

arms and light weapons has particularly important implications for the consolidation of peace processes at the regional level. Despite many similarities, each region is unique and care must be taken when attempting to establish 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 the problem suggest the need for an overarching global approach to DDRPs. At minimum, the international community should identify steps it can take to enhance the prospects for success of regional and subregional efforts.

The First Committee and the UNDC have always emphasized the need:

- a) not to deal with regional approaches in isolation of the implications for international security; and
- b) to ensure that the specific conditions and characteristics of the region and the wishes of the regional Member States are taken into account.

The UNDC's 1993 consensus *Guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security* observe:

"Regional and global approaches to disarmament and arms limitation complement each other and both should be pursued simultaneously in order to promote regional and international peace and security," and

"[r]egional approaches and arrangements should seek to address all aspects of disarmament and arms limitation considered to be necessary by all of the participating States in the region and relevant to the specific security situation of the region concerned, and should use step-by-step approaches whenever appropriate."²⁸

The last point is of particular relevance to DDRP since most of the countries suffering from problems related to inadequate post-conflict disarmament, demobilization and reintegration have expressed a desire for the UNDC to deal with the issue. For states in these regions, DDRPs involve life and death issues and are clearly a priority to be addressed. Just as it is well-recognized in respect of both nuclear and conventional weapons that not every state is obligated to proceed at the same pace but rather that those with the largest

²⁸ A/48/42, paras. 1 and 24 (1993). Note also the UNDC consensus text on *Issues related to conventional disarmament* (A/45/42, 1990): "Taking into consideration the progress accomplished in the field of conventional disarmament, the important role of efforts at disarmament on a regional scale must be recognized. The regional approach to disarmament is one of the essential elements in global efforts. Regional disarmament measures should be taken at the initiative and with the participation of States concerned and must take into account the specific characteristics of each region." (para. 11).