

(c) the ways and means to prevent and reduce the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons, in particular as they cause or exacerbate conflict;

with particular attention to the role of the United Nations in this field and to the complementary role of regional organizations...."

The Panel completed its first session in June 1996 and since then has travelled to South Africa and El Salvador in order to hold discussions with experienced practitioners in the field. Midway through the second session in January, 1997, the Chairman of the Panel, Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki, several Panel members and the consultant to the group attended a Workshop on Progress in International Efforts to Constrain Light Weapons, held in Ottawa, Canada¹². The Workshop was an opportunity for these members of the Panel to focus on proliferation of light weapons in the context of specific peacekeeping experiences.

While it appeared there were still some concerns on the part of certain Member States on the relationship of this type of examination to the inherent right of self-defence, there was general agreement among Panel members on the need to study light weapons problems in the context of UN peacekeeping operations. The Panel is concentrating its efforts on Africa, Central America and South-West Asia; areas it sees as the most pressing in the near and mid-term. Despite many similarities in situations, each region is different and the panel anticipates difficulties in establishing global norms that will be widely applicable and acceptable. Regional approaches may well offer the most opportunity for progress in addressing the problem of light weapons proliferation. On the other hand, the cross-border aspect of arms transfers and the need of many affected states for multilateral assistance in building the capacity to effectively respond to this problem suggests the need for an overarching global approach. The expert group has noted the existence in some areas of a potentially dangerous combination of cultures -- those of violence and of weapons ownership -- which is particularly troubling.

While anti-personnel mines are included in the category of light weapons, the Panel has decided that, given the separate negotiations now underway, it will not deal with this aspect.

¹² The Workshop was organized by the Canadian Council for International Peace and Security, (CCIPS) an independent body formed to promote innovative Canadian policies in the field of international peace and security in keeping with Canada's internationalist tradition. Other panel members in attendance included Ambassador André Mernier of Belgium, Ambassador Pasi Patokallio of Finland, Colonel Wolfgang Richter of Germany and Mr. David Declercq of Canada. Dr. Edward Laurence is the Panel's consultant. The assessment in this report of the state of play in the Expert Group to this point is taken both from the Report of that workshop (Douglas Fraser, *Progress in International Efforts to Constrain Light Weapons: A Canadian Perspective*, (Ottawa: CCIPS, 25 January 1997)), and from discussions with some of the Experts.