

# FOREWORD

## Arms Control and Security Policy Framework

The promotion of international peace and security is a key Canadian foreign policy objective. Indeed, 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 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, Canada believes that excessive accumulations of arms can have a destabilizing effect on both the regional security situation and global order.

Canada is working actively 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 seven years, beginning with the year 1990. Since it was first published, Canada's Annual Report has been a model of detail and completeness, which we hope will serve as an example that other countries may someday match.

We were an advocate of the creation of the United Nations' Register of Conventional Arms in 1991, and a founding contributor. We have supported its continued development and expansion through our participation in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations' Register convened by the Secretary-General in 1994 and in 1997. Over 90 countries now regularly make annual submissions to the United Nations' Register, which records information on imports and exports under seven major categories of conventional weapons systems. In all, 136 states have submitted data for at least one of the reporting years. Canada is one of a growing number of countries that also voluntarily submit data on military holdings and procurement through national production. These data are beyond the minimum currently required by the United Nations. We are working through the Group of Experts to further strengthen the Register by encouraging other countries to join us in submitting such data, and to otherwise enhance their submission through ensuring its accuracy and completeness and the provision of any other relevant background information.

In addition to our efforts at the United Nations to improve and expand the Register, Canada has taken a leading role in encouraging dialogue within regional organizations on the data submitted to the register. Our hope is that these discussions will bring understanding of the reasons underlying military procurement, build confidence and