

The decision to host a UN Conference in 2001 on illicit trade in all its aspects is an opportunity not to be missed. In addition to pursuing further measures on preventing illicit trafficking, the comprehensive framework agreed for this conference allows for the first international discussion of measures to control legal transfers of small arms. That said, the outcome of the 2001 Conference remains unclear. A diverse range of light weapons policies will be discussed. Of salient importance to this group is the need for the Conference to strengthen and develop controls of illegal transfers. Whilst it is recognised that there is an urgent need to focus upon weapons in circulation, new stocks of weapons continue to reach zones of conflict even when local availability is high. It must also be accepted that effective control mechanisms cut across security complexes are far more difficult to implement than national legislation, the more so where there is conflict and state weakness. For example, this will be the major challenge for ECOWAS - how can Charles Taylor be persuaded to