

The issue of small arms control has been on the international agenda for approximately three years and it is still in the early stages of development. International control of small arms is a very complex issue and as a result, the international community is still struggling to conceptualise the issue. Canada and Norway continue to be active on this issue, promoting it in many different fora, including the UN and NGO round-tables. However, the potential for increased co-operation and leadership on the issue stems from common Canadian and Norwegian foreign policy objectives, such as crime prevention, values-building and good governance, post-conflict decommissioning and social reintegration of combatants.

The various approaches and perspectives on small arms issues and problems were reviewed, including the human security perspective, conflict prevention, democracy and good government. As well, gender is an issue from the perspective of women as victims of small arms use and as agents for change. At the same time, small arms are not landmines. In this respect, Norway and Canada have many household firearms and an international ban will not work. South Africa has shown that crime perspectives and conflict perspectives cannot be separated. The big problem is to further refine the concept for small arms control. Various Canadian and Norwegian initiatives and the NGO conference in Orillia were also reviewed. Canada has taken the lead in the crime perspective in the OAS and the UN. Canadian and Norwegian work that could be complementary includes the Orillia NGO network-building, lessons from landmines and the Peace Research Institute of Oslo on illicit trade, Coalition on Gun Control in Canada on public health and gun control. There is a need for capacity building to deal with small arms in areas like justice, the police, the legal community and the need to address the culture of violence. In this respect, Canada and Norway could support capacity building within the NGO community, thereby increasing the ability of civil society to promote the issue. Canada and Norway could also provide leadership in the enforcement and development of international law regarding the global small arms trade.

Unlike the other topics discussed at the round-table, the issues of the circumpolar region are focused mostly on culture and environment. Arctic countries have long co-operated on these issues, including the devolution of power to native peoples, the effects of pollution on Arctic food and environment, sustainable development, bio-diversity and emergency response programs. As part of this co-operative effort, Norway has relocated all of its polar programs to Tromsø in an attempt to centralise circumpolar research and education. Unfortunately, circumpolar research is currently restricted by a lack of new technologies, specifically communications technology.

Human security in the circumpolar world can be advanced through Arctic co-operation including empowerment of Peoples in the region and their regional relationships. Canada is leading in addressing the human security interests of indigenous peoples in the Arctic and can now pull together various experiences such as land claim, devolution, new political power and cultural interests to share with others. Human security in the Arctic is also fundamentally based on environmental problems.