

Tatsuro Kunugi said that a strong central government in Japan has acted as a pre-emptive force to the development of the Japanese NGO community. There is virtually no working relationship between NGOs and corporations in Japan. Those NGOs which attempt to monitor and influence Japanese businesses abroad are perceived as extremist. Challenges posed to corporate governance amidst globalisation are rarely discussed in the Japanese media. Reasons for this situation include the lack of job mobility and the "job for life" security offered in many Japanese corporations. While international monitoring would not be practical, the work of grass-roots monitoring organisation using the Internet could prove effective. He said that the initiatives of Indian NGOs were impressive, especially in the context of the diversity of India's NGO community. John English's account of trying to develop a Canadian code of ethics laid bare the complexity of the issues and the challenges in bringing diverse sectors together.

Terumasa Akio (Japanese NGO Centre for International Cooperation) echoed Toshihiro Menju in describing the state of the NGO community in Japan. NGO work does not offer job security or status. It does not pay very much and support mechanisms for the NGO community are non-existent (i.e., tax exempt status). While the situation has been slowly improving over the past decade, most NGOs still lack confidence. From 500 NGOs in Japan, the top 20 share 80% of all projects. Moreover, one half of the top 20 are international NGOs. Japanese NGOs are therefore active but remain weak. However, the declining capacity of the state to intervene in the economy and provide social safeguards could make the growth of NGO activities inevitable.

6. CODES OF CONDUCT III: THE CASES OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS, AND CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT

Anatole Ayissi (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research) addressed peace-building and practical disarmament in West Africa. He drew attention to problems stemming from the illicit circulation of huge quantities of small arms and light weapons within and among West African nations. The abundant and easy availability of small arms exacerbates conflicts, fuels violence, increases human suffering, facilitates cross-border anarchy and encourages organised crime in the region. An important step forward against the anarchic proliferation of small arms in Africa was taken in October 1998 when sixteen Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States signed a Declaration of a Moratorium on Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons. The Moratorium took effect on 1 November 1998.

The Moratorium is important for several reasons:

- It is the first time a group of African states made the decision to self-impose an arms embargo on a specific type of weapon, including ammunitions.
- It is perceived as a model and a sign of hope in other violence-ridden regions in Africa.
- It is an entirely regional political effort.

A code of conduct which applies to weapons and ammunition also exists. It has an important focus on transparency. It calls for the establishment of an arms registry for the region