

The Canadian background paper of April 1997, entitled *Practical Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Measures for Peacebuilding*, built on the work of the UNIDIR project, substantiating and expanding many of its premises. One of the paper's most important findings was the importance of a disarmament dimension in peace operations, for both short and long term security. In the immediate post-conflict phase, disarmament is a vital confidence-building measure that will allow the peace process to continue. Over the longer term, a responsible arms management program that includes restraint in the production, procurement and transfer of arms is essential to the consolidation of peace. The paper also underlined the need for an integrated approach to DDRPs from the outset. DDRP planning and implementation must be regarded as an integrated and often overlapping continuum within the overall peacebuilding process, with importance being attached not only to the disarmament and demobilization aspects at the front end, but also to the reintegration aspects of the program over the longer term. In short, both the UNIDIR and Canadian studies demonstrated that when disarmament expertise was finally brought to bear on the broader problem of peacebuilding, the result was a far better understanding of the problem.

Perhaps the most compelling argument for the need to deal with DDRP on an integrated basis, with substantial attention to the disarmament dimension, is found in the Report of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms.¹⁵ Owing to the unique characteristics of small arms and light weapons, the Panel found it impossible to conduct its work¹⁶ without also looking at issues of demobilization and the reintegration into society of former combatants. Moreover, like the Canadian and UNIDIR studies, the Panel found that insufficient attention to disarmament in the overall conduct of a peace operation resulted in severe problems. "Several United Nations peacekeeping or post-conflict peace-building operations have resulted in the incomplete disarmament of former combatants owing to peace agreements or mandates which did not cover small arms and light weapons disarmament, or to shortfalls in the implementation of mandates because of inadequate operational guidance or resources. Thus, large numbers of surplus weapons became available in the conflict areas for criminal activities, recirculation and illicit trafficking."¹⁷

The recent experience in Mali, where arms control has been an integral part of the conflict resolution and peacebuilding process undertaken by the Malians themselves, with United Nations assistance, has also increased the analytical understanding of the role of arms

process in post-conflict societies.

¹⁵ A/52/298, 27 August 1997.

¹⁶ As set out in paragraph 1 of its Report, the Group's mandate was to analyze the nature and causes of excessive accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons and to propose ways and means to solve the problem.

¹⁷ *Report of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, A/52/298, 27 August 1997, para. 49.