

7. Wassenaar Arrangement

The Wassenaar Arrangement is a supplier control regime and not comprehensive in its participants. For instance, several critical arms exporting states such as India and Pakistan do not participate. The Wassenaar Arrangement is based on a export-control list that regulates who receives what sensitive commodities such as weapons and ammunitions.

8. United Nations Panel of Government Experts on Small Arms

The panel framed the issue as a matter pertaining to conflict-areas in which the United Nations is involved. The panel's final document consisting of two sets of recommendations, one focusing on reduction and the other on prevention, is not an executing document.

9. United Nations Disarmament Commission

The UNDC is examining the use of practical disarmament measures as a step towards a lasting peace in post-conflict situations.

E. Positive Elements

Although not very prominent or comprehensive, the political will to act on the issue of small arms is there as evident in the several initiatives being carried out to deal with the problem. Indeed, there is optimism regarding a measure of success given the co-operation and enthusiasm generated and the precedent established by other initiatives.

Scope for action exists and the process for arriving at an agreement on the specific initiative to be pursued does not need to be too complicated given that the basic concern is with the illicit use of small arms and with licit trafficking becoming illicit, and other aspects of the issue stem from this. More simply, the concerns lies with the lack of assurance regarding the legal transfers of small arms not falling into the hands of non-military personnel.

There is a good possibility of building on a law-enforcement approach since a consensus is already established as evident in the OAS initiative. Linkages can be explored between the law-enforcement and arms control and disarmament approaches for greater productivity.

Domestic, law-enforcement concerns of Northern countries revolving around the issue of domestic criminal activity and small arms proliferation in non-military circles is driving the call to take action on a law-enforcement basis and suggests the possibility of North-North co-operation regarding information exchange in this area.

There is better opportunity for agreement if initiatives focus on the transnational level rather than focusing on the domestic elements of the small arms problem which leads to complicated issues of sovereignty and significant variations in domestic legislation regarding gun control. While the law-enforcement approach ultimately is concerned with the domestic level, there is a strong transnational component to it as evident in the illicit trafficking of small arms.

There is a good opportunity of building on the Canadian recommendation at the UN Panel of Experts on Small Arms to institutionalise and systematise demobilisation, disarmament and international supervision of these activities as elements of intra-state conflict settlement agreements. Thus far, such activities are instead included in settlement agreements on an ad hoc basis.

There is international consensus that, for economic and social development to take place, there must be internal peace and a stable society.